Earthly reflections of heavenly things

This exhibition brings together three senior Australian artists from different cultural, religious and artistic traditions. Asher Bilu from Melbourne, Queensland-based painter Leonard Brown and Indigenous Anmatyerre artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye engage through their art with ideas relating to mysticism and spirituality.

Asher Bilu (born 1936) produces ambitious artworks that he describes as ‘visual ecstasies’. During the last five decades, Bilu has experimented with materials, three-dimensionality and scale to create artworks that probe the metaphysics of matter, space and energy. Included in the exhibition are three major paintings from the last two decades of Bilu’s practice.

For over thirty years, Leonard Brown (born 1949) has produced minimalist abstract paintings that utilise the expressive potential of colour. Brown applies paint using carefully conceived methods of dripping, pooling and scraping, allowing the effects of time, gravity and the unique character of the moment to play their part in a work’s appearance. The works included here range in date from 2001 to 2007 and illustrate the most recent stylistic developments in Brown’s oeuvre.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye (1916–1996) was one of the first Australian Aboriginal artists whose work was celebrated for its ability to convey the timeless precepts of Aboriginal culture through a language of refined abstraction. Comprising indeterminate fields of layered marks, Kngwarreye’s paintings illustrate her concept of the interconnectedness of all things. Made between 1989 and 1993, the works in the exhibition are drawn from the first four years of her short painting career.

Through their work, these artists offer us the experience of being drawn into a state of prolonged aesthetic contemplation, one that has the potential to exist independently of the world of ordinary sensations.