



Richard Bell - Aboriginal Artist from Queensland

Richard Bell has established a reputation as a political commentator and "enfant terrible" in Indigenous art over the past several years. His no-nonsense works frequently confront the viewer with image and text. He is an avid appropriator who borrows styles and motifs from other artists and periods and cultures to create powerful messages.

He has recently, in the January 2003 issue of the journal "Australian Art Collector" been ranked amongst the top 50 of Australia's "Most collectable artists". The commentator in the journal says that Richard Bell "should be seen together with Gordon Bennett and Tracey Moffatt (also from Queensland) as representing Australian black urban art at its most intellectually astute". Another art critic and academic, Rex Butler, regards Bell as one of Australia's premier political artists.

Richard Bell himself has commented that "White culture took away my tribal language and in return gave me a language that, on the social level, doesn't work." Nevertheless, many of his paintings involve the use of words in ways which make concise and effective political statements.

Richard was born in 1953 in Charleville, south west Queensland and was a member of the Campfire group of artists based in Brisbane. He has taken part in a number of group exhibitions and his work is held in major public galleries including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Galleries of NSW, Victoria and of Queensland.

He was the winner of the first prize in the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award for 2003 for a large work in polymer on canvas.

