

Reading Part 1

Read the text and the questions. Choose the correct answer for each question.

Dot art

The appearance of Aboriginal 'dot' paintings, produced by men from the western deserts of Central Australia in the early 1970s, has been called the greatest art movement of the twentieth century. It all started in a place called Papunya, a village of makeshift huts first established in the Australian outback in the 1950s to bring together various semi-nomadic groups.

In 1971, art teacher Geoffrey Bardon took a post in a school in Papunya. He was horrified by the inhabitants' dreadful living conditions but impressed by the beauty of their drawings – circles and snake-like patterns – which represented the world of dreams.

He realised that the various groups weren't used to living together and so were struggling to build a sense of community. A simple school project, drawing a painting on the wall, or in other words a mural, brought him into contact with the village elders. Although Bardon's young pupils could draw their own stories, they were not allowed to draw the elders' stories. Bardon had to encourage the men to create a mural in keeping with the traditions that had existed for over 20,000 years. The elders drew their own mural, the *Honey Ant Dreaming*, known now only through photographs as it was painted over by the authorities right after it was made. However, it started their process of transcribing traditional body markings and sand drawings onto other, more conventional surfaces, too. Three circles connected by lines represented the *Honey Ant Dreaming*. The so-called 'dot and circle' style had been born.

The authorities in Canberra were not amused, as if painting murals on the walls of a school might be a threat. But painting *The Honey Ant Dreaming* encouraged the elders, and they began to make small paintings on any available surface, including scraps of board and corrugated iron. Bardon supplied them with acrylic paints and canvas, and by early 1972, a painting area had been set up in the storeroom of the Town Hall hut. Bardon regularly went to Alice Springs to sell the paintings to local people for a small profit, but most from this time can no longer be found.

A recent exhibition in Paris included early examples of this art form. After consulting some of the artists and their descendants, the curators decided to devote a special area to art that displays a series of dreams – of kangaroos, children, snakes and such. At the start of the exhibition there was a set of photographs with images which had been inspired by nature: circular trails left by snakes and the characteristic footmarks of kangaroos in the sand. The dreams depicted in the images are certainly more powerful than reality and extremely beautiful.

1. Which statement is true of Geoffrey Bardon?
 - a) He went to Papunya for a career change.
 - b) He continued his profession in Papunya.
 - c) He couldn't understand the local art.

2. The village elders
 - a) were as eager to draw as the children.
 - b) made an appeal to the authorities.
 - c) refused to let others draw for them.

3. The original mural *Honey Ant Dreaming*
 - a) was immediately destroyed.
 - b) was exhibited in Canberra.
 - c) was based on a photograph.

4. Which statement is true of the elders?
 - a) They used a variety of artistic methods.
 - b) Their paintings earned them lots of money.
 - c) Their original works hang in many galleries.

5. The exhibition photographs represented
 - a) images of animals and plants.
 - b) the influence of nature on dreams.
 - c) everyday life in a tribal village.

6. The article is about
 - a) one man's struggle with authority.
 - b) the commercialisation of art.
 - c) the growth of an art form.