

Aboriginal People

Documents from So English 4e

How old is it?

Ancient Aboriginal art is between 60,000 and 80,000 years old. Contemporary Aboriginal art started in 1971, using different materials.

What materials are used?

Traditionally, paintings by Aboriginal Australians were drawn on rock walls, on sandy grounds, on bark, on leaves, or as body paint. Artists used ochres then. Paint was first used in the 1930s (mainly watercolours). Contemporary artists started using canvas and board in 1971.

What colours are used?

Colour first came from local materials, such as ochre or iron clay pigments to produce red, yellow and white, and black from charcoal. Red, yellow, black and white were the four basic colours. Aboriginal women artists brought a wider range of modern colours.

What do Aboriginal paintings represent?

Many paintings by aboriginal artists tell a story from the Dreamtime, a mythological time. These can be drawn like a map. The story shows how the land was created. Contemporary artists illustrate desert landscapes.

What do they tell us?

Australian Aboriginal People have no written language so they used symbols in order to pass down their important cultural stories through generations. An Aboriginal artist cannot paint a story that does not belong to them through family.

The meaning can depend on which tribe the artist is from. The circles could be campfires, trees, hills, digging holes, water holes or a spring. The meaning can be changed by the use of colour.



History:

Aboriginal people arrived in Australia about 50,000 years ago. They may have traveled from Asia across land bridges that were exposed when sea levels were lower. The hardy Aborigines have learned to live in the harsh conditions of the outback. Dutch explorers first landed in Australia in 1606, and the British began to settle there in 1788. Many settlers were criminals sent to live in Australia as punishment. For a short time, the newcomers lived peacefully with the Aboriginal people. But soon, fighting broke out over who owned the land. In 1851, gold was discovered in Australia. A rush to find riches brought thousands of new immigrants, and by 1859, six separate colonies existed. In 1901, these colonies joined to form a British commonwealth.

Source:<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/australia>



Captain Cook landing at Botany Bay in 1770