

ROVER THOMAS and SPRINGVALE Station

Rover Thomas' main connection to Springvale was through his close friendship with Mr Peters and his brother Rammel. The Peters left Springvale after the untimely death of their father. They most likely met Rover Thomas when they were working on the adjoining stations, Lisadell and Texas Downs

Rover was camped with the Peters brothers at 9 mile outside Wyndham in 1975 when he had the series of dreams, which led to the creation of the Kril Kril/ Gorrir Gorrir and he first told those two men what he had experienced.

That closeness persisted - when Rover was painting for Waringarri Arts and Joel Smoker was the art co-ordinator, Mr Peters was Rover's offsider and sometime after Mr Peters became an artist himself. He told me Rover told him to think (a lot) before he began a painting. At the end of Rover's life when he travelled back to the Canning Stock Route and his birthplace near Well 33, he was accompanied on that trip by Rammel Peters.

I have not been able to find any paintings by Rover for Waringarri Arts that are about Springvale, however amongst the works he did for Mary Macha - the Perth based dealer he was working with from 1983 before Waringarri started, there are a few.

See attached paintings-



'Balnji' (on Springvale Station), 1986 . Mary Macha, Holmes a Court Collection

90 x60 ochre, natural binders(bush gum) on plywood. No .2586

'The moon Gangin camped on top of the hill where there is a waterfall. The brown snake (man in Dreamtime) Linga in Djaru language / Lumburunj in Gidga language. Linga left Gangin and went to Djuru, a big hill on Turner River station because Gangin didn't want a man. She wanted to stay a single woman.'

Another painting, called ,
'Kunge' painted in 1987 for Mary Macha.

'Kungee - the moon. The Moon is a man. He had too many girls. He took his cousin to the moon.'



There is also a third painting - where the iconography is similar but the story is a bit different.

'The Shade from the hill comes over and talks in language' 1984,
Mary Macha also in the Holmes a Court Collection

'The moon in the centre of the painting and the dark night shadow) when you sleep'.



To me this suggests that Rover Thomas had been told the story of Springvale homestead site and he had been given some part of the Garnkiny story from his mates, the Peters brothers.

I have been asked to give a value to these paintings, although I am not a certified valuer, my expertise is in Aboriginal Art history - authentication and provenance.

In my opinion, the value of these three works by Rover Thomas would be –
\$60–\$90,000 each,
making a total of \$180– 200,000.

They are authentic works by Rover Thomas with impeccable provenance – indicated by the collection that holds them – The Holmes a Court Collection. They were painted for Mary Macha, the artist’s pre-eminent dealer early in his career and were acquired soon after and they refer to a known place, Springvale Station with which the artist had a connection and a documented story, Garnkiny. They are all fine and important works in his oeuvre.

As Janet Holmes a Court said in 2004 on the occasion of the national tour of 'Rover Thomas: I want to paint',

“His painting is distinctive and the deceptively simple use of form and pigments are at once stark representations of the country he painted and stunning examples of contemporary art”.

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