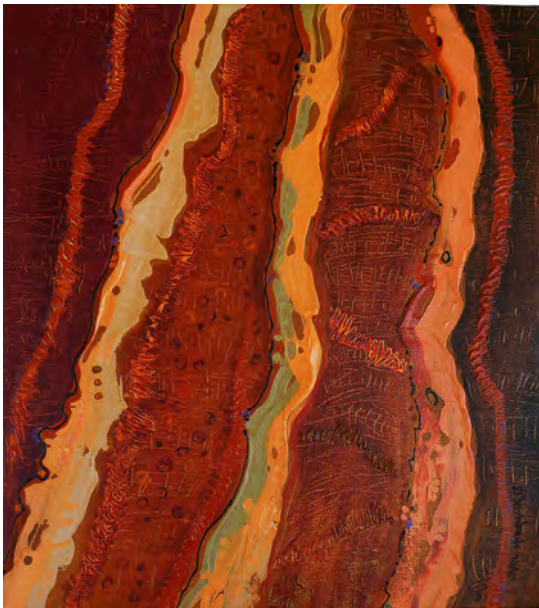


## ARTIST STATEMENT Carol McCormack 2014

Many thanks to ROB for providing this opportunity to exhibit the collection of paintings I've titled 'Connecting with Country' and simultaneously launch the book 'Collection-Connection', a recently published collaboration between myself and writer Jock Douglas.

I am a landscape artist, and have lived most of my life in rural western Queensland. Over the last few years I've made annual trips to remote parts of Australia with my husband, now semi-retired from the land. We both love to travel outback, and I love to paint. Initially this meant setting up the easel wherever we stopped and getting into as much painting as possible before we moved on. I still do that to an extent, but more and more I paint *as we travel*. After much experimenting I've fine-tuned this process, and find it more and more rewarding to use what I see as we drive as subject matter, rather than trying to seek out a particular picturesque camping spot. It's a very satisfying way of working which brings me even closer to the feel of the country and enforces a more relaxed and abstract approach to my work. It is impossible to fuss over detail as the information is ever-changing and the movement of the vehicle over rough roads would cause endless frustration if that were the goal. Instead I concentrate on overall rhythm, unity and colour, and allow the bumps and jolts to create serendipitous effects.

This way of working means I end up with two distinct ways of painting, the stationary which is generally more of a scene in the accepted sense, and the works-in-motion showing more abstract results. I live with this dichotomy in my work, and my current aim is to gradually integrate the two, while allowing the landscape itself to dictate the marks I make.



Left- Desert Dunes, painted on the move. Right- Cawnpore Mesa, in situ

And then there is the issue of style- I just found something on the internet that says it all for me: 'An artist's style is not good or bad. It just IS.+Mine varies with the type of materials I use, and as outlined above, where I am while I paint. I haven't painted in a different country, but no doubt this would demand a different approach again

I have been painting in remote parts of Australia for many years and was one of the first artists to visit Purnululu in 1986. This had a profound effect on my way of seeing our Australian landscape and I have been attempting to align what I see and what I feel in various ways ever since.

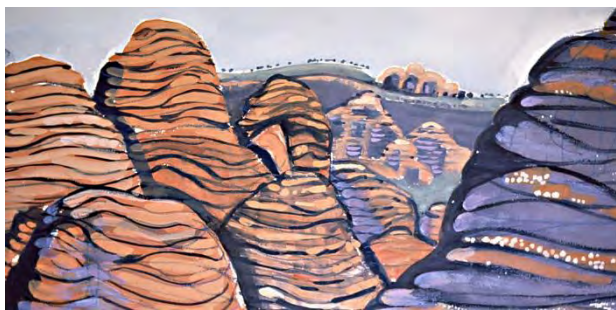
I have been asked if I have permission to appropriate the dot style painting of Central Australia. Copying someone else's style has never been my intention, but I can understand how someone could think it was, so I'd like to analyse the development of the way I paint.

I have discussed the subject with artists and art dealers both aboriginal and non-aboriginal - all have confirmed my opinion that an artist has the right to choose or develop style as they see fit. Many Aboriginals paint in western style. Dot painting is one of their distinctive styles developed fairly recently, and art history tells us that European artists developed dot painting or pointillism to a high degree at the end of the 1800s. Many of the artists in Kimberley communities such as Mangkaja at Fitzroy Crossing have developed their own vibrant modern style of painting reminiscent of last century's modernism. style is up for grabs really.

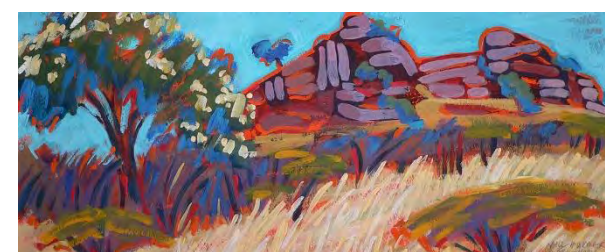
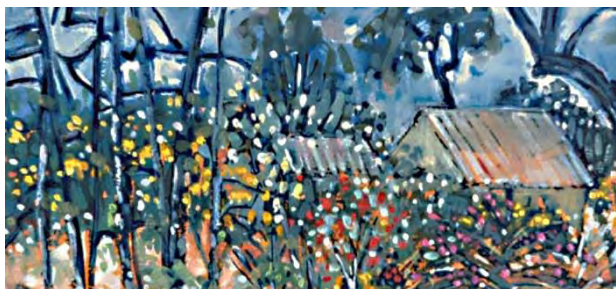
As a landscape artist I interpret what I see, I don't pretend to be something I am not. Often my purpose in using a pattern of dots and/or lines is as a reference and to show respect to traditional ownership. If I wanted to use traditional stories or subject matter, then permission would definitely be needed.

The images on this page span 3 decades and show a progression in my style of translating the landscape into painted form.

The last two images were painted on rough roads in the Western deserts between the Pilbara and Alice Springs, Aboriginal lands where we had obtained a permit to travel. The subject on the left was our movement over the endless sand dunes, and on the right, flowering plants on the network of desert dunes. This painting has been purchased by someone who had also travelled these roads and said she felt she knew exactly where they had been painted. A photographer, not an artist, she said she had actually been moved to try to paint something along the same lines, I encouraged her to keep going! If she does, who knows where that will lead...



1986



2006



2011



2014