

Gordon Hookey
Language: Waanyi

Gordon Hookey was born in Cloncurry, north Queensland, in 1961. Since completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales, he has been involved in a number of exhibitions and collaborative projects both in Australia and abroad. Among his solo exhibitions have been *Interface Inya Face* at the Canberra Contemporary Art Space in 1995, an untitled showing at Villa Van Delden, Ahaus, Germany, in 2000 and *Ruddock's Wheel* at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, in 2001. Recent group exhibitions include *Cont-Sent-Trick-Sir-Kills* at the Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne, in 2003, *Uncommon World* at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in 2001 and *Beyond the Pale*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, in 2000. Throughout his career Hookey has been involved in a number of residencies, including a considerable period at Casula Powerhouse, where the paintings in this show were completed. His work is represented in the collections of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Osaka Museum of Ethnology, among many others. A member of Brisbane's proppaNOW collective, he now shares his time, like a wandering "cantastoria", between proppaNOW, Cloncurry and the Casula Powerhouse.

Although social comment in the form of graffiti has been around since time immemorial, the political cartoon did not come into being until around the time of the British appearance in Australia. Aboriginal people would be on the receiving end of cartoonists' negative imagery from then on, this being commented on in the Aboriginal Progressive Association's 1938 Manifesto to the government of the day. Hookey's compositions derive from these and a number of similar sources: the rude, colourful banners of trade-union street marches, travelling circus sideshows and the boxing tent, familiar to most Aboriginal people. His work is also influenced by the Pop Art movement but infused with confronting political elements and Aboriginal working-class humour.

(Author: Djon Mundine)