



Left:
Kunmanara (Wingu) Tingima
Kuru Ala 2009
 Synthetic polymer paint on linen
 90 x 145cm
 © Wingu Tingima/Licensed by
 Viscopy, 2016

This collection, augmented by jazz magazines and biographies, was donated to the National Film and Sound Archive in 1980.

With his interest initially sparked by his shipping company's activities freighting for both Bonython Galleries and Paul Hamlyn Books in the 1970s, Patrick has devoted over half his life to collecting Australian art, photography and art books. Along the way, he has amassed important collections of manuscripts, exhibition catalogues and bookplates. This love of art and books has also led, at times, to ventures in the trade. He was co-owner of Sydney's landmark bohemian Paddington store New Edition (1974–1978), which, along with its Tea Room, became a hub for residents, poets and musicians. In the late 1980s he was part owner of Craftsman House, which published books on the works of Colin Lanceley, Lloyd Rees, Tim Storrier, John Coburn and Alun Leach-Jones. Currently, he is co-director of Better Read Than Dead, a large independent bookstore in Sydney's vibrant multicultural neighbourhood of Newtown.

Patrick sees himself as a member of Australia's "art family" and his engagement with the art world reflects this sense of intimacy and duty. In addition to major donations to state public institutions, Patrick has donated more than one thousand works of art to more than forty-five regional galleries, cultural institutions and charitable organizations. In 2000 his philanthropy was acknowledged nationally with the award of an Order of Australia Medal for his services to the visual arts, and ▶

THE PATRICK CORRIGAN COLLECTION

Patrick Corrigan AM has amassed his exceptional collection over a lifetime, and in recent years has focused on contemporary Indigenous art and photography.

by JANE RAFFAN



En route from his birthplace, China, to safe haven in Australia during World War II, Patrick Corrigan and his mother were waylaid by the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong and spent four years in the Stanley Internment Camp during the subsequent occupation. Patrick's precious collection of lead soldiers was lost in the fray, and for a time, collecting gave way to other pursuits: "The movie *Empire of the Sun* almost duplicates my life in the camp. I was the same age as the boy... and we did

things that you see in the film... we used to go under the barbed wire and steal vegetables from the Japanese vegetable garden and come back... it's amazing, it's like watching yourself."

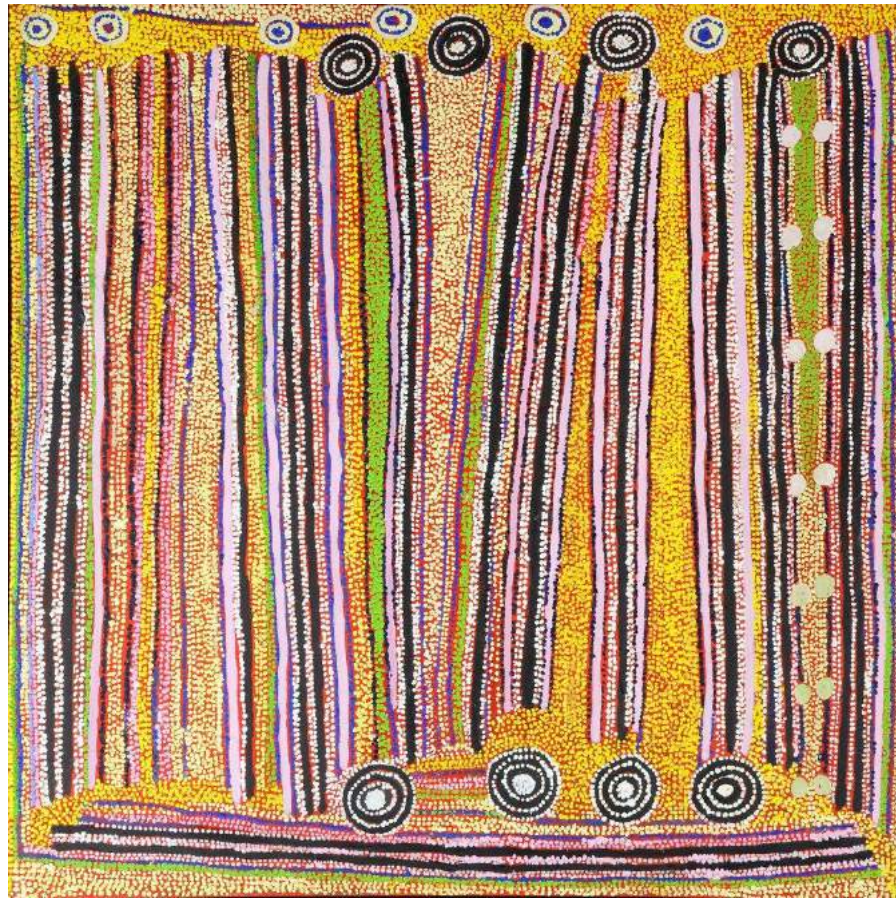
Back in Sydney following his release in 1945, the teenage Patrick became hooked on jazz: "There was a blackout on news, so I had not heard music for years... the next thing I knew, I had a collection of 78s. I ended up with 7,000 of them."



Above (left):
Inveterate collector,
jazz enthusiast and philanthropist,
Patrick Corrigan AM.
Photo: AGNSW by Jeremy Park

(right):
Paddy Japaljarri Sims
Witi Jukurpa (Ceremonial
Pole Dancing) 2006
Synthetic polymer paint on linen
122 x 122cm
Courtesy of the estate of the
artist and Warlukurlangu Artists
Aboriginal Corporation, Yuendumu

Opposite:
Nyuju Stumpy Brown
Ngupawarlu 2006
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
125 x 84cm
© Stumpy Nyuju Brown/Licensed
by Viscopy, 2016



in 2014, the Queensland Government conferred the award of Queensland Great upon Patrick for playing “a significant role in the history and development of Queensland”.

Patrick credits jazz with galvanizing his love of the arts. And like his love of jazz, which he defines as “music you must be able to tap your foot to”, art must also invoke an involuntary and immediate physiological and emotional response in him: “There has to be a rapport with each work I buy; each speaks to me and means something to me, but I can’t define what that is with precision”.

During the 1990s Patrick committed to only buying works by living artists. His broad-based patronage of the arts has earned him the label of a “modern day Medici”, but his motivation is neither power nor prestige. He is happiest when assisting artists to find representation, or promoting their profiles through donations of works to public collections. In tandem he works tirelessly to support art and jazz students through various scholarships and programs.

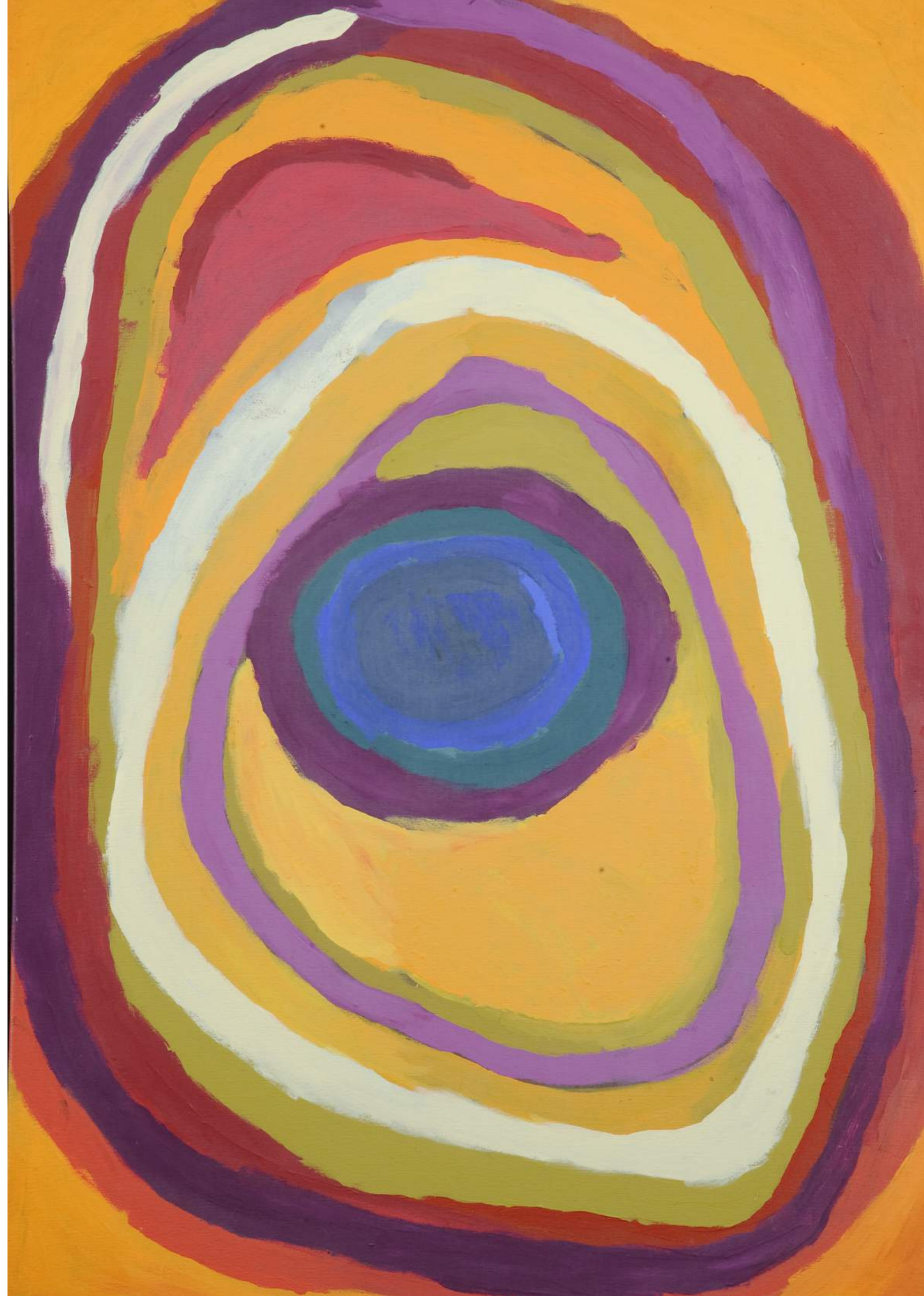
Since 2000, Patrick’s collecting pursuits have concentrated on contemporary Indigenous and non-Indigenous art and photography. It is not surprising that his passion finally

embraced Indigenous art, arguably the most mesmerizing of all contemporary art. Unlike other notable collectors of Indigenous art, however, his focus on contemporary Indigenous works executed after 2000 was, at the outset, unique, and was motivated by his “mind blowing” reaction to the National Gallery of Victoria’s 2004 landmark exhibition *Colour Power: Aboriginal Art Post 1984*.

And so began a new wave of collecting, seeking out works with an urgent and unbridled enthusiasm. The first stage of his new collection was documented in *New Beginnings: Classic Painting from the Corrigan Collection of 21st Century Aboriginal Art* by Emily McCulloch Childs and Ross Gibson.

Patrick’s subsequent acquisitions concentrated on dynamic painting exhibiting strong colour and became the focus of a second book on the collection, *Power + Colour: New Painting from the Corrigan Collection of 21st Century Aboriginal Art* by Jane Raffan.

Power + Colour is testament to an artistic flourish in the APY/NPY Lands and other emergent remote art centres in south-western Australia, as well as inspirational individual talents from other regions, such as Bentinck Island artist Sally Gabori from ▶



INDIGENOUS ART

Below:
Maringka Baker
Pukara 2010
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
120 x 200cm
© Maringka Baker/Licensed
by Viscopy, 2016

the Gulf of Carpentaria (QLD), whose works are the subject of the most recent book on his collection by Djon Mundine and Candida Baker, titled *Gabori: The Corrigan Collection of Paintings by Sally Gabori*. Asked why one collects, art historian Kenneth Clark once quipped: "it's like asking why we fall in love, the reasons are so various". The manner in which collectors choose to profile their collections is as diverse. Around the world there is a growing trend of private museums being built by high-profile art collectors. Others choose to occasionally open their homes to the public. Patrick, however, wants to share the enjoyment he derives from his works and make them accessible to as many people as possible.

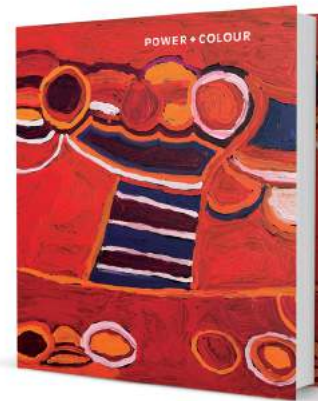
At any given time, he has works on loan to public exhibitions around the country and he currently has more than 650 works on long-term loan to multiple public institutions and universities in Queensland and New South Wales. There have been eight public exhibitions dedicated to donations from his collections, the most recent being *Gifted Artists: Donations by Patrick Corrigan AM*, National Gallery of Australia, ACT (2014/2015). Patrick's donations to Bond University's Medical School are being publicly showcased in The Corrigan Walk, an on-campus guided tour of a selection of the donations and 400-strong works in the loan collection, led by Indigenous students. Collecting has been called an obsession

and Patrick has bought works by artists and sold them to friends for the same price, just to spread the word. He applies the same approach to his philanthropic efforts, encouraging other collectors and artists to donate to Bond University and the Gold Coast City Gallery, where he is Emeritus Chairman, for which he has received several honours, including the bestowal of the title Life Benefactor by the Gold Coast City Council. This is all a far cry from the title of "Successful Beggar" imprinted on his early business cards as a droll statement about his efforts garnering philanthropic support from friends and business associates.

Unlike many collectors, Patrick doesn't fixate on storage and maintenance and doesn't obsess about details, never knowing exactly how many works he owns at a given time, and never worrying about where he might hang the next acquisition. And what might that be?

"I like to fly by the seat of my pants," is the quick response. Patrick Corrigan can't be pigeonholed as a collector, and he won't ever stop. And for this, the future landscape of Australia's artistic cultural heritage will be a better place. ●

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Sacred Stories Boldly Painted

Power + Colour: New Painting from the Corrigan Collection of 21st Century Aboriginal Art takes as its main theme two elements vital to indigenous art: tribal law and the continually stunning and inventive use of colour to depict country and culture. The book showcases 129 works by 77 artists from more than 20 communities, along with an introduction to the paintings and catalogue-style notes for each work.

There are many familiar names – Judy Napangardi Watson, Yannima Tommy Watson and Lucy Napanangka Yukenbarri, to name three. Younger artists include Eileen Napaltjarri, Lance Peck, Keith Stevens, Sylvia Ken and Tjungkara Ken.

What is interesting about these artists is that even though they might not seem on the surface to be depicting journeys across country, if the paintings are read correctly, then the ongoing connection to land becomes apparent, as does the connection to tribal law, which is often present even in the most decorative of their paintings.

Nothing in the collection is pre-2000, making *Power + Colour* an up-to-date picture of the variety of dynamic styles and unbridled colour that dominates Indigenous art today.

Candida Baker,
Sydney Morning Herald 2013

Submit the ArtLife crossword solution for a chance to win a copy of *Power + Colour* (RRP \$120).

See pg 45 for details.

