

BLACK,

WHITE

+ COLOUR

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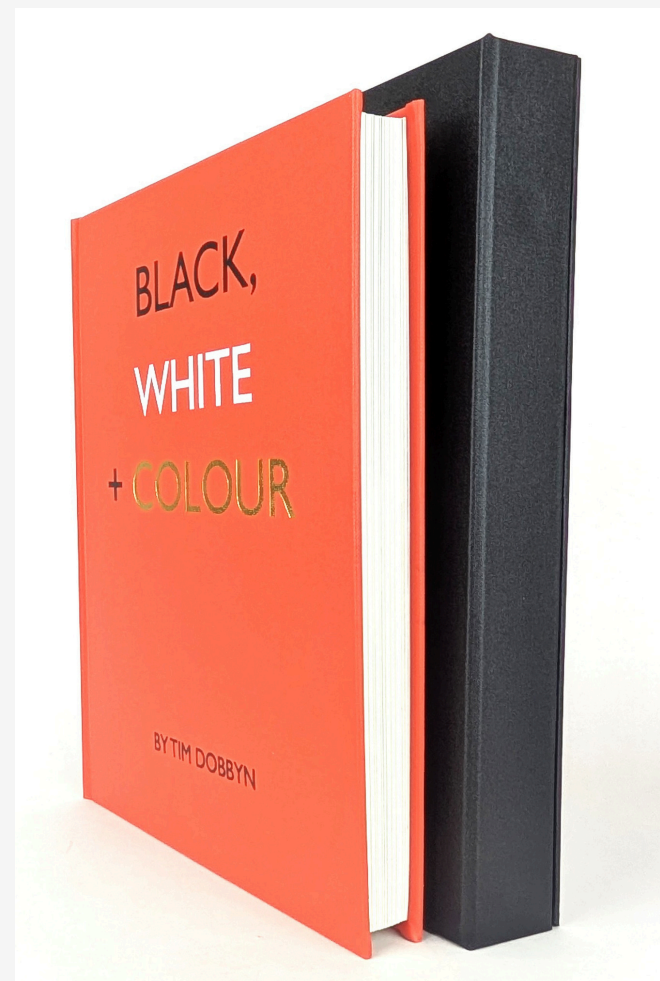
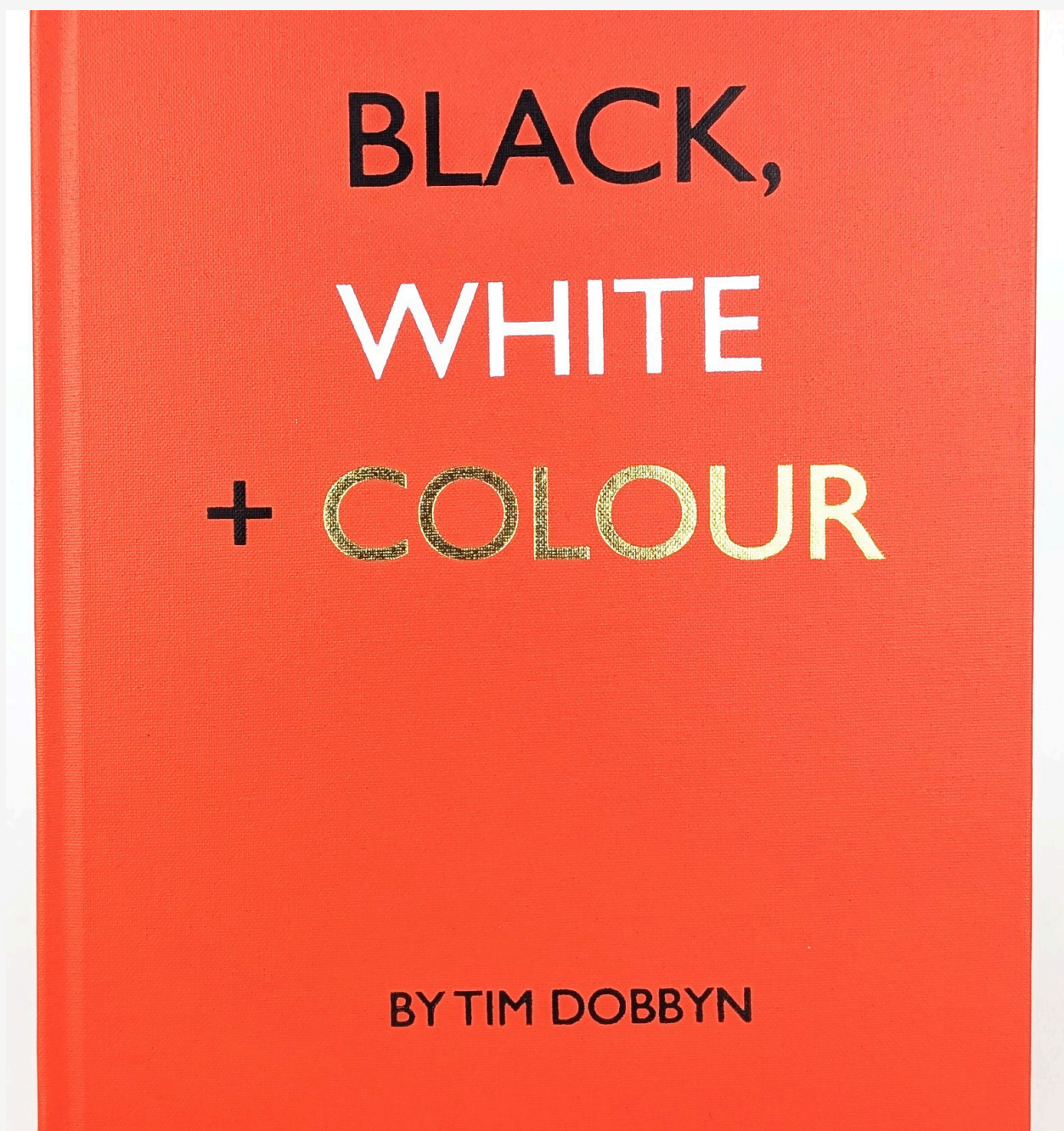
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Black, White + Colour

A biography of Mervyn Bishop, Australia's first Indigenous professional photographer, by Tim Dobbyn.

Publisher: Ginninderra Press

ISBN:9781761097089

Publication Date: October 1, 2025

Print Length:207 pages

This specially bound limited edition in box, coordinated by Josef Lebovic Gallery, is limited to 100 copies plus artist proofs, in two formats. Two original photographs accompany this limited edition and were printed in 2025 and signed by Mervyn Bishop.

About the book

This biography of one of Australia's treasured artists offers an intimate portrait of the struggles and triumphs of Mervyn Bishop, Australia's ground-breaking Indigenous photographer.

Born in Brewarrina NSW in 1945, he used chance, charm and talent to join the staff of the Sydney Morning Herald at just 17. He won a top news photography award but never received the customary pay increase. Disillusioned, Bishop moved to Canberra as a government photographer and took the iconic photo of Gough Whitlam pouring earth into the hands of traditional owner Vincent Lingiari. He later returned to Sydney and was eventually befriended by the arts scene, leading to his first solo exhibition in 1991. But this victory was clouded by the death of his wife on the day of the opening. While often celebrated for chronicling the rising visibility of Indigenous Australians, Bishop is also proud of what he calls his "whitefella pictures". He carved his own path, deftly navigating the Black and White worlds of post-war Australia.

Hardback, 207 pages, offset printed on ivory silk paper for superior image reproduction and touch. Designed and typeset by Isambard Thomas.
Text courtesy of Tim Dobbyn - <https://www.blackwhiteandc.com>

Tim Dobbyn is a former journalist who started at Australian Associated Press in 1981 before moving to the United States in 1987 to work for Reuters. After taking a break from daily journalism, he worked freelance jobs before starting work on the Mervyn Bishop biography in 2018. He and his family have known Bishop since 1962. He lives near Washington D.C. with his wife Sheila and two impossible dogs.



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Foreword by Mervyn Bishop

My story and these photographs are in many ways accidental. As a boy of five in Brewarrina I fell in love with photography, but I never thought of it as a career until I got a job at the Sydney Morning Herald at 17.

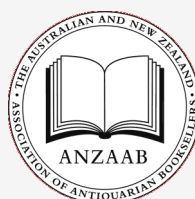
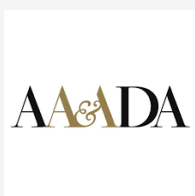
I might well have been a shearer, if I'd been a bit bigger or worked in the town bank or been a railways clerk. It was the local headmaster and an Anglican priest who encouraged me to finish high school and look for jobs in photography.

My photography is rooted in the newspaper world. I've described my work as just making a record, but was fortunate to be present at some important events and my work with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs took me all over Australia. I also captured some wonderful moments with family members such as cousins Ralph and Jim, probably the happiest pix of all.

Opportunities presented themselves and I just went with them. I took on a visiting lectureship at Brewarrina, the boys' high school that I struggled for a bit to find freelance work and to support my two children.

There were some bad times as well. My wife Elizabeth died young, and I've felt mistreated at times by both Whitefellas and Blackfellas but I love yarning with all sorts of people and I've kept my politics to myself, and playing it straight won. My images are my message.

I hope you enjoy this book. We had a lot of fun and only a few tears pulling together my story. And, as scribblers go, Tim Dobbyn's a decent and honest writer.



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Format 1

Black, White + Colour

Tim Dobbyn

Editions number 1–70.

Each specially bound limited edition in box contains an original signed photograph.

Title – *Is there an Aboriginal photography?* Self-portrait, 1989.

\$1,650

CL502-01



Format 2 - Black, White + Colour

Tim Dobbyn

Editions number 71–100.

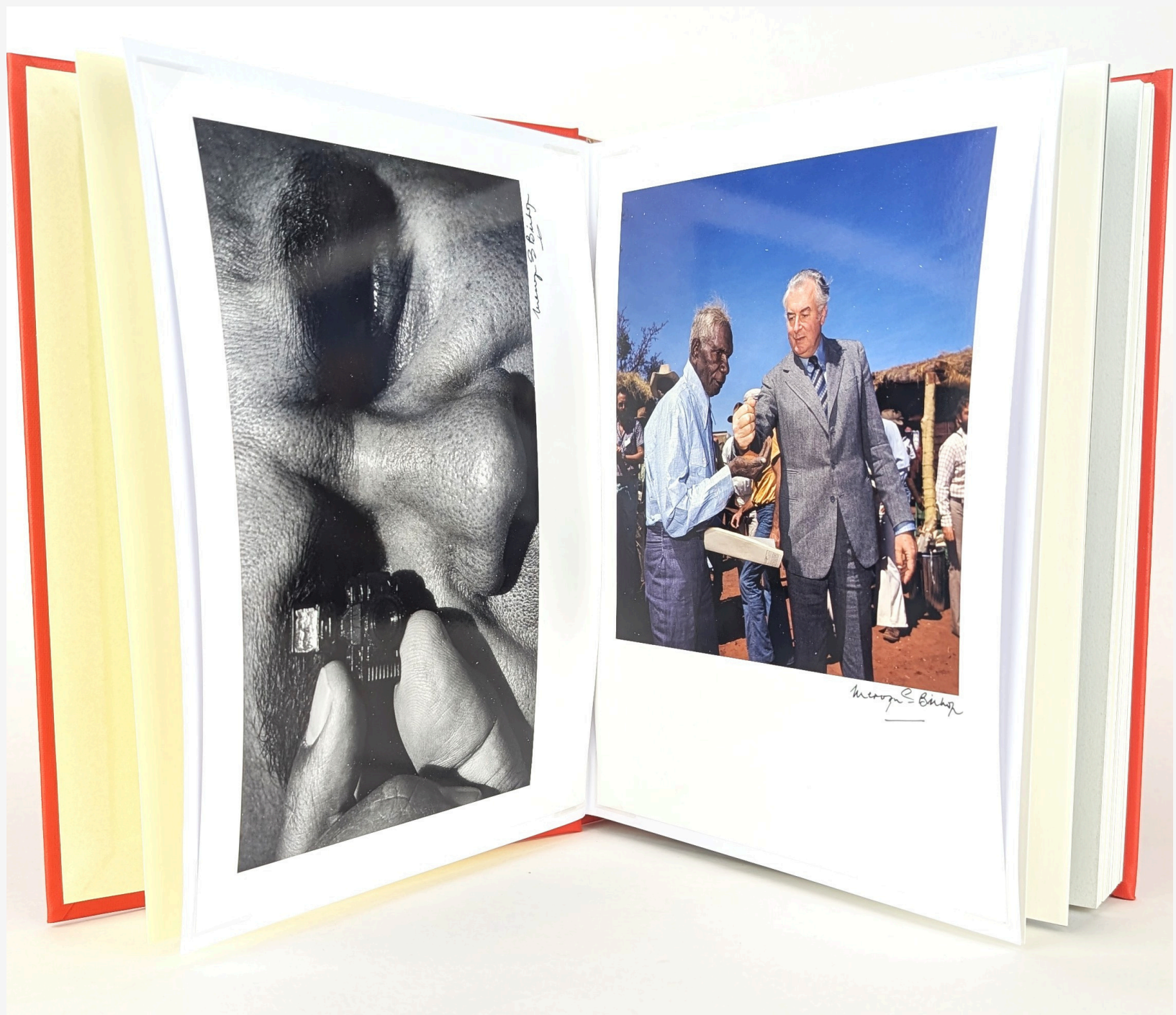
Each specially bound limited edition in box contains two original signed photographs.

Title – *Is there an Aboriginal photography?* Self-portrait, 1989.

Title – *Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into hand of traditional landowner Vincent Lingiari (Gurindji) Wattie Creek, Northern Territory, 1975.*

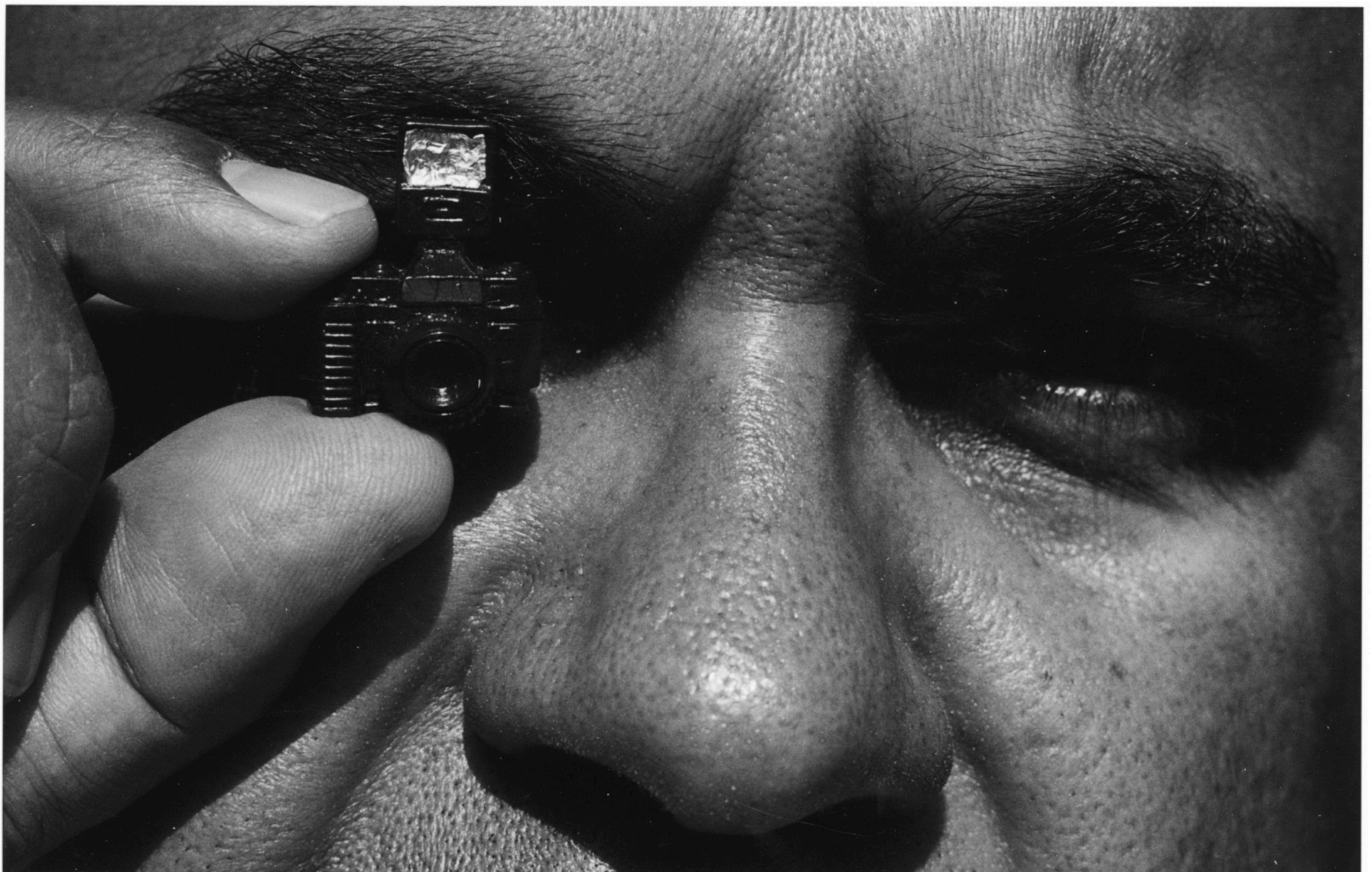
\$5,500

CL502-02



Is there an Aboriginal photography? Self-portrait, 1989.

Included in editions number 1–100.



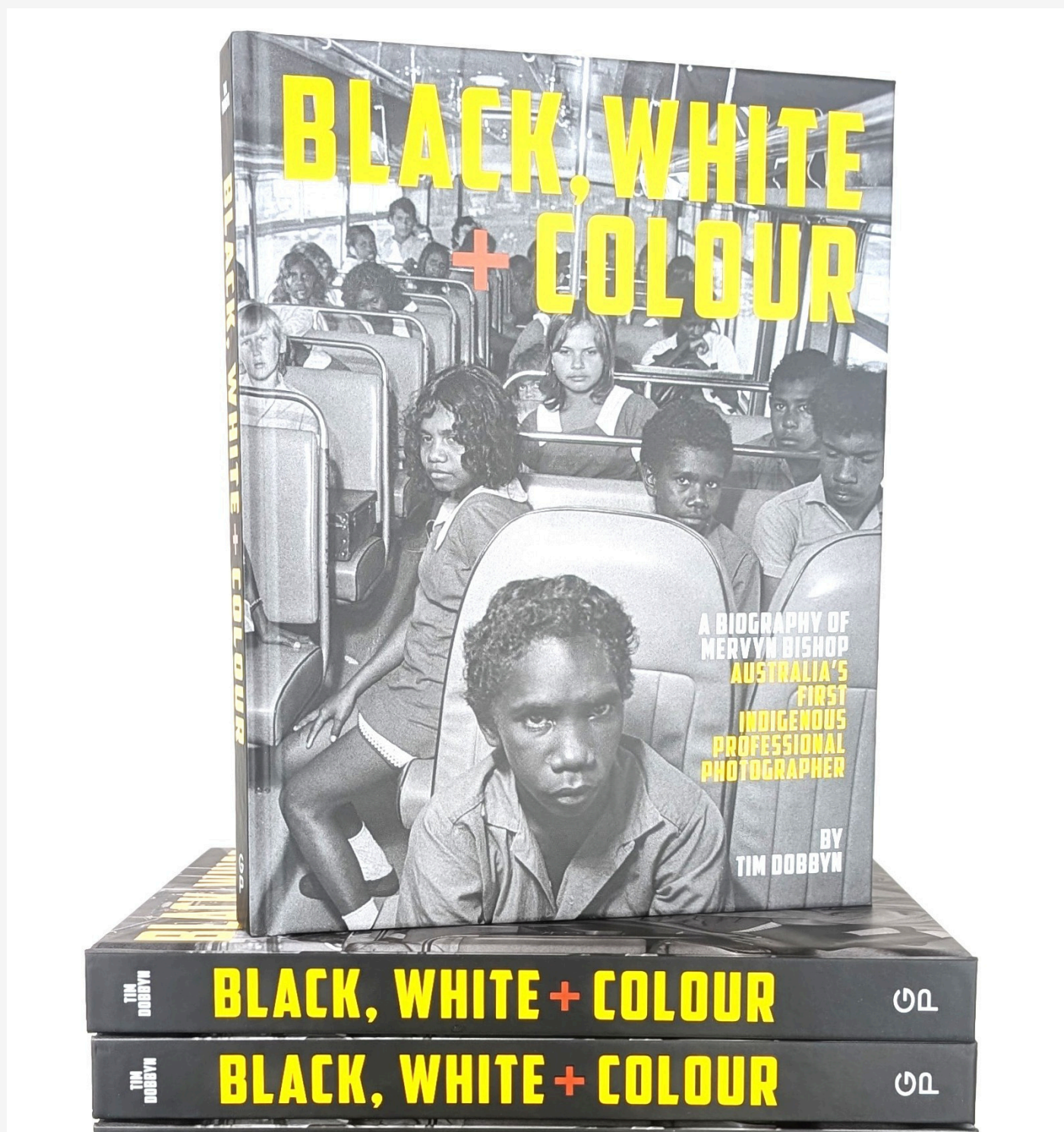
Mervyn S. Bishop

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into hand of traditional landowner Vincent Lingiari (Gurindji) Wattie Creek, Northern Territory, 1975.

Included in editions number 70–100.



Mervyn S. Birch



Black, White + Colour - Standard Edition

The standard edition of Black, White + Colour is available through major book outlets.

Each specially bound limited edition in box is limited to 100 copies in two formats, plus artist proofs. With each purchase you will receive a complementary 'reading copy' of the Tim Dobbyn standard edition of Black, White + Colour.

Every specially bound limited edition in box is numbered and are issued on a first come, first served basis, or by special request.

Mervyn Bishop

(b. 1945, Brewarrina NSW)

Mervyn Bishop is a pioneering Indigenous Australian photographer whose career reshaped both photojournalism and national storytelling. Joining The Sydney Morning Herald in 1963, he became the first Aboriginal press photographer, capturing pivotal moments in the country's social and political transformation.

His award-winning image Life and Death Dash (1971) earned him the Nikon–Walkley Press Photographer of the Year, and his iconic 1975 photograph of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pouring soil into the hands of Gurindji leader Vincent Lingiari remains one of Australia's most enduring symbols of land rights.

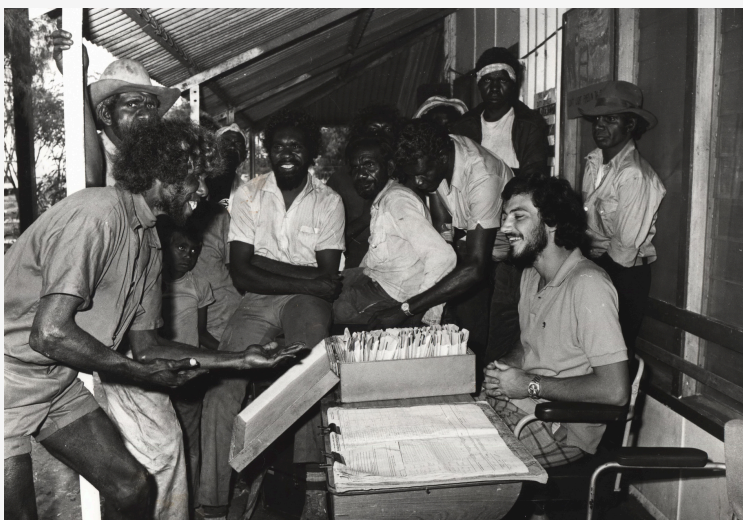


Bishop went on to document community life for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, teach photography at Eora Centre and Tranby College, and exhibit internationally. He received the Red Ochre Award for lifetime achievement in 2000. His work is represented in major collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Australia, and the National Portrait Gallery.

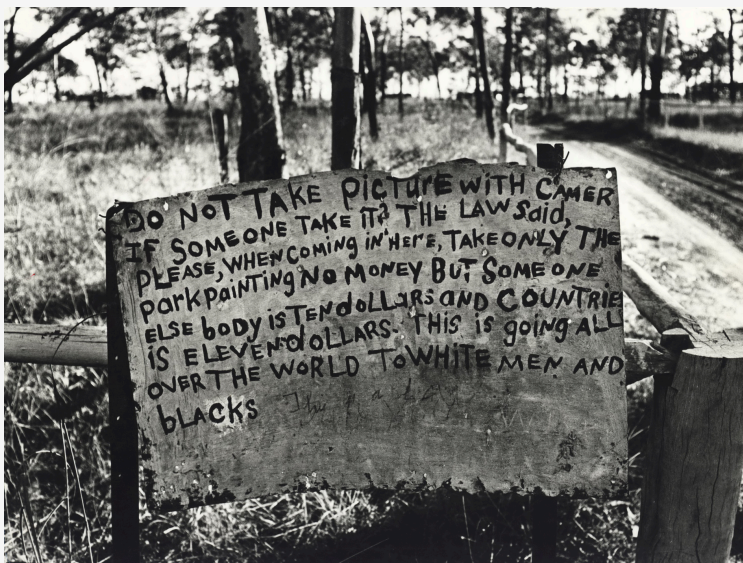
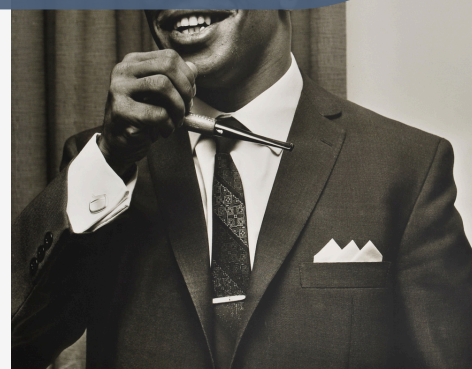
Image: Mervyn Bishop with camera, Sydney 2024. Gerrit Fokkema.



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A selection of curated works by
Meryvn Bishop available for purchase





**Prime Minister Gough Whitlam Pours Soil Into Hand Of
Traditional Land Owner (Gurindji) Vincent Lingiari
(Daguragu/Wattie Creek), Northern Territory.**

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1975/2021. 2/25. Digital c-type photograph, signed, dated and titled, 60cm x 60cm. Framed.

Illustrated on page 81, *In Dreams*. Mervyn Bishop: Thirty Years of Photography, 1960-1990. Held in AGNSW, NGA. Commissioned by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to document this historic event of handing back the land to the Indigenous people. This picture was shot in colour and then converted to black-and-white for publishing purposes. Only a few prints were made by Bishop before 1991 when he returned to his negatives to print for his touring show *In Dreams*.

\$33,000

CL179-92



Life And Death Dash

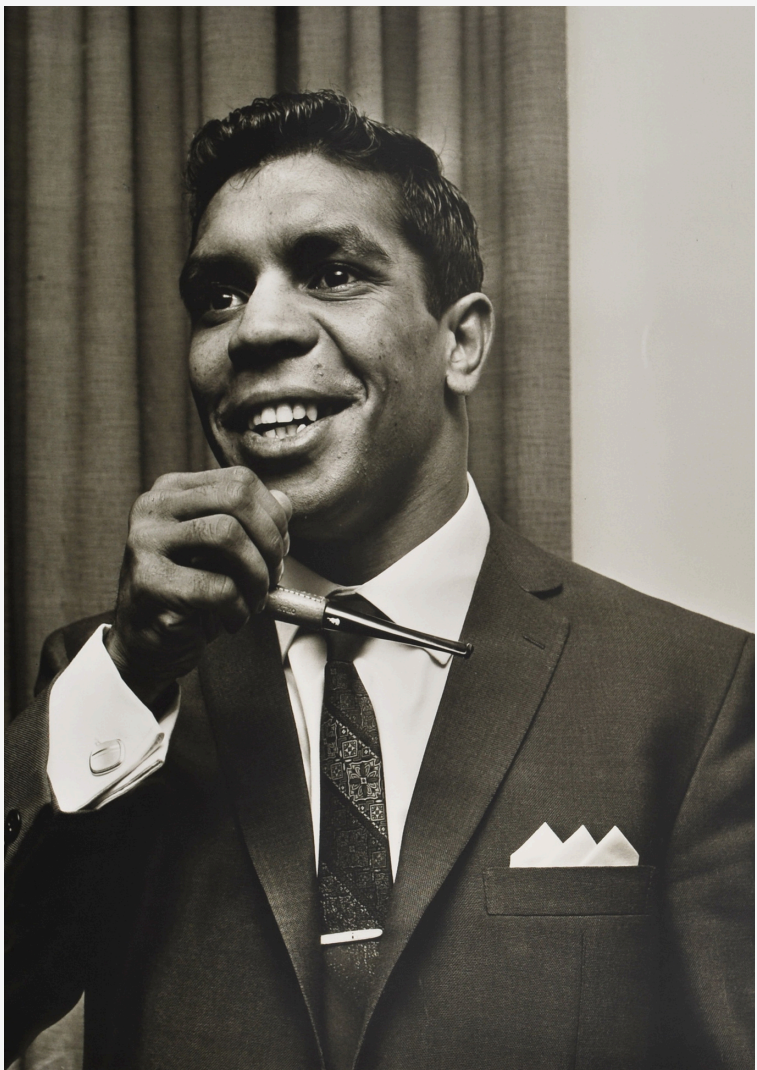
Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1971. Vintage silver gelatin photograph, untitled caption on mimeographed slip affixed with tape verso, 24.1 x 19.1cm.

Caption reads "A nurse races this three-year-old boy - he'd taken an overdose of drugs - into St Margaret's Children's Hospital at Darlinghurst. His mother, with a police escort, had dashed him and his [sister] - also poisoned - to the hospital from Marrickville."

\$11,000

CL203-65



World Champion Bantam Weight Boxer Lionel Rose At His Press Conference, Mascot Airport, Sydney NSW

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1968/2009. Silver gelatin photograph, signed in pencil in lower margin, titled and dated verso, 40.6 x 35.3cm.

Lionel Rose was the first Indigenous Australian to win a world title in boxing, and later the first Indigenous Australian to become Australian of the Year.

\$3,300

CL195-41



Cousins Ralph And Jim Richardson Boating On The Darling River

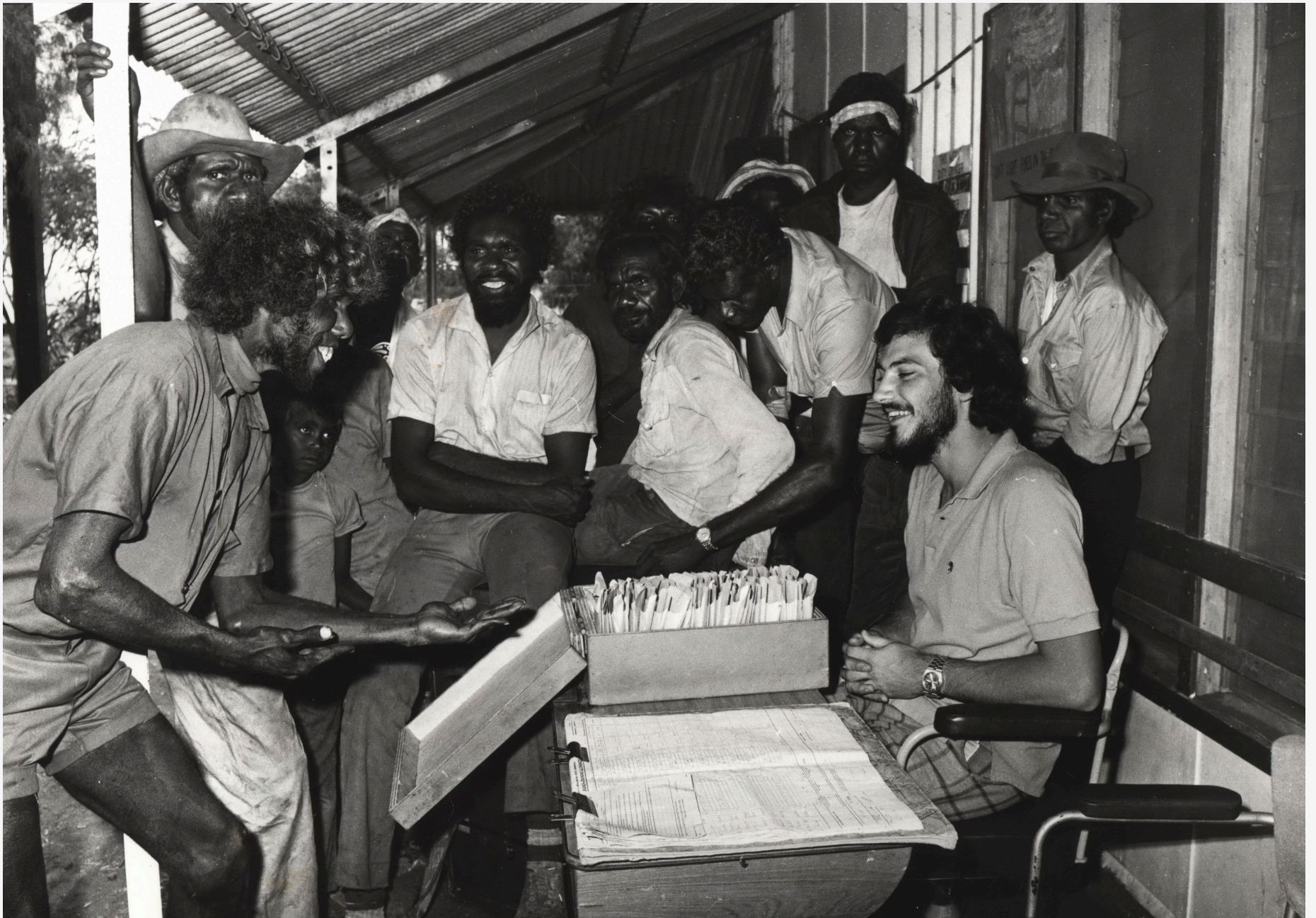
Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1966/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, captioned, dated and signed in pencil verso, 30.3 x 40.3cm. Slight handling creases.

Caption continues "Near Gundawera Sheep Station, Brewarrina, NSW." Illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960-1990*, ACP, 1991, p17. Held in AGNSW; NGA.

\$5,500

CL191-48



Pay Day, Hooker Creek, NT

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1974/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, titled, dated and signed in pencil verso, 28.8 x 40.3cm. Soiling to left portion of image, slight creases to edges.

Illustrated in exhibition catalogue *In Dreams: Mervyn Bishop – Thirty Years Of Photography 1960-1990*, The Australian Centre for Photography, 1991, p58.

\$4,400

CL178-23



**Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser At The Unveiling Of A
Mural At The “Sydney Morning Herald” Foyer, Broadway,
Sydney NSW**

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1981/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, captioned, dated and signed in pencil verso, 28.3 x 40.3cm. Soiling, chips and creases to edges.

Caption continues “On the occasion of the SMH’s Sesquicentenary (150 years).” Illustrated on page 93, In Dreams. Mervyn Bishop: Thirty Years of Photography, 1960-1990.

\$3,300

CL179-127



Women And Cakes, Mungindi, NSW

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1976/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, titled, dated and signed in ink in lower margin, 30.1 x 30.2cm. Minor creases and stain to image centre left.

Illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960–1990*, p84. Mungindi is situated on both sides of the NSW and Queensland borders. It is divided by the Barwon River, and is the only border town in the Southern Hemisphere with the same name in two states. Ref: Wiki.

\$4,400

CL195-43



**Boys And Nurse At Far West Children's Health Clinic,
Manly, NSW**

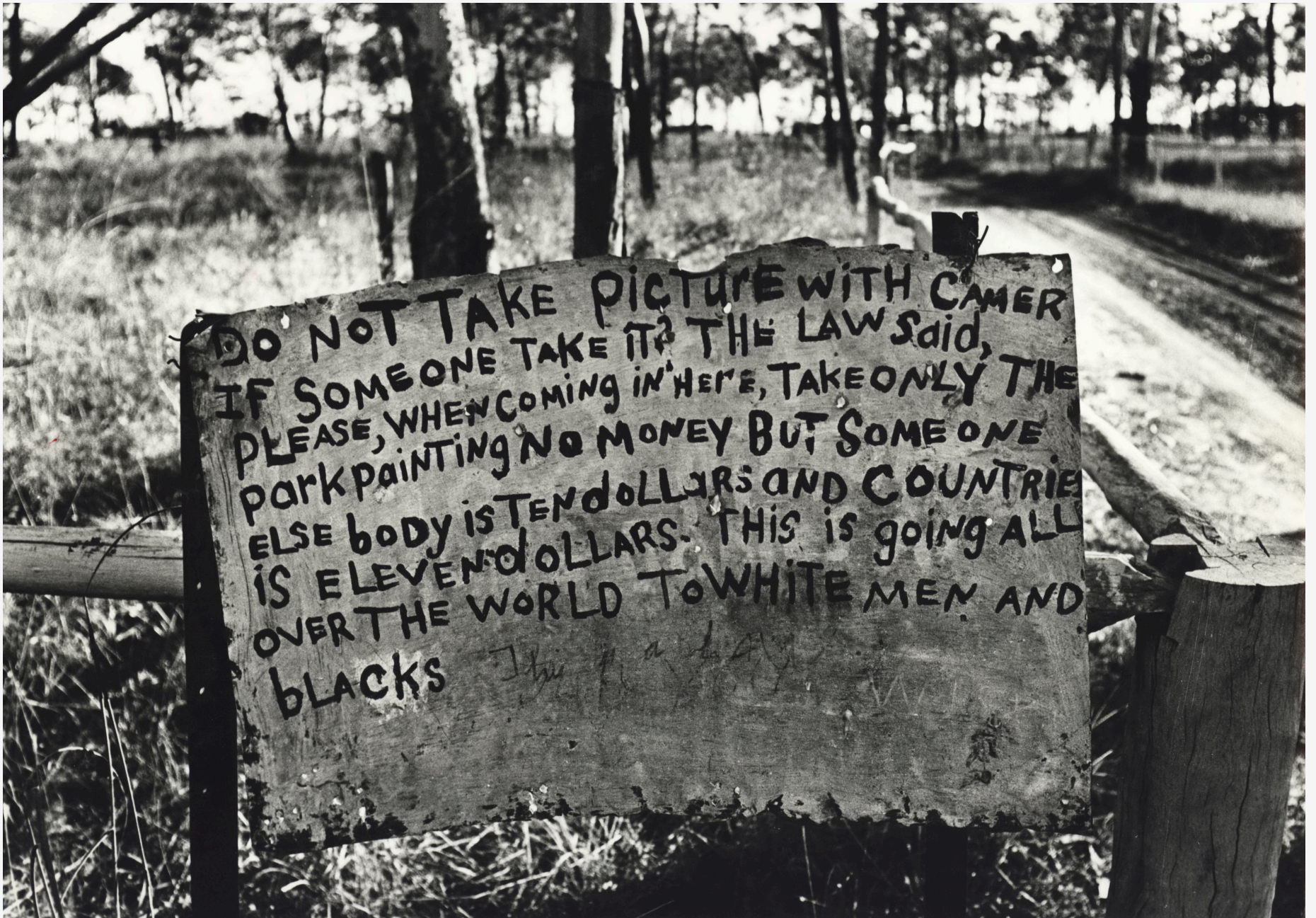
Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1968/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, captioned, dated and signed in ink in lower margin, 30.2 x 30.1cm. Tear to left edge, minor handling creases.

Illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960-1990*, ACP, 1991, p30.

\$5,500

CL191-49



Warning Sign, 30kms From Maningrida, NT

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1974/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, captioned, dated and signed in pencil verso, 30.1 x 40.2cm. Minor creases.

The sign reads "Do not take picture with camer. If someone take it? The law said, please, when coming in here, take only the park painting, no money, but someone else body is ten dollars and countrie is eleven dollars. This is going all over the world to white men and blacks." Illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960-1990*, ACP, 1991, p64.

\$5,500

CL191-50



Women Attend Home Management Course At Yuendumu, NT

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1974/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, titled, dated and signed in pencil verso, 36.9 x 27cm. Slight foxing, handling creases.

Illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960–1990*, p60. Held in AGNSW.

\$5,500

CL195-42



Cross Country Race

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1968. Vintage silver gelatin photograph, titled, signed and dated in pencil verso, 38.6 x 30.3cm. Tears and chips to edges, creases overall.

One of the competitors is wearing a Gosford athletic club patch.

\$5,500

CL178-22



Art And Photography Cadets With Model In Studio

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1967/1990. Silver gelatin photograph, titled, dated and signed in pencil verso, 28.2 x 40.3cm. Minor creases, crinkles, chips to edges.

Title continues "at Sydney Morning Herald, Broadway, Sydney, NSW." Illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960–1990*, p21. Held in AGNSW with variant title.

\$5,500

CL195-39



Barry Humphries In His Dressing Room Prior To His Performance At The Tivoli Theatre

Mervyn Bishop (Aust., b.1945).

1968. Vintage silver gelatin photograph, titled, dated and signed in pencil verso, 27 x 39.6cm. Slight stains to image lower left, creases, minor soiling to margins.

“Down with expatriate transvestites” is written on the mirror in lipstick. Similar image illustrated in Bishop, *In Dreams: Thirty Years of Photography 1960–1990*, p35.

\$4,900

CL195-40

The Josef Lebovic Gallery

Established in 1977, the Josef Lebovic Gallery in Kensington, Sydney, specialises in Australian and international vintage works on paper and photographs dating from the 15th to 20th century.

Josef Lebovic is one of Australia's most well known and respected figures in the field of original prints and photography. Josef is a member of the Australian Antique Dealers Association, the New South Wales Antique Dealers Association, and the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD).

AA&ADA



aipad

IVPDA
international vintage
P O S T E R
dealers association

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*Josef Lebovic
Gallery*