

A Superstar Dreaming:
An economic analysis of the Aboriginal Desert Paintings Market

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Abstract

Two artists each have total auction sales greater than AU\$10 million in a single decade. In that same market and decade, over 20% of painters failed to sell a single painting offered at auction. There is no question that superstars dominate the Aboriginal Desert Paintings Market (ADPM) in Australia. But what contributes to the emergence of stars and superstars in this market? A gap has been left in the literature explaining superstardom; no mechanism for the emergence of stars in the visual arts has been offered. This study presents specific empirical characteristics and structural features of the ADPM which generate constraints and incentives for dealers and auction houses. The expected responsive behavior of these players is mostly confirmed by evidence presented in this study. The general picture that emerges is of a three-way tacit agreement by dealers (with government support), buyers and auction houses in promoting early success, reinforcing demonstrated market appeal by the few, and helping accelerate the shift of stars and the few real superstars from the primary to the auction market.

I. Introduction

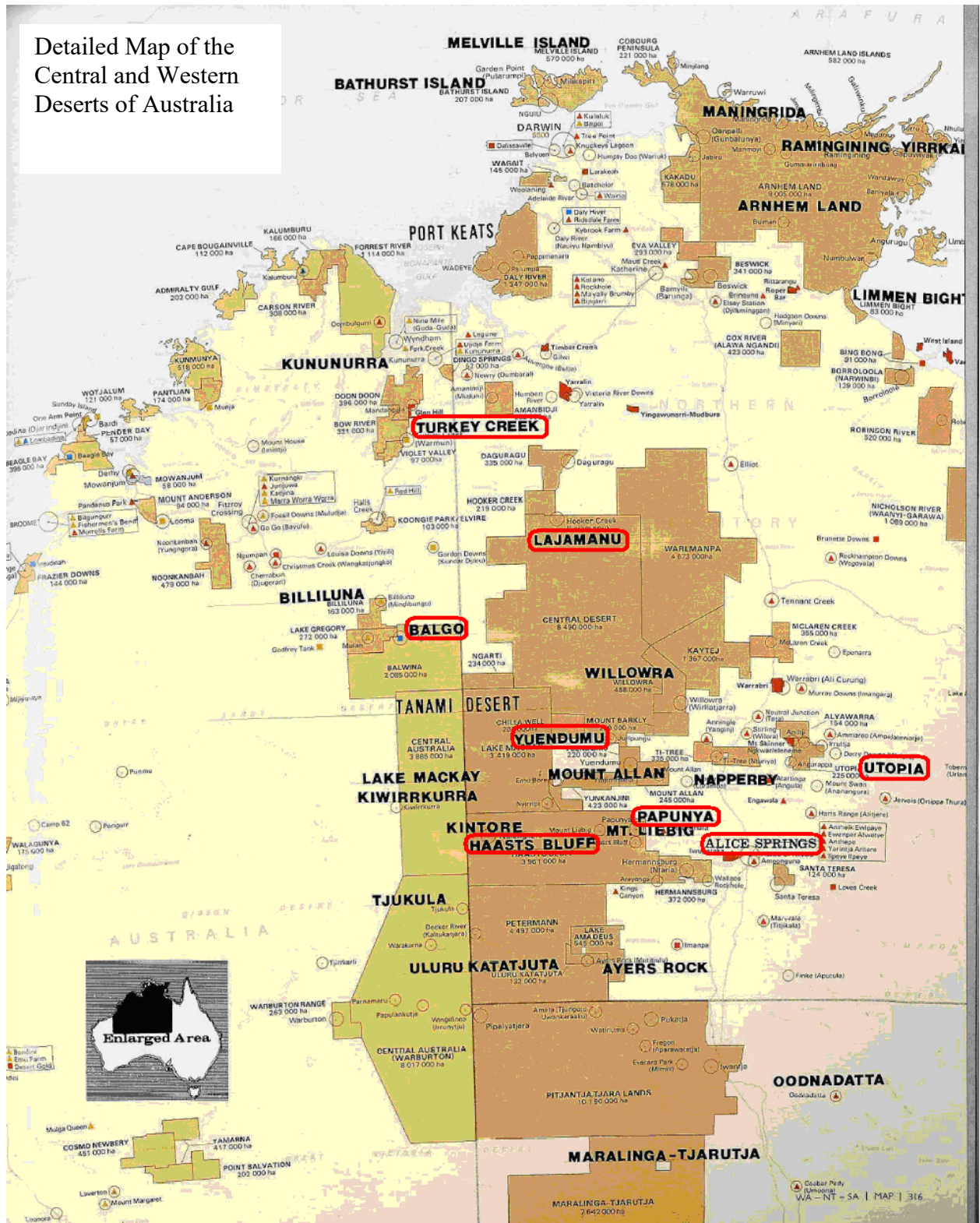
Superstars are no new or isolated phenomenon: few producers in a given industry dominating their market and earning extremely high incomes characterizes sports, the popular and classical music markets, and the film industry. What Michael Jordan did in professional basketball and what Luciano Pavarotti has done as an opera singer may differ, but the results are the same—superstardom. So what is it that makes them superstars? Why do some people earn significantly more than others? If the competitive model were to hold, then the producers should be compensated just for their marginal productivity. But are they? As Schulze (2003) wonders, is the talent of Britney Spears so different from that of an average local musician as to warrant the huge difference of incomes? If not, then the superstar phenomenon must depend on more than the simple competitive model.

One particular market which exhibits superstardom is the Australian Aboriginal Paintings Market. Paintings are a subset within the overall Aboriginal Arts and Crafts industry, and within that subset my focus is on artists in the Central and Western Deserts of Australia—see map—who share their Dreaming¹ stories in painting, mostly acrylics on canvas. Call this submarket the Aboriginal Desert Paintings Market (ADPM). We can measure superstardom in the ADPM by examining auction sales². Around 6,000 to 7,000 Aborigines are involved in artistic production (McCulloch, McCulloch, & McCulloch, 2006), but 52% of total auction sales by Aboriginal artists in the past decade has come from works

¹ A gross definition of a Dreaming would be a specific story of the ancestral beings. The Aboriginal paintings are not abstract, they are “from the Dreaming,” and all Dreamings are about the formation of the land and its inhabitants (Myers, 2002, p. 3). They have significant meaning to Aboriginal people.

² It would be useful to also measure superstardom by looking at the incomes earned by Aboriginal artists and the prices their paintings sell for in the primary market; unfortunately, that information is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain.

Detailed Map of the Central and Western Deserts of Australia



Note. Map from Nangara. *The Australian aboriginal art exhibitions from the Ebes collection*. Melbourne: The Aboriginal Gallery of Dreamings, p. 49. Emphasis added by author.

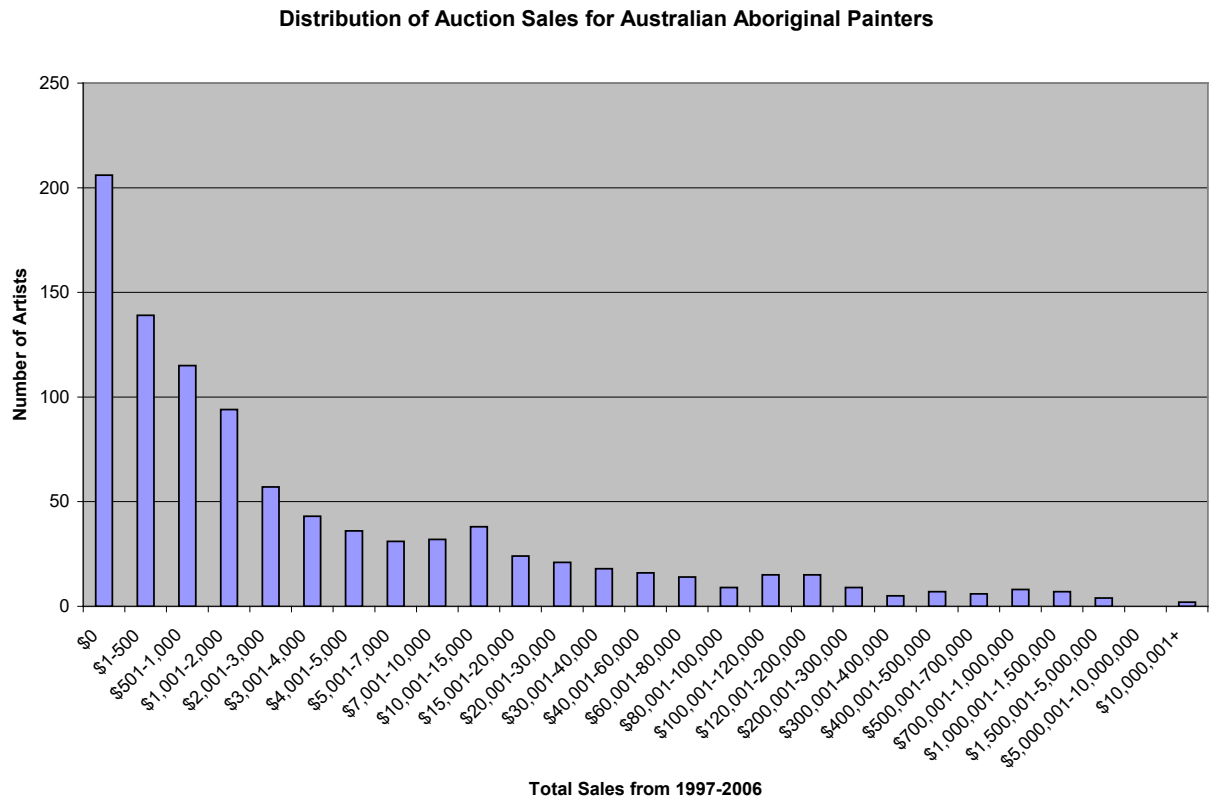
by only 17 artists³.

My set of artists comprises those with some auction record. Prices realized at auction confirm demand for an artist's works. Auction houses selling Aboriginal Desert paintings often introduce newcomers, at the low end. They also actively seek works by established artists, most of which appear to be re-sales. This means that they blur the usual distinction between primary and secondary markets for paintings, but the blurring does not alter the fact that the inclusion of artists in the mid-range and upwards in an auction is a confirmation of their established status. I have identified 966 desert artists who had sales at auction in the last decade. As Figure 1 shows, most sold very little, while just a few artists had sales greater than AU\$1 million. In other words, the ADPM is marked by the presence of stars, and among the stars a small number of artists far outsell their peers. These are the superstars. But superstars first reach star status, and my intent is in grasping how stars and superstars emerge.

What is it about the Aboriginal market that enables a handful of artists to enjoy great financial success while the vast number of other artists struggle to sell much at all? Between 1997 and 2006, over 200 painters whose works were offered at auction failed to sell a single work (Figure 1). At the other extreme, the works of a single painter sold for more than 10 million Australian dollars. That painter happened to be Rover Thomas, who worked for most of his career in Turkey Creek and died in 1998. What is behind his phenomenal success? Was he simply more talented than the others? Or is there something else at work? I cannot address the talent question, because there is no agreement of an aesthetic of quality in Aboriginal paintings. Nor can we know buyer preferences except by what they buy.

³ Data concerning superstardom in the ADPM is from original research by the author using the Australian Art Sales Digest and is explained further in Section III.

Figure 1



Note. Data from Australian Art Sales Digest.

On the second question, however, I assume that the something else is promotion. By analyzing the primary and auction markets for paintings by Australian Aboriginal artists I seek to uncover the features of the market relating to the promotion of artists such as Thomas and will look for evidence of the role of auction houses confirming successes such as his. Auction sales, to repeat, will be my measure of success.

My analysis is in a fairly new research subfield known as the economics of superstardom. First established by Sherwin Rosen in his 1981 paper “The Economics of Superstars,” the subfield sets out to explain the pronounced earnings skew one finds in industries with superstars, in particular the arts, where the contrasting images of the starving

artist and the star are prominent. Figure 1 shows this skew for the ADPM. The theory suggested by Rosen (1981) makes small differences in talent result in large differences in success. Central here is the diminution of fixed costs with scale, and the imperfect substitutability of products. Reproduction technologies allow for additional output at low marginal cost.

MacDonald (1988) extended Rosen's model to demonstrate the process of superstar emergence: a history of good performances signals greater talent, which in turn causes even greater success. But Adler (1985) suggests that differences in success could emerge even among artists of equal talent. This is possible because knowledge is important for enjoying art. To gain knowledge, consumers of art expose themselves to specific art objects and discuss the objects with others. Discussion is only beneficial if consumers know the same artist—but there's the rub, for it is costly to learn about new artists. A cost-minimizing consumer will thus choose a popular artist over an unknown artist of similar perceived talent, because he is more likely to find others knowledgeable about that artist also wishing to converse. In this model, the more popular artist may initially be popular only as a result of pure luck. Adler (1985) shows how an initial advantage of slight popularity can snowball into superstardom as more and more consumers continue to choose the already popular artist.

As Adler suggests more recently (2006), some forces besides talent and luck might underlie the superstar phenomenon. Artists and other art market players whose incomes depend on the artist's success (e.g., agents, gallery owners, and dealers) would not usually allow chance to determine the initial choice by consumers. Signaling of popularity is done mostly by publicity, but Adler hints at using manipulation to signal a history of success. In an illustrative account he offers, an author buys copies of his own book in order to break onto

the bestseller list, which signals popular opinion and fosters further success. Art dealers, we should note, often do something similar to help create a record of rising prices for artists they represent.

The explanations of superstar theories such as those of Rosen, MacDonald and Adler, are presented as if they apply to all art markets, including markets for visual arts. But the explanations are based on assumptions that, although perhaps reasonable in the case of performing arts, are not fully applicable to the visual arts, much less paintings. A major reason for this is the relative uniqueness of original paintings. A similar situation applies in the case of empirical studies of superstar theories: while there have been a number of empirical analyses of superstardom in the performing arts, there have been none, to my knowledge, of superstardom in the visual arts, and none of paintings in particular.⁴ This paper intends to contribute to filling that gap. I analyze the phenomenon of stardom and superstardom in the market for Australian Aboriginal Desert Paintings. As my paper shows, a combination of specific characteristics of this market, such as its small size, the extraordinary costs of access to paintings, and involvement by the government in promoting Aboriginal art, make possible an accelerated emergence of stars in this market, the reinforcement of that status once attained, and, in some cases, elevation to superstardom. A definition of superstars for my market will be given in Section III. As dealers, buyers, and auction houses respond to the specific features of the ADPM, their behavior reinforces early success and accelerates the move from primary market to auction market.

The paper is divided as follows. Section II presents the literature analyzing the economics of superstars. Section III specifies distinguishing characteristics of the ADPM.

⁴ The empirical studies have centered themselves around two main theories. A few studies present data which seem to oppose the Rosen model of talent magnification (Hamlen, 1991, 1994), while another claims to support the Adler model (Chung and Cox, 1994). For more, see Section II.

Section IV discusses key structural features of the ADPM and the expected dealer, buyer and auction house responses to these features which contribute to what appears to be a unique channel to superstardom in the ADPM. Section V describes exhibition list data which demonstrate the patterns of promotion for individual Aboriginal Desert artists. Section VI analyzes the findings which confirm most of the anticipated actions by dealers, buyers and auction houses to accelerate and reinforce the success of top artists. Section VII introduces a control group of Aboriginal artists who began as equals, but among whom differences quickly emerged. I conclude my paper in Section VIII with a summary and a few suggestions for further superstar research in my market.

II. Superstar Literature Review

The economics of superstars is a relatively new and small field of study which aims to explain phenomenal success by some producers in their given industries. Several theoretical models have been developed to describe the reasons why superstars exist; but only a few have utilized empirical data to test these models and none has applied the underlying theories to the visual arts.

Rosen (1981) broke open this subject by giving structure to the phenomenon that small numbers of individuals dominate many fields. The skewed nature of rewards in these fields, he suggested, reflects the distribution of talent. Superior talent enables some to charge more for their services, moreover, talent is very imperfectly substitutable, so in some cases the best earn increasingly more than the next best. The latter element is due to production technologies: they enable a superstar to sell to a large population at low marginal costs. In large concert halls, for example, fixed costs are given whether 1,000 or 10,000 tickets are

sold, and reproduction technologies such as CDs tend to magnify the earnings differences stemming from small differences in talent.

MacDonald (1988) provided structure for the distribution of talent within a population that Rosen's model simply assumed as given. Consumers are able to get a better idea of each artist's talent from the reviews of previous performances. Hence, if an artist has already had good performances, audiences conclude that he is more likely to have still more good performances. Audiences will not attend performances of artists who have a history of bad performances, because they take performance to signal talent. Untalented artists therefore tend to exit the market, while conversely, the proven performers are able to charge higher prices than before. Thus in equilibrium only young artists enter the market and only successful artists stay in it. Artists of equal talent are equally successful. MacDonald's model extended Rosen's model by these dynamics, and applied it to the performing arts. It appears to apply somewhat to contemporary paintings markets as well, where number of works previously sold has been shown to have a significant positive effect on prices in the New York and Amsterdam markets (Rengers & Velthuis, 2002).

The superstar model as presented by Rosen and MacDonald implies that superior talent leads to far superior earnings; but could superstars exist without any differentiation of talent? Adler (1985) developed a model in which individuals with the same level of talent can earn markedly different levels of income. Utility from art consumption depends on knowledge and common culture. Art connoisseurs develop 'consumption capital' in specific artists and increasingly enjoy these artists as their knowledge builds (Stigler and Becker, 1977). Knowledge is costly, however, and the learning process is twofold: first-hand experience and discussion with others about the art and artists. Finding people with common

artist familiarity is easiest and least costly if the artist is already popular, so it is in the consumer's interest to patronize those artists. Talent is not necessary for stardom in this case, only luck. An artist needs to be chosen early on by enough consumers to give an initial advantage which can then escalate into stardom. The Adler (1985) model adds prime mover advantage but, like Rosen's, it has not been proven empirically. Though Ginsburgh and Van Ours (2003), in a study of the Queen Elizabeth prize in piano, showed that success in the competition correlated with subsequent market success. And most importantly they found that order of appearance within the competition affected both the competition's results and the market success, demonstrating how an event (or signal!), independent of talent, could affect the earnings of pianists.

Chung and Cox (1994) found a stochastic model to be consistent with sales of popular music and follow Adler in ascribing this to an initial advantage enjoyed by some. But how is this initial advantage acquired? More recently (2006) Adler has questioned whether this could just be by luck. Assuming people prefer certainty, promotion may be important. Public appearances, newspaper coverage, or even purchase by an author of his or her own books are possible mechanisms for securing an early advantage in the publishing field (Adler, 2006). The payola system in music recordings is a further, infamous route. And dealers in the primary market for paintings are known to buy at auction the paintings of artists they represent and prevent unwanted price declines.

Empirical studies of superstar theories have focused on sports and the performing arts. Sports statistics offer more quantifiable and commonly recognized measures of talent than the arts, making it simpler to find empirical evidence testing superstardom, but that has not stopped all empirical testing in the arts. In spite of the difficulty of finding an objective

measure of talent, Hamlen (1991, 1994) searched for evidence of a superstar effect in the American record industry. In a 1991 paper he utilized the harmonic content of a singer's voice as the objective measure of talent and presented opposing evidence to Rosen's supposition that small differences in talent may magnify earnings differences. In a further paper in 1994, Hamlen found that success in the singles market serves as an indicator of quality and contributes to success in the albums market. This signaling gives substance to the information accumulation idea of MacDonald (1988).

Chung and Cox (1994) also claimed to have found evidence in popular music sales inconsistent with the Rosen model. They suggested, instead, that a stochastic process characterizes the record-buying behavior of consumers, so that an initial advantage—whether talent related or not— may snowball into huge success. Schulze (2003) instead argued that neither of these empirical studies provided conclusive evidence: Hamlen (1991) suffers from omitted variable bias⁵ and Chung and Cox (1994) present coincidental results that could actually be consistent with Rosen's stress on talent.

Finally, in a study of opera singers, Towse (1992) explained skewed distributions of earnings among them by relating these to search costs and the signaling properties of the performance fee. Search costs faced by opera houses are high, but choosing star singers helps keep them in check by reducing the need for auditions and the risk of a bad performance. On the supply side, the performance fee which the singer demands helps establish the singer's rank. Comparing her account with those superstar explanations emphasizing costs of information (Adler and MacDonald), Towse suggests that "perhaps all

⁵ Schulze (2003) is not convinced that the relevant measure of quality for non-classical singers is the harmonic content of voice used by Hamlen. Other important success factors for rock stars that are ignored and subjective are charm, sex appeal, and lyrics.

are right in their own way because in fact each protagonist deals with a slightly different problem” (Towse, 1992, p. 215).

Despite the importance of the visual arts, they have received virtually no attention in the superstar literature and painters in particular have been ignored. Of the available theories, not all pertain to the market for paintings. For instance, the reproduction technologies employed by Rosen (1981) to account for the magnification of small differences in talent clearly does not apply to original paintings. However, other theories do. The buyer consensus which snowballs in Adler (1985) to create success applies quite generally, and by implication also to Aboriginal Desert Paintings, though I will not pursue that aspect. On the other hand, the impact that search costs make by enticing opera houses to choose the stars (Towse, 1992) is closely related to the ADPM in that dealers, as will be clarified later, also face sizable access costs. For the rest, the literature has little to offer and I will focus on features of the Aboriginal market that make it unique and suggest a new mechanism governing the path to superstardom, delineated here for the first time.

III. Empirical Characterization of ADPM

Given the difficulty of measuring talent and the unusual nature of the Australian Aboriginal Desert Paintings Market (ADPM), I will not follow a “model first” approach. Instead, I will identify key structural features of the ADPM which contribute to a skewed earnings distribution by suggesting how those features influence the behavior of players in this market. Before I get to these features, however, I offer some parallel statistics for the Australian non-Indigenous Contemporary Paintings Market (ACPM) to place the size, skew and stability of the ADPM earnings distribution in perspective.

1. The ADPM is a small market. As noted earlier, I define this market as acrylic paintings by Aboriginal artists from the Western and Central Deserts of Australia, a definition narrower than all Aboriginal art but distinctive in ways important to my purposes. The ACPM is quite broadly defined as those non-Indigenous Australian artists who were still living in the 1990s, thus including many of Australia's best-known modern painters. There are no data on sales in the primary component of either market. However, using data from the Australian Art Sales Digest, an up-to-date, extensive online database of Australian auction records, and data made available by Meaghan Wilson-Anastasios, a student of the ACPM, the secondary markets for these two distinct groups of Australian artists can be compared. Data comparing the size of these two markets can be seen in Table 1. Though sales have increased every year in the ADPM, the total value of auction sales by all Aboriginal artists (not just those in the ADPM) from 1997 to 2006 is only 11% of total auction sales in both markets combined⁶.

Line 1 of Table 1 shows that non-Indigenous Australian artists have offered 9.74 times more works at auction since the 1970s than artists in the ADPM. The data I compiled from the Australian Art Sales Digest include sales from 2005 and 2006, but the numbers for the ACPM cover only the years through 2004. If the data for the ACPM were available for the two most recent years, the difference in size would be multiplied, revealing an even tinier auction market for Aboriginal Desert Paintings.

2. Not only is the market for Aboriginal paintings small, but it is greatly skewed. As Figure 1 demonstrated, the number of artists who have significant auction sales is low.

⁶ Data from Australian Art Sales Digest. Total sales of all Australian markets include Aboriginal artists, non-Indigenous artists and overseas artists whose works are sold at auction in Australia.

Table 1*Comparative Statistics for Australian Paintings Markets*

	ADPM ^a	ACPM
Total Works Offered ^b	9,572	94,512
No. of Artists	966	2,788
No. of Works by Top 17 artists	2,742	23,333
No. of Works per Artist	9.91	33.90
No. of Works by Top 17 (avg.)	161.29	1372.53
No. of Works by Others (avg.)	7.19	25.69

Note. Data for ADPM compiled by author from Australian Art Sales Digest online database. Data for ACPM from Meaghan Wilson-Anastasios, personal communication

^a ADPM includes the set of artists as described in Section I

^b ADPM includes works from the 1970s to 2006, ACPM data through 2004

In fact, the concentration of sales at the high end is almost twice that of the ACPM. Sales by value are not shown in Table 1, but the Top 17 Aboriginal artists account for 52% of total auction sales by value from 1997 to 2006, while the Top 17 non-Indigenous artists only account for 29% of sales in their respective market from 1988 to 2004⁷. That the ADPM is more strongly skewed than the ACPM can be seen also in the fact that 25% of sales by value are for works by only two artists, each of whom had greater than \$10 million in auction sales. These are the true superstars. The next most successful artist had only \$3 million in auction sales. It seems reasonable to call the group immediately below the two superstars ‘stars’: so artists with sales between \$500,000 and \$10 million will count for me as stars in the ADPM. These 24 artists account for 2.5% of my set of 966.

The top artists in the ACPM were selected according to both economic and biographical characteristics. The several criteria for this distinction include number of works offered at auction (>300), average value of sales in primary medium (>AU\$10,000), length of time present in the auction market (auction record >25 years to 2004), and also some

⁷ Total auction sales, by value, include all Aboriginal art. Thus the Top 17 artists in the ADPM account for an even greater percentage, 66%, if only total sales by the 966 artists with auction records in the ADPM were used.

biographical highlights, such as a major retrospective at a public gallery (M. Wilson-Anastasios, personal communication, April 5, 2007). Only 17 artists met all of these criteria. I have also separated out the top-selling 17 Aboriginal Desert artists to match the ADPM with the ACPM. This gives us two superstars and 15 stars. Biographical information of these 17 Aboriginal Desert painters can be found in Appendix 1.

My database of 966 Aboriginal Desert painters shows that these painters have offered 9,572 works at auction since the 1970s. The Top 17 Aboriginal artists account for 29% by volume of works offered at auction. The value-volume difference in the ADPM means that the average price fetched by top artists at auction is much greater than the prices of works by other Aboriginal painters. This average price difference is not as large in the ACPM, where the Top 17 account for 25% of total sales by volume and 29% by value.

3. The ADPM is not only smaller and more concentrated at the top than the ACPM, but the star artists have had more staying power. The same 17 Aboriginal artists have consistently had a large share of the market (between 46% and 62% of annual total auction turnover, 1997-2006). In the ACPM, the market share of the Top 17 painters has dropped off somewhat in more recent years (M. Wilson-Anastasios, personal communication, March 24, 2007). Even as new artists have entered both markets, the top Aboriginal artists have maintained their status, which is less true of the top non-Indigenous artists. The reinforcement which has helped contribute to the stability of the superstar Aboriginals arises, I suggest, from the structural features of this market, to be addressed next.

IV. Structural Peculiarities of the ADPM and Expected Dealer and Auction House Behavior

The ADPM has features that encourage dealers, buyers, and auction houses to conduct their business in certain ways. In other words, given the structural peculiarities of the ADPM, we can expect the principal players in the market to exhibit particular behaviors. In what follows, I will label those simply as *expectations*. The expectations in my analysis embody the roles that the principal players have in what appears to be a unique path to superstardom in the ADPM.

Unusual importance of dealers in the ADPM

Aboriginal artists live and produce their paintings in remote desert settlements and outstations, so potential buyers are thousands of kilometers away, in the major cities along the coast of Australia and even overseas (Altman, 1988). From Sydney to Alice Springs, the major art centre in the Central Desert, a direct flight takes about 3 hours and 15 minutes over a distance of 2,002 km, or 1,244 miles. An equivalent trip in the United States would take you west from Washington DC 1,176 miles (1,893 km) to Dallas, TX. As seen on the map in Section I, from Alice Springs one could then drive any distance up to 250 km more to reach the Central Desert settlements of Papunya, Yuendumu or Utopia, to name three of the more important. Thus some market player is needed to find paintings and bring them to the buyers.

In the early development of a market for Aboriginal paintings, the Australian government stood in for dealers. It both supported community arts centres and bought the paintings produced, though efforts were made to sell them through a marketing company. The Office of Aboriginal Affairs established Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty. Ltd. in 1971 to wholesale and retail Aboriginal art and artifacts in Sydney. This intervention declined in the

mid-80s as the growing popularity of Aboriginal art attracted private sector retailers (Altman, 1988). Since about 1988 private dealers have increasingly undertaken the job of marketing and promoting Aboriginal art. A complementary secondary (auction) market dates from 1991.

Unusual costs borne by dealers

Private dealers in the ADPM incur the normal costs of running a gallery—renting space, paying staff, mounting exhibitions, printing catalogues, hosting receptions, etc.—but must also face additional risks and costs particular to this market.

They encounter additional costs when trying to obtain paintings. The remote location of the artists also imposes high travel costs on dealers. Dealers must obtain permits to enter the Aboriginal tribal lands, drive or fly to the production centres, and book accommodation for their stays. Once in the desert, dealers must still travel between the many isolated settlements to find quality works (Altman, 1988), and that over unpaved roads and in desert weather conditions. After paintings are purchased, the dealers must pay for shipping them back to the gallery. In the case of art galleries in other markets, artists often take their paintings to the dealer and sometimes even cover part of exhibition costs themselves. Thus, the time, travel expenses and shipping expenses incurred by dealers in the ADPM are greater than usual. These access costs—cf. Towse’s search costs—can be reduced by dealers accepting works by artists who have already been chosen, either by the arts coordinator at a production centre, or by previous dealers, or even by buyers who have purchased their works at distribution centres such as Alice Springs or even at auction. So, one would *expect to see the same artists being exhibited by dealers, as the artists reveal themselves to be desired* (expectation (1)).

Relational costs are also involved when dealers strive to gain access to paintings. Whether building a relationship with the arts centre coordinator of a remote community or with individual artists, dealers must spend a great amount of time in the process, and on a sustained basis. The arts centre coordinators, or art advisors, are employed to collect works and act as agents for the artists (Altman, 1988). They decide who may purchase works and how many. In order, then, for a dealer to obtain quality paintings on a consistent basis he or she must invest in and develop a good working relationship with these arts advisors.

Even a solid relationship with an arts coordinator or individual artist does not necessarily guarantee consistent quality supply. The Aboriginal culture is not one of accumulation⁸. An individual artist might paint to assuage an immediate need for cash, but have limited incentive to continue on a regular basis. Infrequent or irregular supply is a risk for dealers, especially if they are depending on a single artist to fill a gallery for a solo exhibition. This leads to the expectation that *dealers will spread their risk among many artists by mounting more group exhibitions than solo exhibitions* (expectation (2)).

In addition to the costs and risks faced on the production side, dealers face a thin market. The density of galleries specializing in Aboriginal art is low compared to galleries for other Australian visual artists. The *New McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art* (2006) lists 210 important private galleries but only 30 specializing in Aboriginal art, 14% of the total, much less than the 26% Aboriginal Desert artists comprise of desert artists plus non-Indigenous contemporary artists in Australia (Table 1, p. 16). These 30 specialist galleries are listed in Appendix 2. The density of galleries per capita is much less than, say, a major center such as New York. One recent survey lists 191 galleries in New York City, in a

⁸ For additional reading on Aboriginal culture and painting, see Myers, F. (2002). *Painting culture: The making of an Aboriginal high art*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

population of 8 million, whereas for both Melbourne and Sydney combined (7.5 million residents), there are only 44 art galleries (including those *not* specializing in Aboriginal paintings). (art-info, 2007)⁹ Even the auction market for the ADPM is thin. Only one international auction house is now holding specialist sales in Aboriginal art. (Christie's exited in 2006, leaving only Sotheby's among the internationals.) A handful of local auction houses deal in Aboriginal paintings, but only one of them, Lawson-Menzies, holds specialist sales.

As demonstrated earlier, the size of the market is small by volume and value of production; moreover, it is divided. A large portion of the ADPM (perhaps more than 50%) is international, while the domestic market is divided among the major cities in six different states. This thin and widespread market requires dealers to promote their artists domestically and abroad. Dealers might engineer touring exhibitions and institute online selling as part of a strategy to diminish the effects of distance, but the former in particular is a costly means of exposing the work of Aboriginal artists and one would *expect dealers to seek public and business funding for such initiatives* (expectation (3)).

Availability and effect of public funding

A notable feature of the ADPM is the ready availability of public funding for Aboriginal arts promotional efforts. It is the norm in art markets elsewhere for private galleries and dealers to fund their own promotion activities. However, the Australian government has a policy of sustaining Aboriginal culture. Though the government is no longer involved in marketing Aboriginal art directly, it remains committed to supporting paintings as an important form of cultural expression and one of the most viable

⁹ The ADPM is more similar to St. Louis, which, in the early 1990s, had a mere 8 private dealers handling high end art, out of 44 commercial art outlets serving 2.5 million people (Plattner, 1996).

employments for desert Aboriginals (Altman, 1988). Government funded art museums and art galleries hold Aboriginal art exhibitions and host art prize awards exhibitions. Federal grants, sponsorships by publicly funded museums, support from government-funded touring agencies and trade organizations, are a few of the various means through which a private gallery or dealer may secure additional financial support for touring exhibitions.

As noted, private dealers might be expected to represent already successful artists as a way to reduce their time and search costs and reduce supply-side risk. Private dealers might also be expected to mount group exhibitions that include at least some already successful artists. One would expect dealers to depend even more on successful artists in exhibitions touring internationally. Finally, public funding and business sponsorship are also more likely in the case of such exhibitions. Therefore, one would *expect both (a) more international touring exhibitions to have dual support (private dealer plus publicly funded organization), and (b) more such exhibitions to be dominated by the same few artists than is true of domestic exhibitions* (expectations (4. a and b)).

Significant costs faced by buyers

For serious collectors interested in purchasing the best of Aboriginal art the search costs, especially time loss, are extremely high. As with dealers, a major time commitment is undertaken by buyers if they decide to purchase at the point of production. Traveling to remote communities in the desert takes both time and money as well as a permit. The Central Land Council, a representative body promoting Aboriginal landowner rights, requires any non-Aboriginal person who enters Aboriginal land to have a permit. The permit system is in place to protect the privacy of Aboriginal communities, preserve Aboriginal culture and promote visitor safety. Though these permits are free, they require application and

processing time. (Central Land Council, 2005) And, if collectors are from abroad, as many are, these costs are additional to those of just reaching Australia. These high travel costs—hotels, flights, permits, and time—are similar in expense to those which dealers incur (except for the international collectors), but for a serious collector the opportunity cost of time spent searching for art would be even greater than that of a dealer whose primary business is dealing in art. For all but established collectors, moreover, there is an uncertainty cost imposed by the lack of an agreed aesthetic in the ADPM for judging “quality”. Time and exposure are needed to develop a discerning eye. And even then there is no guarantee that winners will be picked.

Faced with these costs and uncertainties one would expect serious buyers to rely on dealers who have already incurred the search and travel costs, just as opera-goers rely on opera houses to choose the best singers (Towse, 1992). Such buyers are also likely to choose already established artists (recall Adler, 1985), reinforcing expectation (1).

Auction house concurrence in emphasizing successful artists

As noted, auction houses in the ADPM deal both in primary and secondary sales; they also deal with wide ranges of quality, and serve a widespread market of buyers. Auction houses publish their in-house experts’ estimate of real market demand for each of the works offered in a forthcoming sale. Of course, it is in their interest to support already successful artists and help push them to further success and higher sales. Therefore, one would *expect to see auction house mean pre-sale estimates for star artists diverging by ever greater amounts from those of lesser artists*. (expectation (5)) That is, the absolute size of the wedge between superstars/stars and less successful artists should increase.

The structural features of the Aboriginal paintings market provide an incentive framework for a three-way tacit agreement between dealers (with government support), buyers, and auction houses favoring already successful artists. This tacit agreement is what expectations (1) – (5) reflect. These expectations do not tell us why some artists begin to attract attention while others do not. If confirmed, however, they would bolster confidence in my claim that the channel to stardom in the ADPM, once promotion begins, is somewhat unique.

V. Exhibition List Data

My empirical identification of special characteristics and structural features of the ADPM is based on general knowledge of the ADPM. Apart from this, however, I have assembled a special data set relevant to investigating the channel to success. These data relate to (1) the number, (2) type (group or solo), and (3) manner of funding of exhibitions, and (4) the rapidity of transition from primary to auction presence.

My basic source is the *Aboriginal Artists Dictionary of Biographies* (Birnberg & Kreczmanski, 2004) which includes lists of exhibitions by each artist. These are lists of ‘selected exhibitions;’ they are not complete. What does the *Dictionary* mean by ‘selected exhibitions’? The book has limited space and could have restricted the number of exhibitions to conserve that space. They could have also included every exhibition of which they were aware, but labeled these lists ‘selected,’ realizing they may not know all of the shows for every artist. The latter seems more reasonable considering the data. Some artists have as many as 50 exhibitions listed in the *Dictionary*, while others have only a few listed. If the authors were concerned about restricting lists to conserve space, they would have created a

more uniform length of entry for all artists. The range of exhibitions listed suggests that the authors attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, according to their knowledge. On this reasoning the lists included in the *Dictionary* serve as a fairly reliable source for exhibition data.

In addition to using the *Dictionary's* lists, I searched gallery websites. Many galleries have websites which include biographical information for the artists they promote, including previous exhibitions by those artists. For some artists I found extensive lists of exhibitions which more than doubled the number of shows listed in the *Dictionary*, but for others no lists could be found online. This inconsistency presents a possible weakness in my data set. However, the patterns of promotion emerging (and discussed in the following section) seem to be so strong that omissions are unlikely to invalidate the overall picture they present. The supplementary sources for exhibitions by each artist are listed in Appendix 3.

The net result of my online search was to add more exhibitions for some artists, but not for all. Nonetheless, this supplementary source generated more detail about the exhibitions than the *Dictionary* provides, making it worthwhile even at the risk of introducing some inconsistency. The expanded lists distinguish between group and solo exhibitions, which the *Dictionary* failed to do, and include several international exhibitions not included in the *Dictionary*. The same concern about comprehensiveness in the lists exists for the number of solo shows as well. The total number of solo shows may be underestimated because the primary exhibition source (the *Dictionary*) did not specify solo exhibitions. But, again, the patterns found are so striking that this seems unlikely to render them invalid.

Once the exhibition lists were gathered, I categorized each exhibition according to the following distinctions: strictly public; strictly private; public-private; and international touring vs. domestic. The first set of categories reveals the proportion of exhibitions involving some degree of government funding. The percentage of exhibitions that tour internationally adds the element of international exposure in which galleries are involved, with or without the help of public support. I determined the nature of funding for each exhibition by using information from *The New McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art* (2006) and various galleries' websites. The few exhibitions for which precise distinctions (public, private or mixed) could not be made were dropped, but these amount to a tiny fraction of the totals.

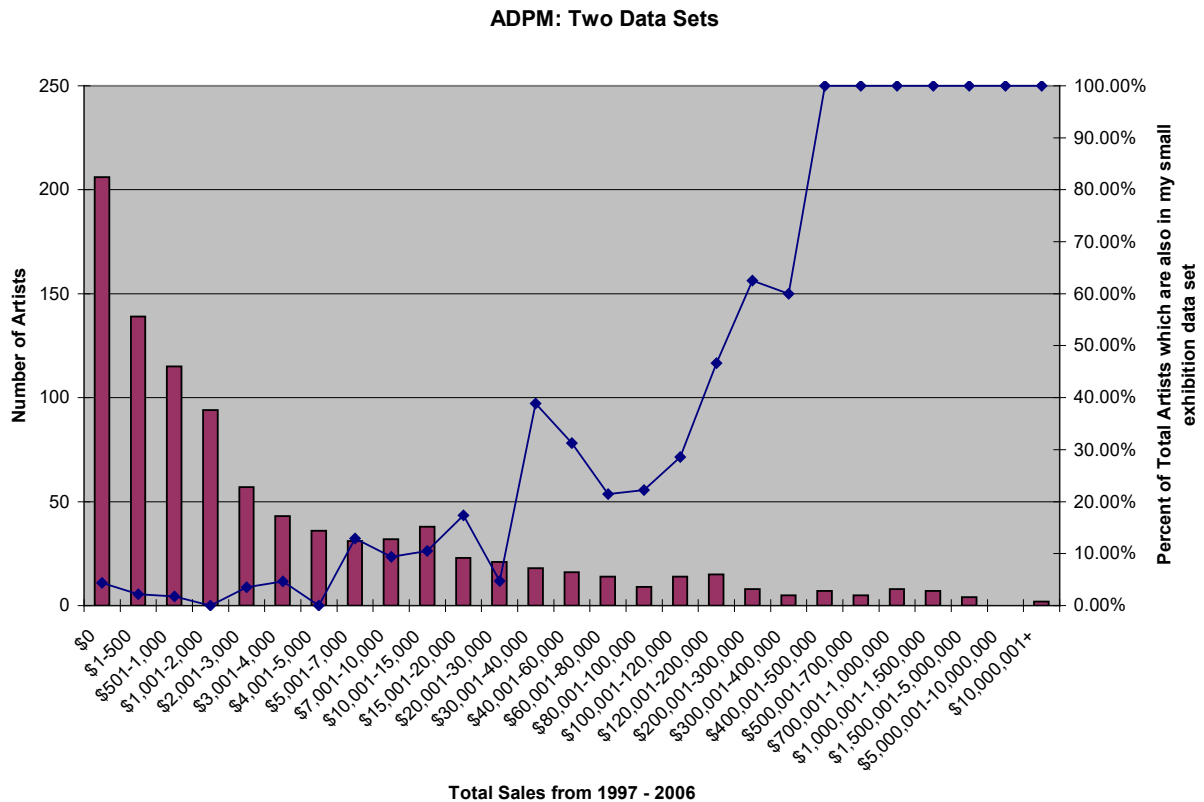
Strictly public exhibitions include solo and group shows at publicly funded museums or art galleries (e.g. the National Gallery of Australia or the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory). This category also includes exhibitions at public galleries which were held in conjunction with national Aboriginal art prizes and competitions. A strictly private exhibition is one organized and funded wholly by a private dealer or gallery owner, but also includes exhibitions which have been partially funded with business support. A Public-Private exhibition is one in which a private dealer or collector mounts an exhibition which enjoyed some form and measure of government support. These might also have business sponsorship. The forms of public support vary from a touring subsidy to collaboration with a government funded museum to an exhibition showing at an Australian embassy overseas. One example of a Public-Private exhibition is *Nangara*, an exhibition of the Hank Ebes collection which toured internationally in 1996, funded partly by his private gallery

(Aboriginal Gallery of Dreamings), and partly by Austrade (a federal government agency with an arm promoting Aboriginal and non-Indigenous paintings exports).

The database I have compiled focuses primarily on the Top 17 artists in the ADPM, ranked by sales at auction from 1997-2006, but also contains exhibition lists for 100 other Aboriginal artists. These 117 artists are comprised of 103 artists from the larger auction sales database I compiled and 14 artists who have no auction record. The starting date of their artistic careers, as measured by their first known exhibition, ranges from 1971 to 2006, with a median and mean of 1989. Eighty of these artists are still living. They represent several desert painting communities, including Papunya (29 artists), Balgo Hills (17), Utopia (14), Warmun/Turkey Creek (13), Yuendumu (11), Haasts Bluff/Ikuntj (7), Lajamanu (3) and a few others. These locations can be identified on the detailed map in Section I.

My focus in this paper on stars, superstars and auction sales success has influenced the sample of artists chosen. Each of the Top 35 artists, by auction sales, is included in the promotion analysis. Thus, the mean total sales (1997-2006) for my small sample of 117 was \$488,179 (median: \$52,475), while the mean for the entire ADPM was \$68,431 (median: \$1,175). The skew diagram of the ADPM introduced in Section I has been reproduced as Figure 2, but with one change. It now also shows the percentage of the total artists for each price range who are included in my small sample of promotion data. This is represented by the line graph overlaying the earlier bar graph, using the right hand scale. There is of course greater representation of successful artists in my promotion data set than in the overall market. More specific information about the data is given as necessary in the following section.

Figure 2



Note. Data compiled from Australian Art Sales Digest.

VI. Findings

As noted, I am no better able to distinguish between quality and promotion than previous economists writing about the superstar phenomenon, but from my data I am able to demonstrate a new channel to superstardom, one reinforced and accelerated by the unique features of the ADPM.

Several expectations emerged from the discussion in Section IV of the structural features of the ADPM. Though only some directly affect the mechanism which magnifies quality differences into superstardom, most are confirmed by the evidence.

Expectation (1), drawn from the high access costs which give dealers the incentive to expose and promote artists who have already been accepted, was that many dealers will promote the same star artists. Eight of the Top 17 Aboriginal artists have been included in exhibitions by multiple galleries specializing in Aboriginal art, and even more have been exhibited by multiple non-specialist galleries¹⁰. To give an illustration, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, the second highest ranked Aboriginal artist according to auction sales, has worked with dozens of dealers, including several primary dealers with long-term commitments to represent her such as Chris Hodges from Utopia Art (Sydney) and Gabrielle Pizzi in Melbourne (McCulloch, McCulloch, & McCulloch, 2006). Why is confirmation of expectation (1) not stronger? Possibly because dealers also need to seek out new artists simply because most of the Top 17 are now dead.

The high costs and risks to dealers also implied that they would choose to mount group exhibitions more frequently than solo exhibitions (expectation (2)). The data collected and described in Section V offers empirical evidence for a sample of Aboriginal artists which supports this expectation. Of the 3,915 known exhibitions by the 117 artists for whom I collected exhibition lists, only 6% were solo shows¹¹. An interesting feature of these data is that the percent of solo exhibitions rises to 11% for the Top 17 Aboriginal artists, suggesting that dealers are willing to incur greater costs for promoting already successful artists or do not feel the need to spread their risks in the same degree for them.

A variant for risk and other cost spreading is for specialist ADPM dealers in Australia's main cities to seek exclusive representation in their own city, yet collaborate with competing dealers across cities. This would fit with both expectation (1) and (2) as the

¹⁰ Data extracted from the exhibition lists described in Section V.

¹¹ Recall from the explanation of the data in Section V that these numbers may underestimate the number of solo shows because of the lack of solo-group distinctions in the primary source for exhibitions.

dealers would gain from the mutual promotion of stars across cities. The distance between the major cities is great enough that the markets are only partially competitive with each other—Melbourne to Sydney is 687 km, or 427 miles—so collaboration across markets is acceptable whereas exclusive representation tends to be sought in any one city.

As an expectation, my data on the Top 17 artists in the ADPM does not fully confirm this. Artists are being shown by several dealers and these dealers are sharing artists across cities and not often within a single city, but this joint promotion occurs for more than just the same few successful artists. Of the 117 Aboriginal artists in my sample, 65% have been exhibited in different cities by more than one private gallery specializing in Aboriginal art. However, 29% were exhibited by multiple galleries in the same city, suggesting that exclusive representation within a city is not fully realized. Just looking at the Top 17 artists (i.e. the same few expected artists) 47% were exhibited by multiple specialist galleries across cities and 24% by galleries within the same city. The Top 17 artists were exhibited, on average, by 1.7 galleries specializing in Aboriginal art, whereas the remaining 100 artists were shown in exhibitions by 3.0 private specialist galleries, on average.

Rather than the top artists being shown by *more* specialist galleries than lesser artists, they were actually shown by fewer on average. One possible explanation for the overall modest gallery exposure for the top artists is that 9 of the Top 17 artists were among the first painters in this market, all from the original group which began painting in Papunya, west of Alice Springs (see map). Thus, the majority of them were exposed through general exhibitions where basic exposure was a large part of the intent. One such touring exhibition was the major *Dreamings* exhibition by the Asia Society in New York City in 1988 which exposed American audiences to contemporary Aboriginal art for the first time. These

original artists were exposed and promoted before dealers became at all prominent in the market. This leads us to the impact of public funding availability for Aboriginal artists and specifically expectation (3).

A significant degree of initial exposure by purely government funded museums, significant promotion by dealers collaborating with public funding agencies, in particular in the form of international touring exhibitions, are three forms of promotion expected in this market and which play a role in the rise to success for some Aboriginal artists. Expectation (3) held that dealers would emphasize these options. The additional exposure in this market, which would not be found in a market which lacks such cost sharing with government and business, increases the public's awareness of Aboriginal artists and allows small artist differences in success to be magnified into larger earnings differences.

As anticipated, the government's early involvement in the market and the private dealers' incentives to pick up artists who have already shown some sign of success are revealed in the amount of early exposure involving strictly public funding, as seen in Table 2. 'Early exposure' in this table means first 10 known exhibitions in an artist's career. If the 10th exhibition falls in the middle of a year, every exhibition for that year is included in the calculation. Two artists have fewer than 10 known exhibitions in total, so all of their career exhibitions are used. The percent of early exhibitions which fall into the categories defined in Section V are listed for each artist, as well as for a new category which combines all exhibitions which have some degree of public funding (columns 1 and 2) into one category labeled MIX. The artists are listed in descending order according to auction sale success, 1997-2006.

Table 2*Top Aboriginal Artists' Early Exhibitions by Support*

Rank	Last Name	First Name	Public	Public-Private	Private	MIX ^a
1	Thomas	Rover	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
2	Kngwarreye	Emily Kame	50.00%	10.00%	40.00%	60.00%
3	Tjapaltjarri	Clifford Possum	80.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%
4	Tjupurrula	Johnny Warangkula	90.00%	0.00%	10.00%	90.00%
5	Tjapaltjarri	Mick Namarari	63.64%	0.00%	36.36%	63.64%
6	Napangardi	Dorothy Robinson	57.14%	0.00%	42.86%	57.14%
7	Nakarra	Queenie McKenzie	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
8	Tjampitjinpa	Kaapa Mbitjana	63.64%	9.09%	27.27%	72.73%
9	Tjupurrula	Turkey Tolson	36.36%	0.00%	63.64%	36.36%
10	Tjapaltjarri	Tim Leura	81.82%	9.09%	9.09%	90.91%
11	Tjampitjinpa	Ronnie	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
12	Tjungurrayi	Shorty Lungkarda	75.00%	12.50%	12.50%	87.50%
13	Napangardi	Maggie Watson	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
14	Tjangala	Uta Uta	33.33%	25.00%	41.67%	58.33%
15	Jaminji	Paddy (Jampin)	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	80.00%
16	Tjakamarra	Anatjari No. III	45.45%	9.09%	45.45%	54.55%
17	<i>Tjapangati ^b</i>	<i>Wimmitji</i>	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	20.00%

Note. Data from exhibition lists compiled from *Dictionary* and references listed in Appendix 3.

^a MIX is determined by adding Public to Pub-Priv to include all exhibitions that were influenced by public funding.

^b This artist has only 22 known exhibitions. Of these, 5 observations had to be thrown out because information on the gallery type could not be found. Thus, this artist's data should not be considered significant.

Not only is there a high average percentage of public-funded exhibitions in the data, but there is a significantly lower percentage of dual-funded exhibitions in the early stages of these top artists' careers (column 2), relative to the data presented in Table 3 which pertain to the entire promotional careers of the top artists. Adding a longer time span considerably increases the presence of Public-Private support. This increase in private support after the early stages of the artist's career seems to be confirmation from a different direction of expectation (1), that dealers are reducing costs by choosing to promote artists after they have already had some form of exposure or success. It also supports expectation (3), that dealers

Table 3*Top Aboriginal Artists' Total Exhibitions by Support*

Rank	Last Name	First Name	TOTAL Shows	Public	Public-Private	Private	MIX ^a
1	Thomas	Rover	84	57.14%	9.52%	33.33%	66.67%
2	Kngwarreye	Emily Kame	116	45.69%	16.38%	37.93%	62.07%
3	Tjapaltjarri	Clifford Possum	35	65.71%	14.29%	20.00%	80.00%
4	Tjupurrula	Johnny Warangkula	41	73.17%	17.07%	9.76%	90.24%
5	Tjapaltjarri	Mick Namarari	103	53.40%	13.59%	33.01%	66.99%
6	Napangardi	Dorothy Robinson	41	46.34%	2.44%	51.22%	48.78%
7	Nakarra	Queenie McKenzie	22	77.27%	4.55%	18.18%	81.82%
8	Tjampitjinpa	Kaapa Mbitjana	13	69.23%	7.69%	23.08%	76.92%
9	Tjupurrula	Turkey Tolson	94	54.26%	15.96%	29.79%	70.21%
10	Tjapaltjarri	Tim Leura	11	81.82%	9.09%	9.09%	90.91%
11	Tjampitjinpa	Ronnie	57	52.63%	10.53%	36.84%	63.16%
12	Tjungurrayi	Shorty Lungkarda	8	75.00%	12.50%	12.50%	87.50%
13	Napangardi	Maggie Watson	16	62.50%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%
14	Tjangala	Uta Uta	16	50.00%	18.75%	31.25%	68.75%
15	Jaminji	Paddy (Jampin)	5	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	80.00%
16	Tjakamarra	Anatjari No. III	18	55.56%	11.11%	33.33%	66.67%
17	<i>Tjapangati</i> ^b	<i>Wimmitji</i>	17	23.53%	0.00%	76.47%	23.53%

Note. Data from exhibition lists compiled from *Dictionary* and references listed in Appendix 3.

^a MIX is determined by adding Public to Pub-Priv to include all exhibitions that were influenced by public funding.

^b This artist has only 22 known exhibitions. Of these, 5 observations had to be thrown out because information on the gallery type could not be found. Thus, this artist's data should not be considered significant.

seek and receive public support for exhibitions, though it seems that some history of private risk-taking helps in making successful appeals for public help.

Given that a significant component of the market for Aboriginal paintings is comprised of international buyers, we expected—expectation (4a)—that a large share of the initiatives for which dealers seek public and business funding will be high cost international touring exhibitions. This is confirmed by comparing Public-Private exhibitions with international touring exhibitions involving the Top 17 artists. On average the Top 17 had 5 Public-Private exhibitions (10.8% of total individual exhibitions). Of these 5 dual-funded exhibitions an average of 3.6 were international touring exhibitions (8.5% of their total; 71%

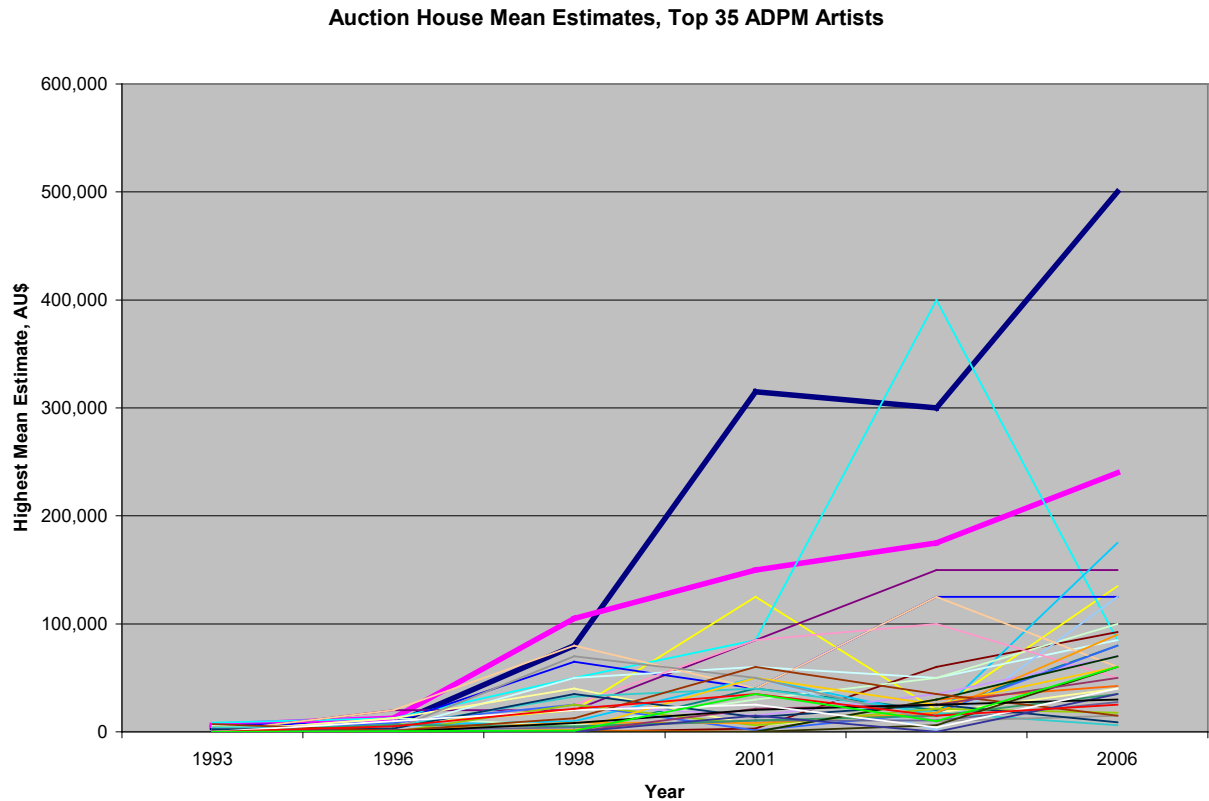
of Public-Private exhibitions). The 1.4 exhibit difference is due largely to exhibitions which were of private collections shown in Australian public museums and galleries.

The second part of expectation (4) was that the high cost touring exhibitions with dual support (private dealer plus publicly funded organization) would be dominated by the same few artists. I use the Top 17 artists as the ‘same few’ whom I compare with the rest of my sample (recall that the remaining 100 painters have experienced less success at auction than the 17 but, on average, more success than most artists in the ADPM). The Top 17 artists average 3.6 exhibitions which match the criteria—international touring exhibition *and* Public-Private funding. The other 100 artists in my sample are shown in only 1.37 of these exhibitions on average. If the ‘same few artists’ is narrowed to just the Top 5 artists the support for the hypothesis is even stronger: these five artists have been shown in dual-funded international touring exhibitions 7.2 times on average, or 9.4% of their total exhibitions.

For the most part, the expected behaviors of the dealers in the ADPM are confirmed by the promotional evidence of the exhibition lists. Dealers behave as we would expect if bent on reducing costs; they also promote artists more than they would if they were not able to share costs; and, exposing Aboriginal artists internationally, they emphasize already successful artists.

Do auction houses concur with demonstrated success, as expectation (5) would suggest? Yes; the divergence of mean pre-sale estimates for stars from less successful artists does indeed grow. Figure 3 shows the highest mean estimate for each of the Top 35 artists in the ADPM every two or three years since 1993. The mean estimates for the two superstar artists are in bold (Thomas in blue and Kngwarreye in pink).

Figure 3

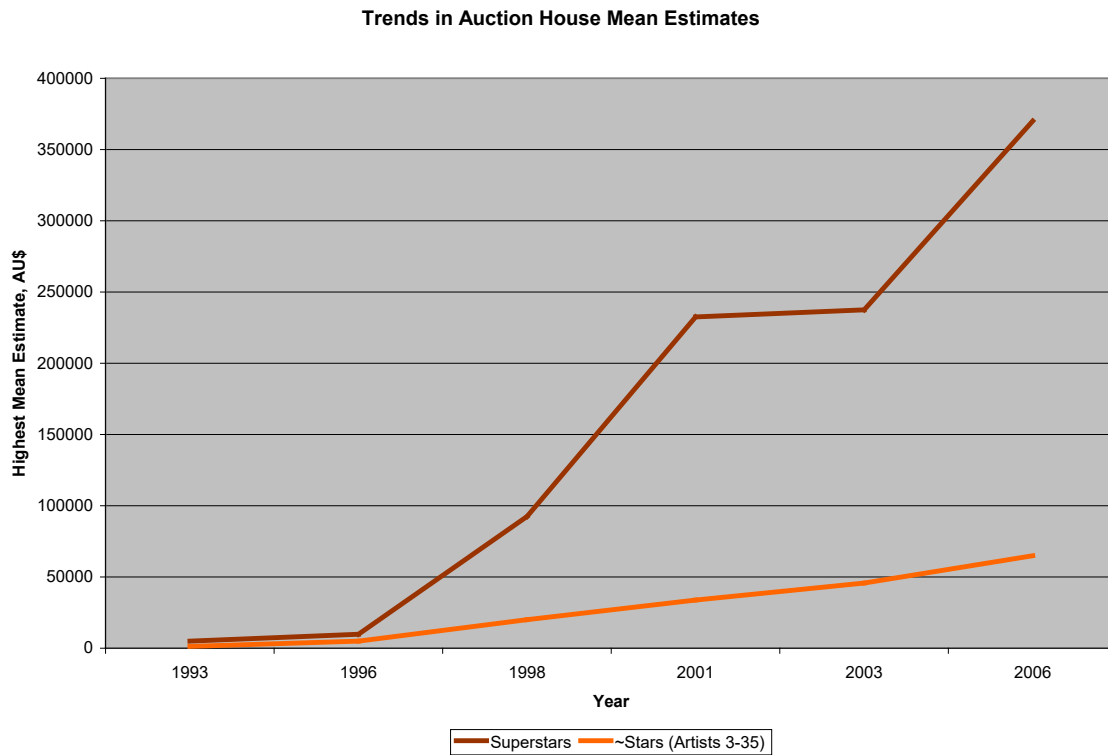


Note. Data from the Australian Art Sales Digest.

Note that a rising average trend is to be expected for all Top 35 artists, not just the stars and superstars, because of sustained economic growth in Australia and expanding demand for Aboriginal Desert Paintings¹². The point is that, as auction houses concur with prior success and increasingly support the superstars and stars as they emerge, the absolute size of the wedge between the highest mean estimate of the average superstar and average star should grow. This increasing divergence is shown in Figure 4.

¹² The one artist with the greatest variation in estimates was Johnny Warangkula Tjupurrula, one of the first Aboriginal Desert painters and the number four artist in the ADPM by auction sales. He had a work offered at auction in 2003 with a mean estimate of AU\$400,000. This work was one of the first painted at Papunya in the early 1970s and sold for AU\$342,250. Since then his mean pre-sale estimates have been less than AU\$100,000.

Figure 4



Note. Data from Australian Art Sales Digest.

The confirmed behavior of dealers and auction houses in emphasizing the same few artists has affected the channel to stardom in two key ways: time to auction sales and sustained auction success. The evidence of persistent auction success by the Top 17 Aboriginal Desert artists was presented in Section III, where it was compared to the declining dominance of the Top 17 artists in the Australian non-Indigenous Contemporary Paintings Market. I turn next to evidence of the reduced time to auction sales in this market.

One would expect that the significant initial and continuing promotion and exposure evidenced in the careers of the Top 17 Aboriginal artists would cause exhibitions to give way more quickly to auctions than in a more normal contemporary market. Table 4 compares the move to auction by Aboriginal Desert artists with that by American Contemporary artists,

Table 4*Rate of Success for American & Aboriginal artists*

Painters	Start to Auction (yrs)	
	Mean	Median
American Contemporary	~20	~20
Australian Aboriginals		
Top 50	9.56	8
Top 17	12.52	12
Top 18-50	8.03	5

Note. Data for American Contemporary from Deng (2005) and data for ADPM compiled by author from Australian Art Sales Digest, *Dictionary* and exhibitions sources from Appendix 3.

using average number of years between the start of an artist's career and his/her first auction sale as the measure¹³.

In the American Contemporary Paintings Market almost half the painters with appearances at auction, in a large sample, were more than 20 years into their artistic careers by the time they began to have auction sales (Deng, 2005, p.37). Deng uses the last year of study before the first exhibition as proxy for the start of an artist's career; the data I use for the ADPM employs the first exhibition as the starting date. The differences between the two measures could slightly alter the averages, however a general comparison can still be made for the rate of movement into the auction market. The mean period from start to appearance at auction is much lower for the Top 50 Aboriginal Desert artists (column 1). The channel to extreme success is opened by public support on top of early private risk taking, and the increased exposure appears to have sped up the shift from primary to auction sales for Aboriginal Desert artists.

¹³ Data on the time delay between career start and first auction sale were not available for the Australian non-Indigenous Contemporary Paintings Market, so the American market was used in this comparative analysis instead. Further research in the accelerated path of success for the ADPM may thus wish to find and compare data from the other Australian market.

To be more precise, here too the confirmation of expectations is mixed. Aboriginal artists have experienced an accelerated move into auction sales compared with American Contemporary painters, but the evidence also shows that the Top 17 artists have not moved faster into auction sales than the slightly less successful artists. The relative slowness by the very top Aboriginal artists relative to the next best artists could be a result of the overwhelming majority of group exhibitions in the ADPM. The additional exposure and promotion is experienced across a wider range of artists than just those at the very top, so that many aboriginal artists benefit from the increased speed to first auction appearance. However, it is also likely that the shorter time between artistic start and auction sales reflects the fact that there are more works in the middle range of the market than at the very top.

The structural features unique to the ADPM and related behaviors together generate a mechanism for supporting stardom/superstardom without our having to separate quality from promotion, avoiding the difficulty encountered in previous literature which depended on the ability to define and detect talent. The following section, however, draws attention to differentiated early success among a group of women artists from Utopia, all of whom began on equal terms. This allows us to observe, if not explain, talent, and relate it to differential success in the first 10 years of these artists' careers.

VII. Utopia: An Experiment Isolating “Quality”

The community of Utopia, 270 km north east of Alice Springs, affords the conditions close to a control on promotion. Painting began in Utopia in a very special way. Between 1977 and 1989 there were three experiments. First, a group of women (and one man) were

taught batik; then the women were offered linen and acrylic paints; third, the same women were each asked to provide a painting of the same Dreaming¹⁴. Thus the same women were twice engaged on the same medium or technique, and at one point even the same subject. Moreover, no dealer-related promotion was involved during the whole period of these experiments. These are almost ideal circumstances under which to observe differences in perceived quality.

All three experiments were initiated by Rodney Gooch, in association with the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), an aboriginal initiative partially funded by the government. From 1986 to 1992, at the times of the second two experiments, Gooch was also the arts coordinator at Utopia. (Nicholls, 2001)

The first experimental project lasted from 1977 to 1987. During this time women were taught how to produce batiks (an intricate method using wax on silk) as a corollary to a women's adult education literacy centre (McCulloch, McCulloch, & McCulloch, 2006). At the end of this project each of the 87 women and 1 man who had learned the technique produced a large silk batik telling their own Dreaming story. All 88 batiks were immediately purchased by the private Holmes á Court Collection and shown in a touring exhibition, beginning at the Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute in Adelaide, a public-funded organization. (Nicholls, 2001)

The second experiment, dubbed *The Summer Project*, initiated acrylic painting among the women at Utopia. Gooch distributed supplies and encouraged the women to paint in acrylics during the long summer months (McCulloch, McCulloch, & McCulloch, 2006). By early 1989, 100 paintings, all of the same size, were ready. It happened that the S.H. Ervin

¹⁴ This man, Lindsay Bird Mpetyane, was also involved in all three artistic experiments. For simplicity, however, I refer to Utopia artists as women.

Gallery in Sydney had a May opening in its schedule. The Ervin Gallery is not private, but part of a non-commercial foundation. The gallery had shown works from the Holmes á Court Collection just the previous year, and the director, Dyna Dysart, enthusiastically filled the gap in the gallery's schedule with the exhibition titled *Utopia Women's Paintings, the First Works on Canvas 'The Summer Project'* (Nicholls, 2001). At this point "there were no stars," but the work of one woman, Emily Kngwarreye, was judged by Christopher Hodges to be "exceptional" (Hodges, 1999, p. 22). Hodges is a successful artist who in 1988 established a private gallery in Sydney to show Utopia paintings—Utopia Art.

The first two experiments at Utopia had been community activities, with no particular commercial goal, but the batiks, followed by the paintings, began to produce incomes for individual artists, Kngwarreye foremost among them. According to Hodges, this marked the start of "the era of the individual artist" (Hodges, 1999, p. 23). Gooch, however, fought against this trend by initiating yet another project, this time encouraging each of the women artists to make her own interpretation of a single Dreaming—the Yam Dreaming. This collection of works was first exhibited under the title *One Dreaming* at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, a publicly funded gallery.

Even with Gooch's efforts to stem individualism and support all Utopia artists equally, some among them stood out. Very soon vastly different levels of success in the auction market were realized. Emily Kngwarreye's total auction turnover from 1997 to 2006 was over AU\$10 million while the next best Utopia artist had sales of only AU\$654,564 over the same period. That next best artist, Kathleen Petyarre, is ranked 22 in the ADPM by auction sales and is considered by some a star, but the greatly magnified earnings differential between the two reveals degrees of stardom. Part of the difference between these two

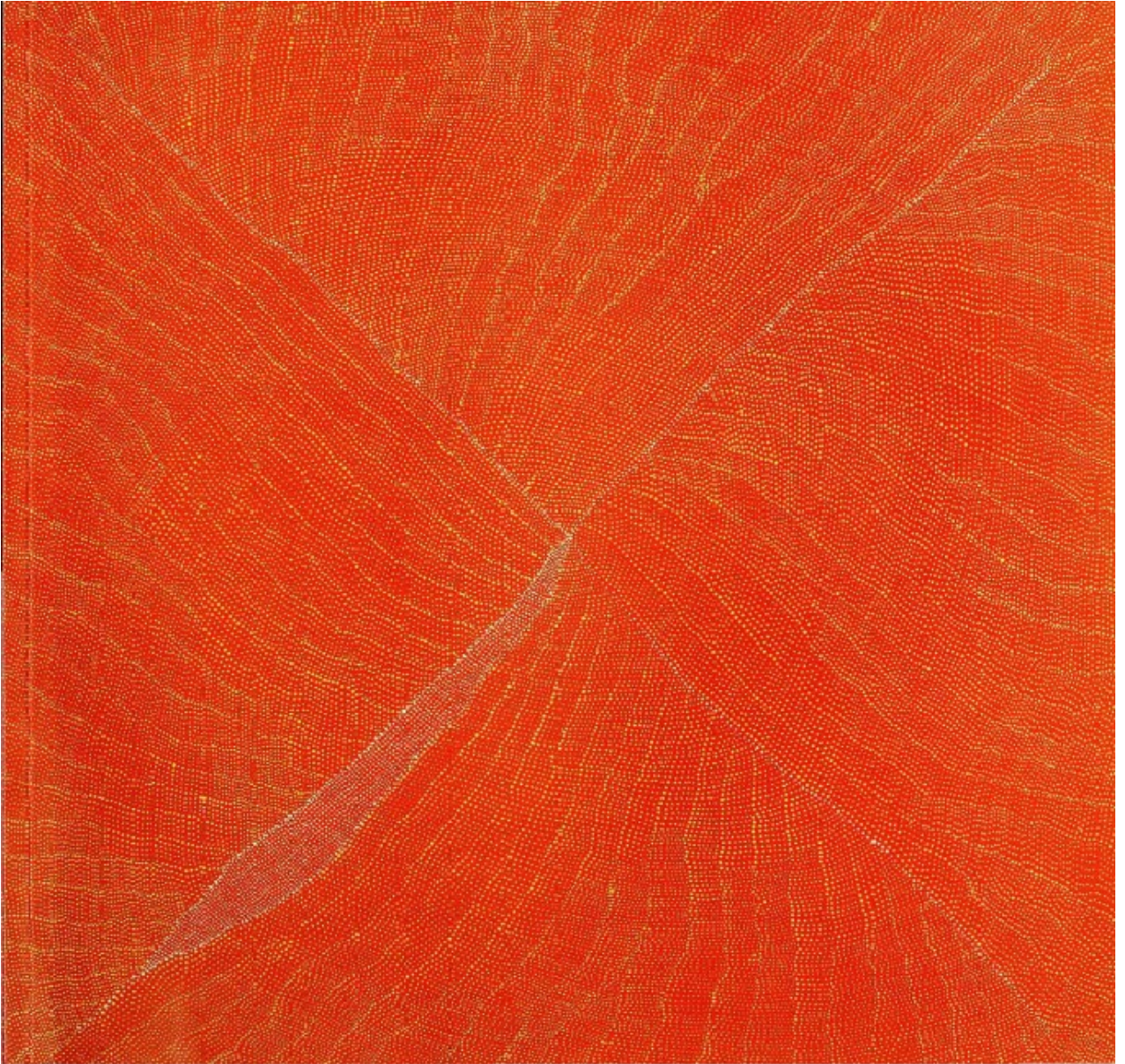
painters is artistic appeal. This can be illustrated without going into depth. I will follow a brief discussion of visual appeal with a statement of the dealer and auction house responses which strengthened the differential appeal of Emily Kngwarreye and spurred her success relative to that of Kathleen Petyarre.

Visual appeal and initial advantage

Emily Kngwarreye immediately drew attention by a style that was easy to connect with. By contrast, Kathleen Petyarre's transition from batiks to painting with acrylics resulted in works that, according to Gooch, seemed "rather awkward" (Nicholls, 2001, p.24). Even Kngwarreye's early work had the look of Impressionist paintings and commanded immediate attention among Western buyers. Petyarre, moreover, took several years to develop the style for which she is now famous, but even these "finely wrought, lyrical compositions" are relatively demanding and lack the appeal of Kngwarreye's works (Nicholls, 2001, p. 25). While there is no agreed aesthetic for Aboriginal paintings, the differences between these two artists' early styles gave one of them a prime mover advantage. These differences are illustrated on the next three pages. First, one of Petyarre's early paintings is shown (*Emu Dreaming*, 1993). The change between that work and the one she produced in 1999 (*Mountain Devil Lizard Dreaming*, 1999) is apparent. In contrast to both, a typical early Kngwarreye work, from the same year as Petyarre's early work, is shown on page 44 (*Wild Potato Dreaming*, 1993). Once such early differences in appeal were registered by dealers and buyers, the mechanism for magnifying them into extreme differences has been the same dealer-buyer-auction house consensus I have identified for the ADPM as a whole. Here, as in most cases, various forms of non-private—or at least non-dealer—support helped in the early exposure of the Utopia women.



Note. KATHLEEN PETYARRE *Emu Dreaming* c.1993 from Kathleen Petyarre. *Genius of place*, essays by Chistine Nicholls and Ian North. Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, p. 37.



*Note. KATHLEEN PETYARRE **Mountain Devil Lizard Dreaming (Sandstorm)**2000 from Kathleen Petyarre. *Genius of place, essays by Chistine Nicholls and Ian North.* Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, front cover.*

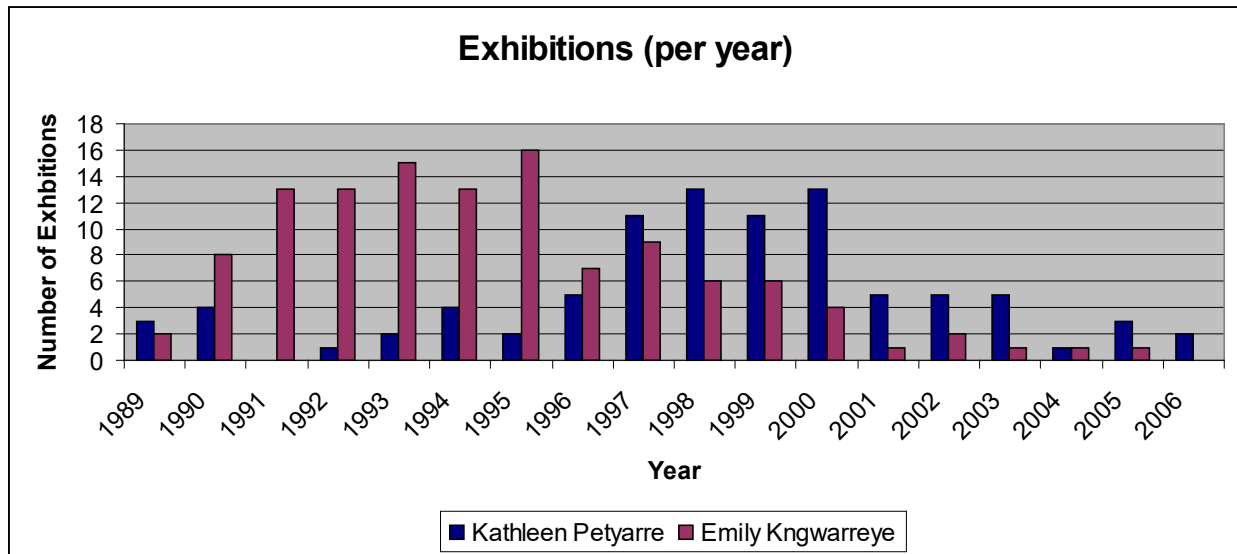


*Note. EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE **Wild Potato Dreaming 1993** from *Earth's creation*. The paintings of Emily Kame Kngwarreye. North Caulfield, Australia: Malakoff Fine Art Press, p. 10.*

Dealer promotion

Though both artists received the same start in their artistic careers and enjoyed the same support by early publicly funded exhibitions, the promotional patterns apparent in Kngwarreye's and Petyarre's careers differ in several ways. Kngwarreye received dealer support soon after her debut in *The Summer Project* exhibition; Petyarre, however, was not represented by a private dealer until she signed a contract with David Cossey of Gallerie Australis, Adelaide, in 1995 (Nicholls, 2001). Gallerie Australis acquired exclusive rights to represent Petyarre; Kngwarreye, by contrast, worked with dozens of dealers during her career in all the major cities (McCulloch, McCulloch, & McCulloch, 2006). Figure 5 reveals the differences in both timing and quantity of exposure for these two artists. The early exposure that Kngwarreye received could have been a factor in her rapid auction market dominance. On the other hand, the delayed appeal of Petyarre's works was followed by a delayed, but significant, promotion through exhibitions.

Figure 5



Note. Data from *Dictionary* and sources listed in Appendix 3.

Auction house concurrence

The role that auction houses play in reinforcing the superstar skew in the ADPM was discussed earlier. It is in their interest to concur with demonstrated success, and in Utopia the divergence of mean estimates between stars and lesser artists is even more striking than that seen for the Top 35 artists. Rather than displaying the wedge in graphical form, Table 5 lists the highest mean estimate for a work by each artist in a given year. The table lists 10 Utopia artists (1 superstar, 2 stars, and 7 others), ordered by auction sales. If an artist had no works offered at auction in a particular year, AU\$0 has been entered. Note that Kngwarreye was not only the first of these artists who had a work offered at auction, but she also enjoyed a rapid and continuous rise in estimates. Kathleen Petyarre shows signs of rising in the two most recent years of data, so it seems auction house validation has followed suit with her lagging rise to stardom.

Table 5*Auction House Highest Mean Estimates, in AU\$, Utopia Artists*

Artist	1993	1996	1998	2001	2003	2006
Emily Kngwarreye	6,000	12,500	105,000	150,000	175,000	240,000
Kathleen Petyarre	0	800	1,250	0	7,000	31,500
Gloria Petyarre	0	1,600	4,000	10,500	10,500*	27,500
Ada Bird Petyarre	0	700	0	5,000*	6,500*	5,000*
Lily Sandover Kngwarreye	0	0	0	1,100	7,000	10,500
Lindsay Bird Mpetyane	0	0	0	30,000*	2,500	1,500
Gladys Kemarre	0	0	2,000	3,500	0	3,000
Violet Petyarre	0	0	0	0	0	6,000
Gracie Pwerl Morton	0	0	450	0	0	2,000
Audrey Morton Kngwarreye	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note. Data computed from estimates from Australian Art Sales Digest online database.

* This work went unsold.

The other Utopia artists received much lower and inconsistent estimates revealing the relative lack of confidence that the auction houses had in these artists' works.

Despite the lack of an agreed aesthetic or a quantifiable measure of quality, the case in Utopia seems to offer a clear view of the advantage which quality could give an artist. Whether this difference is a requirement for superstardom cannot be determined, but it can be seen that the same mechanism (dealer and auction house concurrence with some public funding) which has accelerated the emergence of stardom and reinforced success in the ADPM in general has also been at work for the women in Utopia.

VII. Conclusion

My subject has been superstardom in the Australian Aboriginal Desert Paintings Market. I have focused on the role of dealer and auction house promotion in reinforcing early success and in accelerating the shift of successful artists from the primary market to the auction market. This is a focus absent from previous discussions of mechanisms in connection with the emergence of superstars.

I have proceeded in three stages. First, I drew attention to some empirical characteristics of the ADPM: small size; the skewed distribution of earnings (at auction); and the persistent dominance of a very few artists. Next, I identified a number of structural features that mark the ADPM as somewhat unique: *the key role played by dealers* – key because the artists are remote from the main markets and possibly half of buyers are from abroad; *the abnormal costs faced by dealers* (including risk linked to the uncertainty of regular flow of quality paintings); and *the historical and ongoing commitment by the Australian government to promote Aboriginal paintings*. Lastly, I linked the market's empirical characteristics and structural features with a set of behaviors one might expect of dealers and auction houses under the circumstances. I view these expected behaviors as responses to constraints and incentives.

The main contribution of the thesis is my use of a dataset of artists' exhibitions and records at auction, to address these expected behaviors. I anticipated, as part of cost-reducing efforts, that dealers would tend to show the same artists; that as part of risk-cost spreading they would also hold more group than solo exhibitions; that they would take advantage of public funding in various forms to support their promotional activities, especially touring exhibitions; that these tendencies would be particularly evident in

international touring exhibitions; and that auction houses would reinforce the success registered by the small group of stars, by increasing the mean pre-sale estimates of stars relative to those of less successful artists, contributing mainly to the superstar status of a few.

For the most part the evidence supports these expected behaviors, though there is room for further research, refining both the expectations and empirical correlates. Perhaps the most important area for future work is the activity of dealers (and auction houses) in identifying new artists. The general picture that emerges from my work is of a three-way tacit agreement by dealers (with government support), buyers and auction houses in promoting early success, reinforcing demonstrated market appeal by the few, and helping accelerate the shift of stars and the few real superstars from the primary to the auction market.

I did not attempt to distinguish the relative significance of talent/quality and promotion in the emergence of superstars, mainly because, unlike, say, baseball where quantitative measures of performance have become common, there is no agreed aesthetic for judging quality in Aboriginal Desert Paintings. Nonetheless, a small control study for Utopia artists clearly showed that market success is related to early differential appeal to buyers. Promotion, it follows, builds on initial visual appeal.

Appendix 1. Biographical Information of Top 17 ADPM artists

Artist	Community	Born	First Exhibition	First Auction Sale	Died	Total Auction Sales ^a
Rover Thomas	Warmun	c.1926	1986	1993	1998	\$10,897,031
Emily Kngwarreye	Utopia	c.1910	1988	1993	1996	\$10,396,605
Clifford Possum	Papunya	c.1932	1974	1989	2002	\$3,032,516
Johnny Warangkula Tjupurrula	Papunya	c.1918/ 1925	1977	1993	2001	\$2,694,645
Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri	Papunya	1916/ 1926	1975	1991	1998	\$2,501,806
Dorothy (Robinson) Napangardi	Yuendumu	1958	1991	2002	-	\$1,559,286
Queenie McKenzie	Warmun	1915/ 1920	1991	1999	1998	\$1,434,577
Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa	Papunya	1920/ 1926	1981	1989	1989	\$1,376,687
Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula	Papunya	1938/ 1942	1974	1987	2002	\$1,365,085
Tim Leura	Papunya	1929	1976	1993	1984	\$1,102,219
Ronnie Tjampitjinpa	Kintore	1943	1982	1995	-	\$1,066,906
Shorty Lungkarda	Papunya	1920	1973	1995	1987	\$1,066,869
Tjungurrayi	Papunya	1924	1985	1996	2004	\$1,048,464
Maggie Watson Napangardi	Yuendumu	1920/ 1926	1985	1996	2004	\$1,048,464
Uta Uta Tjangala	Papunya	1926	1975	1993	1990	\$991,041
Paddy (Jampin) Jaminji	Warmun	1912	1989	1997	1996	\$987,915
Anatjari Tjakamarra	Papunya	1930/ 1938	1980	1996	1992	\$944,046
Wimmitji Tjapangati	Balgo Hills	1924	1986	1995	2000	\$808,020

Note. Data from *Dictionary* and Australian Art Sales Digest.

^a Total Auction Sales from 1997 - 2006

Appendix 2. Aboriginal Specialist Galleries in Australia

Gallery Name	Started	Location	Director
Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery	1996	Sydney	Gabriella Roy
Aboriginal Desert Art Gallery	1985	Alice Springs	Michael Hollow
Aboriginal Galleries of Australia	1990	Melbourne	Mary-Anne Hollow
Aboriginal Gallery of Dreamings	1990	Melbourne	Hank Ebes
Agathon Gallery	2004	Sydney, Melbourne	John Ioannou
Alcaston Gallery	1989	Melbourne	Beverly Knight
Alison Kelly Gallery	2000	Melbourne	Allison Kelly
Aranda Aboriginal Art	2000	Melbourne and Alice Springs	Adam Knight
Art Mob	2002	Hobart	
Coo-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery	1981	Sydney	Adrian Newstead
DACOU Aboriginal Art Gallery	1995	Adelaide	Fred Torres (son of Barbara Weir)
Gallerie Australis	1991	Adelaide	David Cossey
Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi	1983	Melbourne	Gabrielle Pizzi
Gallery Gondwana	1990	Sydney & Alice Springs	Roslyn Premont
Hogarth Gallery	1980	Sydney	Melissa Collins
Japingka Gallery	1995	Fremantle, Perth	Plunkett and Wroth
Jinta Desert Art	1993	Sydney	Natalie Hollow & Semon Debb
Kimberley Art	1992	Melbourne	Harrison and Spender
Marshall Arts	2001	Adelaide	Graeme & Ros Marshall
Mbantua Gallery	1990	Alice Springs	Tim Jennings
Mossenson Galleries - Indigenart	1993	Fremantle, Perth	Dr Diane Mossenson
Papunya Tula Artists Pty. Ltd	1970s	Alice Springs	outlet
Raft Artspace	2001	Darwin	Dallas Gold
Rainbow Serpent Gallery	1991	Sydney	Parnes family
Raintree Aboriginal Art Gallery	1986	Darwin	Shirley Collins
Red Rock Art	1997	Kununurra	Kevin Kelly
Short Street Gallery	1998	Broome	Emily Rohr
Utopia Art	1988	Sydney	Christopher Hodges
Vivien Anderson Gallery	1987	Melbourne	Vivien Anderson
Yanda Aboriginal Art	1998	Alice Springs	Chris Simon

Note. Data from McCulloch, McCulloch, & McCulloch, 2006

Appendix 3. Supplementary References for Exhibition Lists

Abie Loy Kemarre	1) http://www.gadflygallery.com/pub/art.cgi?artid=KEMA
Ada Bird Petyarre	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_abp.htm 2) http://www.aboriginal-desert-art.com.au/artists/ada_bird.html
Alan Winderoo Tjakamarra	none
Alice Nampitjinpa	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_an_.htm
Anatjari Tjakamarra	1) http://www.tandanya.com.au/exhibition/ExhibArchive.html
Audrey Morton Kngwarreye	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_amk.htm
Bai Bai Napangarti	1) http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au/ab_baibainapangarti.cfm 2) http://www.shortstgallery.com.au/exhibits.php 3) http://www.evabreuerartdealer.com.au/aboriginal_2005.html
Barbara Weir	1) http://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/2004/07/14/32199.html 2) http://www.savah.com.au/artists/bw/bw.htm 3) http://aboriginalartshop.com/barbara-weir-aboriginal-artist.html 4) http://www.mahoneysgalleries.com.au/aboriginalart_biography.cfm?id=4 5) http://www.galleriesdirect.com/Artists/ArtistInformation.aspx?artistId=36
Bessie Liddle	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_bl_.htm
Bessie Sims Nakamarra	none
Betsy Lewis	1) http://www.japingka.com.au/artist-profiles.cfm?artistID=2
Betty Carrington Naminji	1) http://www.gadflygallery.com/pub/art.cgi?artid=WARA 2) http://www.chrysalis.com.au/biography.asp?intArtistID=6
Biddee Baadjo	1) http://www.japingka.com.au/artist-profiles.cfm?artistID=26 *not in dictionary
Bill Whiskey Tjapaltjarri	1) http://www.japingka.com.au/artist-profiles.cfm?artistID=37 *not in dictionary
Billy Stockman Tjapaltjarri	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/stockman.htm 2) http://www.galeriaaniela.com.au/Billy%20Stockman.htm
Billy Thomas Joongoorra	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_btj.htm#literatur
Boxer Milner Tjampitjin	1) http://www.shortstgallery.com/artist.php?id=12
Bridget Mudgidell	
Napanangka	none
Bridget Wallace Kngwarreye	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/BridgetWallace.htm
Camilla Young Perrurle	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/CamillaYoung.htm
Charlie Tawara Tjungurrayi	none
Churchill Cann Juwurru	
Joolama	1) http://www.shortstgallery.com/artist.php?id=10 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_ccy.htm
Clifford Possum	1) http://www.aboriginal-desert-art.com.au/artists/clifford_possum.html 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/possum.htm 3) http://www.qag.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/past_exhibitions/2004/clifford_possum_tjapaltjarri 4) http://www.aboriginalfinearts.com.au/Artists.asp?AID=101 5) http://karaart.com/aboriginalart/possum/curriculum.html
Daisy Jugadai Napaltjarri	1) http://www.awaag.org.au/indigenart.htm 2) http://www.outbackgallery.com.au/whatsnew.html
David Downs Jarinyanu	1) http://www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au/exhibitions/
Dolly Granites Nampijinpa	none
Dorothy (Robinson)	1) http://www.gallerygondwana.com.au/Artists/cv_dn.htm

Napangardi	2) http://www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au/exhibitions/index.cfm 3) http://www.aaia.com.au/dorothynapangardi.htm
Elizabeth Marks Nakamarra	1) http://www.vivienandersongallery.com/artists/elizabeth_marks_nakamarra/archive.html
Elizabeth Nyumi Nungurrayi	1) http://www.shortstgallery.com/artist.php?id=340 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_enn.htm
Emily Kame Kngwarreye	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/emily.htm 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_deu/ver_ekk.htm 3) http://www.evabreuerartdealer.com.au/cv/kngwarreye_emily_bio.html
Eubena Yupinya Nampitjin	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_en_.htm
Eunice Napanangka	1) http://www.aboriginalfinearts.com.au/Artists.asp?AID=200 2) http://www.mukmukaboriginalart.com/webcontent13.htm 3) http://www.aaia.com.au/eunice.htm 4) http://www.aboriginal-desert-art.com.au/artists/eunice_napangarti.html 5) http://www.jintaart.com.au/bios/eunicebio.htm
Eunice Napangardi	1) http://www.jintaart.com.au/bios/eunicebio.htm 2) http://www.aboriginal-desert-art.com.au/artists/eunice_napangarti.html 3) http://www.aaia.com.au/eunice.htm 4) http://www.mukmukaboriginalart.com/webcontent13.htm 5) http://www.aboriginalfinearts.com.au/Artists.asp?AID=200
Everlyn Young Perrurle	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/EverlynYoung.htm *not in dictionary
Fred Tjakamarra	none
Freda Napanangka	none
Freddie Timms	1) http://www.shermangalleries.com.au/artists/inartists/artist_profile.asp?artist=timmsf 2) http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au/ab_freddytimms.cfm
George Ward Tjungurrayi	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/gward.htm
Ginger Riley Munduwalawala	none
Gladys Kemarre	none
Gloria Petyarre	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_gtp.htm 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/gloria.htm
Goody Lilwayi Barrett	
Nyawurra	1) http://www.moragalleries.com.au/gbarrett/artist_profile.asp?artist=timmsf
Gordon Barney Jangari	none
Gracie Pwerl Morton	1) http://www.gallerygondwana.com.au/Artists/cv_gm.htm 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_gmn.htm
Hector Jandany Joongoorra	1) http://www.artplace.com.au/CVs/hector_jandany.html
Helen Nelson Napaljarri	none
Jack Britten Joolama	1) http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au/ab_jackbritten.cfm
Jilary Lynch Pengarte	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/JilaryLynch.htm
Jimmy Roberston Jampijinpa	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/jimmyrob.htm
Joey Helicopter Tjungurrayi	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_ht_.htm
John Kipara Tjakamarra	none
Johnny Gordon Downs	none
Johnny Warangkula	
Tjupurrula	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/johnnyw.htm
Joseph Jurra Tjapaltjarri	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_deu/ver_jjt.htm
Josette Young Perrurle	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/JosetteYoung.htm

Josie Petrick Kemarre	1) http://www.aboriginal-desert-art.com.au/artists/josiek_petric_kemarre.html 2) http://www.authaboriginalart.com.au/Artist.asp?Artist=Josie%20Petrick%20Kemarre josiek_petric_kemarre.html
Judith Uniman Jugadai Nakamarra	none
Judy Watson Napangardi	1) http://www.flg.com.au/Aboriginal%20Artists/FLG_theartists_judy_cv.htm 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/judywatson.htm
June Smith Pengarte	3) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/JuneSmith.htm
Justin Hayes Perrurle	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/JustinHayes.htm *Not in dictionary
Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa	McCulloch, 2006
Kathleen Petyarre	1) http://www.gadflygallery.com/pub/art.cgi?artid=PETK 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/kathleen.htm
Kathleen Wallace Kemarre	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/KathleenWallace.htm
Kitty Miller	none
Leonie Young Perrurle	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/LeonieYoung.htm *Not in dictionary
Liddy Yijaturre Nelson Nakamarra	none
Lily Sandover Kngwarreye	1) http://www.gadflygallery.com/pub/exh.cgi
Lindsay Bird Mpetyane	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_lbm.htm 2) http://www.galeriaaniela.com.au/Lindsay%20Bird.htm McCulloch's (2006)
Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra	1) www.aaia.com.au/longjack/htm
Lorna Fencer Napurrula	1) http://www.jintaart.com.au/bios/lornabio.htm
Lucy Kennedy Napaljarri	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_deu/ver_lnk.htm
Lucy Yukenbarri	
Napanangka	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_lyn.htm
Maggie (Long) White Nakamarra	1) http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=de&u=http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_deu/kat_mnw.htm&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=4&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3DMaggie%2Blong%2Bwhite%2Bnakamarra%26hl%3Den%26lr%3D%26rls%3DRNWE,RNWE:2004-43,RNWE:en McCulloch's (2006)
Maggie Watson Napangardi	
Marie Young Perrurle	1) http://www.keringkearts.com.au/Artists/MarieYoung.htm
Maureen Turner Nampijinpa	1) http://www.japingka.com.au/artist-profiles.cfm?artistID=14 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/hudson.htm
Maxie Tjampitjinpa	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_mt_.htm
Michael Nelson Jagamarra	1) http://www.savah.com.au/artists/mnj/
Mick Gill Tjakamarra	none
Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/mnamarrarri.htm 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_mnt.htm
Minnie Pwerle	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/minnie.htm McCulloch's (2006)
Mitjili Napurrula	1) http://www.jintaart.com.au/bios/mitjilli_nbio.htm 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_mnl.htm
Naata (Mary) Nungurrayi	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/naata.htm

Narputta Jugadai Nangala	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_nn1.htm
Ningie Nanala Nangala	none
Norbert Lynch Kngwarreye	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_nlk.htm#gruppe
Old Mick Tjakamarri	none
Old Walter Tjampitjinpa	none
Paddy (Jampin) Jaminji	1) http://www.stateart.com.au/sota/hit-list/default.asp?fid=3124 2) http://www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au/exhibitions/current.cfm?exhibition_id=74
Paddy Bedford Jawalyi	1) http://www.shermangalleries.com.au/artists/inartists/artist_profile.asp?artist=bedfordp 2) http://www.raftartspace.com.au/paddy.html
Paddy Carroll Tjungurrayi	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/paddy.htm
Paddy Nelson Jupurrula	1) http://www.cultureandcosmos.com/abstracts/vol_4_no_1_abo.htm 2) http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/colourpower/
Paddy Sims Japaljarri	1) http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au/ab_paddysims.cfm 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_pjs.htm
Patrick Mung Mung	1) http://www.evabreuerartdealer.com.au/mung_mung.html 2) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_pmm.htm 3) http://www.shortstgallery.com/artist.php?id=244 4) http://www.warmunart.com/centre.htm 5) http://www.artplace.com.au/exhibprevious/TexasDowns.html
Pauline Woods Nakamarra	none
Queenie McKenzie	1) http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au/ab_queeniemckenzie.cfm
Rita Kuninyi Nampitjin	none
Ronnie Tjampitjinpa	1) http://www.mukmukaboriginalart.com/webcontent8.htm 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/ronnie.htm 3) http://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/2004/07/14/32199.html 4) http://www.aboriginal-desert-art.com.au/artists/ronnie_tjampitjinpa.html 5) http://www.aboriginalfinearts.com.au/Artists.asp?AID=99 6) http://www.aboriginalartprints.com.au/ab_ronnietjampitjinpa.McCulloch's (2006)
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Shirley Purdie Nangari	1) http://www.chrysalis.com.au/biography.asp?intArtistID=30
Shorty Lungkarda	
Tjungurrayi	none
Sunfly Tjampitjin	1) http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/colourpower/
Tim Leura	none
Timmy Payungka Tjapangati	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/payunka2.htm
Tjumpo Tjapanangka	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_tt_1.htm 2) http://www.shortstgallery.com/artist.php?id=20
Tjunkiya Napaltjarri	1) http://www.indigenart.com.au/_common/frames.asp?content=Dynamic/work/search.asp
Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula	1) http://www.aboriginal-art.de/art_eng/ver_ttt.htm 2) http://www.aaia.com.au/turkey.htm
Two Bob Tjungarrayi	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/twobob.htm
Uta Uta Tjangala	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/possum.htm 2) http://www.tandanya.com.au/exhibition/ExhibArchive.html

Violet Petyarre	1) http://www.gallerieaustralis.com/pages/violetpetyarre/vpdiscirption.html#
Walala Tjapaltjarri	1) http://www.fireworksgallery.com.au/Artists/Walala/Walala%20BIO.htm
Willie Ryder Tjungurrayi	2) http://www.gallerygondwana.com.au/Artists/cv_wt.htm
Wimmitji Tjapangati	1) http://www.aaia.com.au/willy.htm
(Tjapangarti)	none
Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi	none

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