

DEAN BOWEN
Flourish

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6 – 29 March 2025

Opening night, 6 March 5 – 7 pm, to be opened by Courtney Kidd, consultant at Artbank

Why, as I have observed recently while in an art-endowed public space, does Dean Bowen's art stop people in their tracks — whether they be young or old and of varying interests and ethnicities? Firstly, his sculptures, paintings and prints are unique. Although related in numerous ways to other instantly effective works of art created over the ages and employing animal imagery, there is nothing quite comparable with Bowen's work and it has an immediate tendency to lift the viewer's spirits.

Secondly, the works are beautifully executed. Now an internationally acclaimed artist, Bowen has spent decades maintaining the highest levels of studio practice. His mastery of techniques, along with a powerful use of colour and meaningful choice of imagery, invests his processes and materials with qualities that capture the viewer's attention while stimulating the imagination. He takes inanimate materials and brings them alive. It is this spirit of life, or *anima mundi*, that is the essence of Bowen's art, as it has been to varying degrees in the notable art of most cultures dating back to deep antiquity.

Although Bowen's entire repertoire of imagery is broader, in the works chosen for this exhibition his subjects are birds, animals, people — even insects — along with simple shelters occupying zones of earth and sky that exude an atmosphere of well-being, warmth and affection. Highly abstracted and possessing distinct personalities, his birds and animals may be playfully reminiscent of the animated human, bird and animal identities of children's books and films that continue to occupy the psyche throughout one's life. However, beyond individual experience, Bowen's images have a timeless ancestry extending back into cultures where art was humanity's primal means of connecting with those mysteries of life that elude us to this day. I have come to think of his art as an attempt, consciously or not, to re-capture and extend the visual impact of that *animus* or animating spirit which is essential to all life. This enterprise has been shared by many cultures that have recognised and used the power of art to awaken the senses and provide reassurance in the hope of communicating with forces beyond human control.

Think of ancient Egypt and other civilisations whose art and architecture is replete with representations of birds, animals and significant human identities, often combining them in 'animistic' sculptures and other artefacts in a quest to understand and influence those vital life-forces, or *mana*, that remains fundamental to human life.

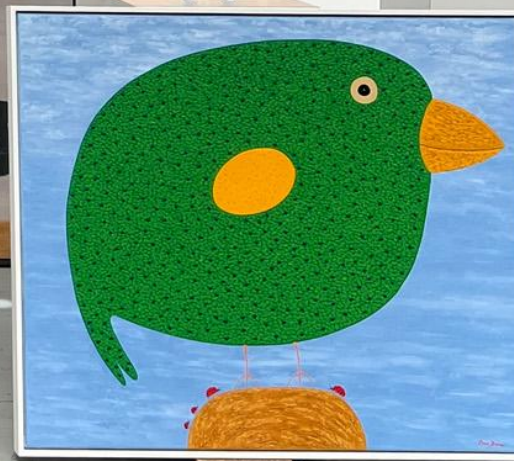
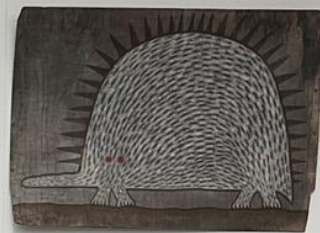
In the first chapter of his book, Totem and Taboo (1972), Sigmund Freud outlines consecutive eras of human development. The first, the animistic, was common to less evolved societies with their dependence on magic, ritual, and artefacts expressing the mana, or life-forces, believed to be shared by man and beast. Next came religion, philosophical thought, and scientific discoveries. Our era, right now, is technologically driven — man and machine rather than man and beast. But a sense of the animistic cannot be erased from our mental history and emerges in the works of artists like Bowen whose seemingly simple birds, animals and humble dwellings, with ladders reaching to the sky or heart-shaped plumes of smoke issuing from their chimneys, are expressions of hope and love in the face of that which remains unknown.

Musing over the items in this exhibition I have asked myself why people become spellbound by a simple, almost oval not quite circular, field of delicious colour endowed with minuscule eye and beak, or a roughly semi-circular shape with spiny quills and horizontal underbelly? All Bowen's works, whether three-dimensional or two, are firmly grounded — on earth, sturdy plinth or strategically placed feet. The human heads, with frontal gaze, are also oval and the horizontal emphasis is replicated in their outstretched arms. There is geometry at work here and this is another universally recognised primal element to which humans respond — whether intellectually or instinctively.

In Bowen's art references to bird families, the egg shapes within the birds' bodies and their friendship and protection of the insects on which they depend can be seen as symbolising the need for human and animal life to continue to flourish — and the importance of art and artist in this endeavour. We are reminded that in shamanistic belief the bird, with its ability to fly — which humanity lacks — was regarded as a messenger between earth and the inaccessible beyond. Given the frailties and incapacity of humans in their dealings with the unknown, birds became endowed with responsibilities, and, like Dean Bowen's art, they bring us joy!

Bowen holds a PhD and an MA from Monash University, as well as a Diploma of Fine Art (Printmaking) from RMIT. He has exhibited widely in Australia and overseas, including Paris, London, Japan, Germany, Poland, Egypt, Switzerland, Spain, China and Slovenia. Bowen has received a number of significant sculpture commissions including Point Leo Estate 2017, Deakin University Burwood Campus 2014, Hamilton Gallery 2014 and the arts/ACT Government Gungahlin Commission 2011. In 2023, he opened a major survey exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Takasaki-City, Japan. Bowen's works are held in many major collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Gallery of Australia, Australian War Memorial, Heidi Museum of Modern Art, Artbank, University of Sydney, Monash University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Melbourne, National Library of Australia, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery and Point Leo Estate.

Jenny Zimmer
Author



Black Canary (Short Tail)

oil on linen

141 x 187 cm (framed)

\$19,500



Rainbow Landscape with Echidna Family

oil on linen

125 x 156.5 cm (framed)

\$16,500



Kookaburra
bronze (ed. of 9)
45 x 46 x 17 cm
\$17,600



Returning Comet (The House of Lights)

oil on linen

140 x 156 cm (framed)

\$18,000



Kookaburra (Blue Wing)

oil on board

125 x 156 cm (framed)

\$16,500

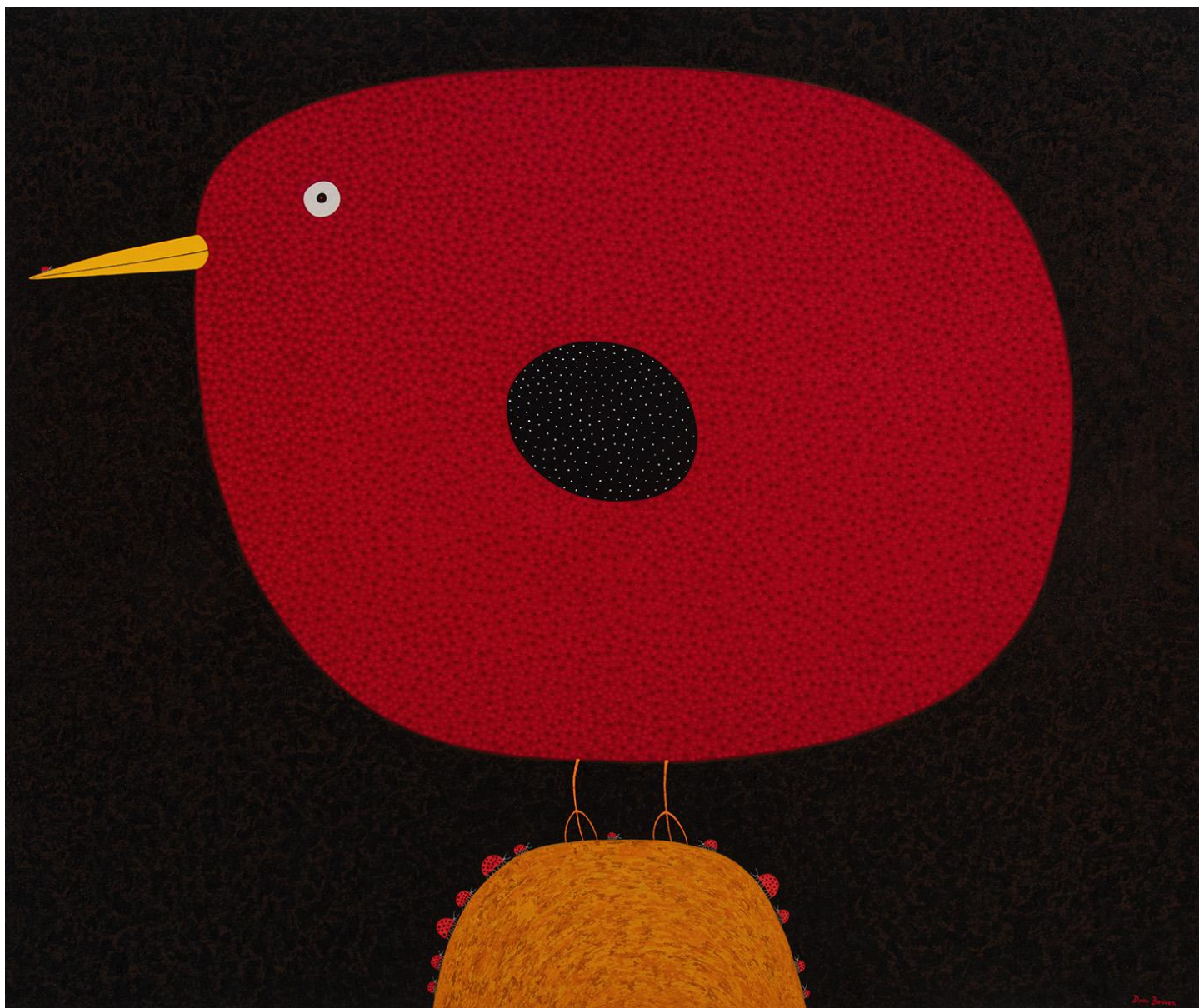


Red Bird with Ladybird Family

oil on linen

158 x 183 cm (framed)

\$22,000

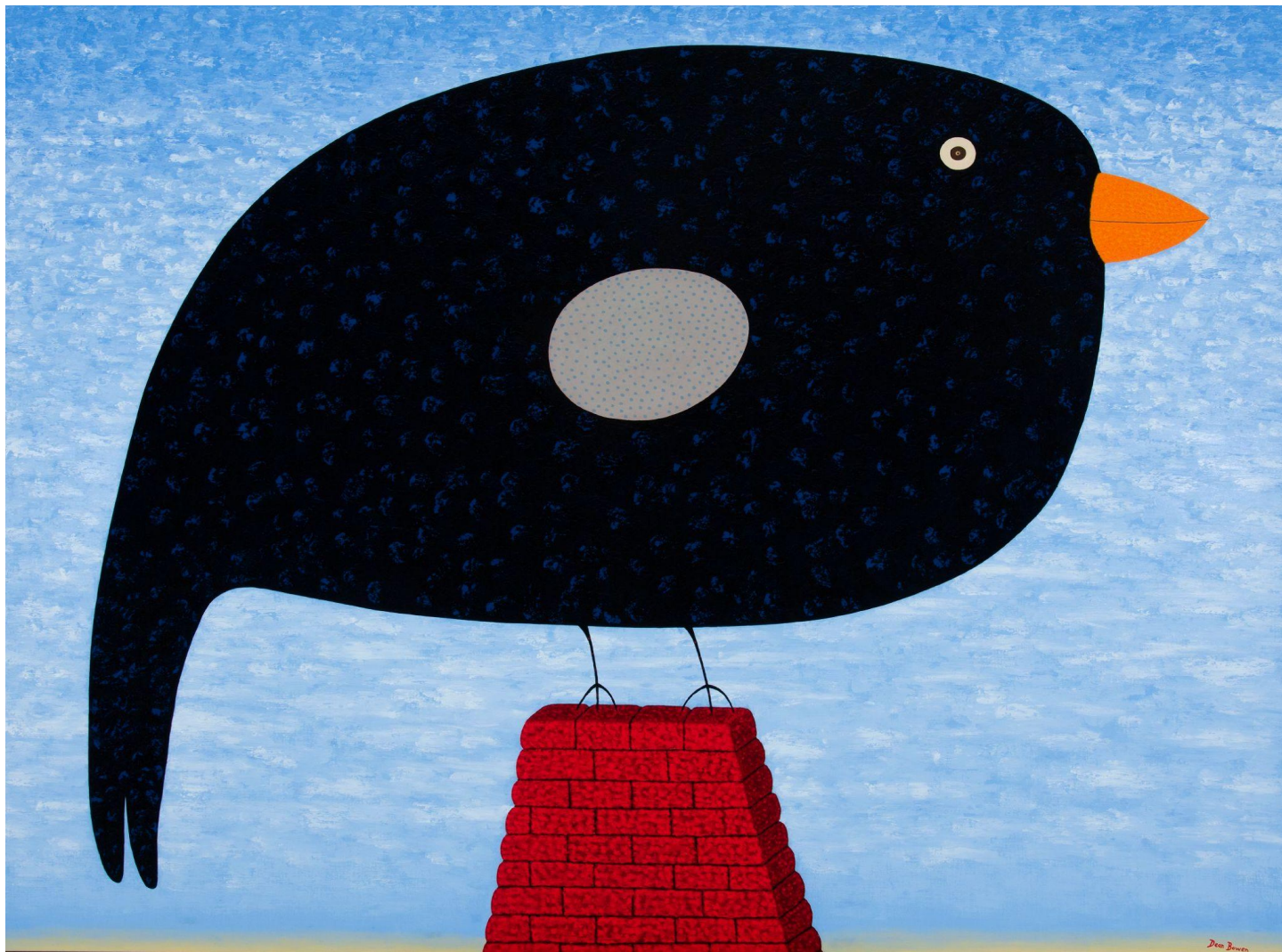


Black Canary (Long Tail)

oil on linen

141 x 187 cm (framed)

\$19,500



The Gentle Rain

oil on linen

140 x 156 cm (framed)

\$18,000



Echidna (Female)
bronze (ed. of 9)
34 x 78 x 20 cm
\$24,000

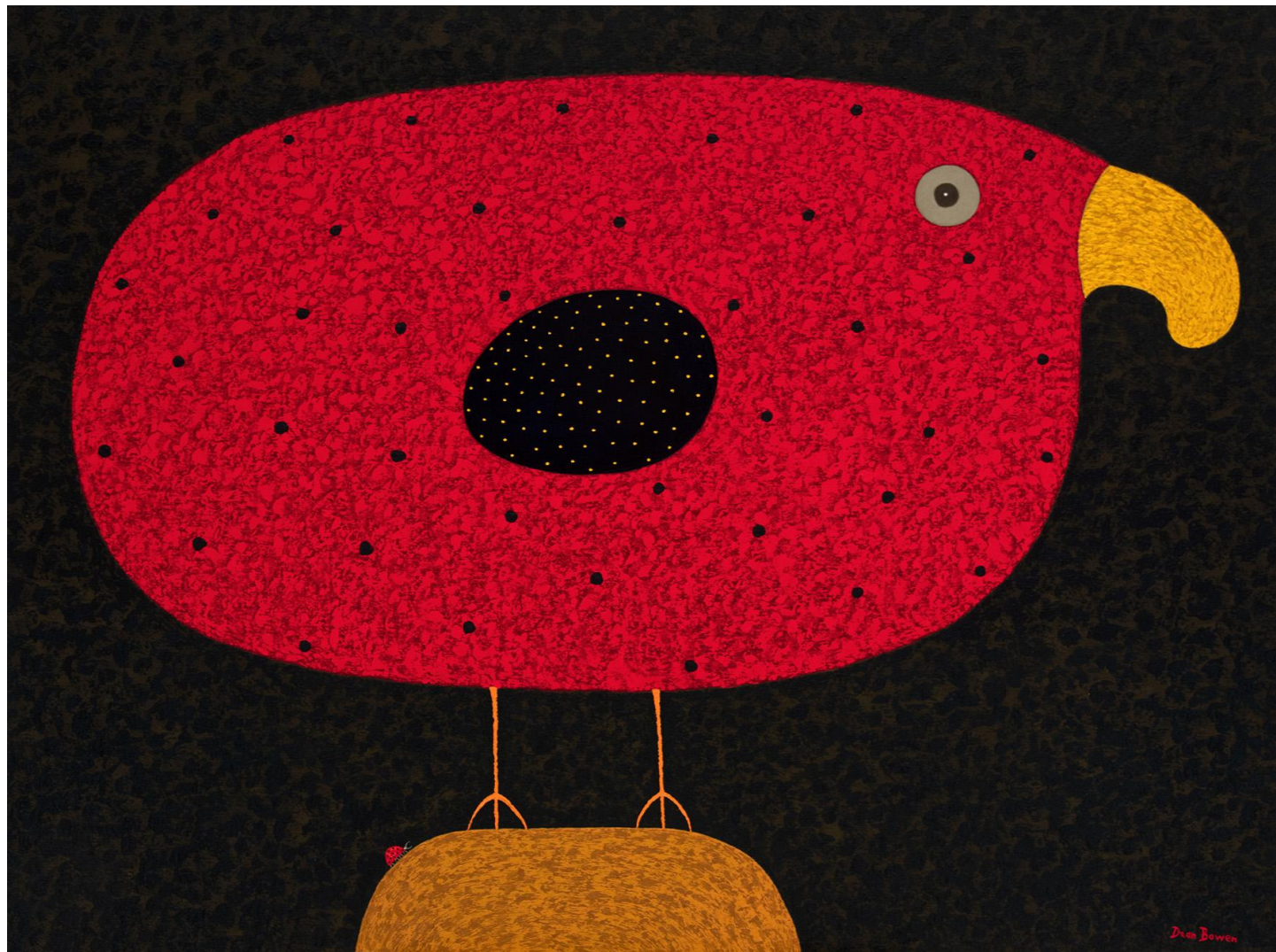


Red Spotted Bird

oil on linen

140 x 186 cm (framed)

\$19,500



Rainbow Country (Echidna Parade)

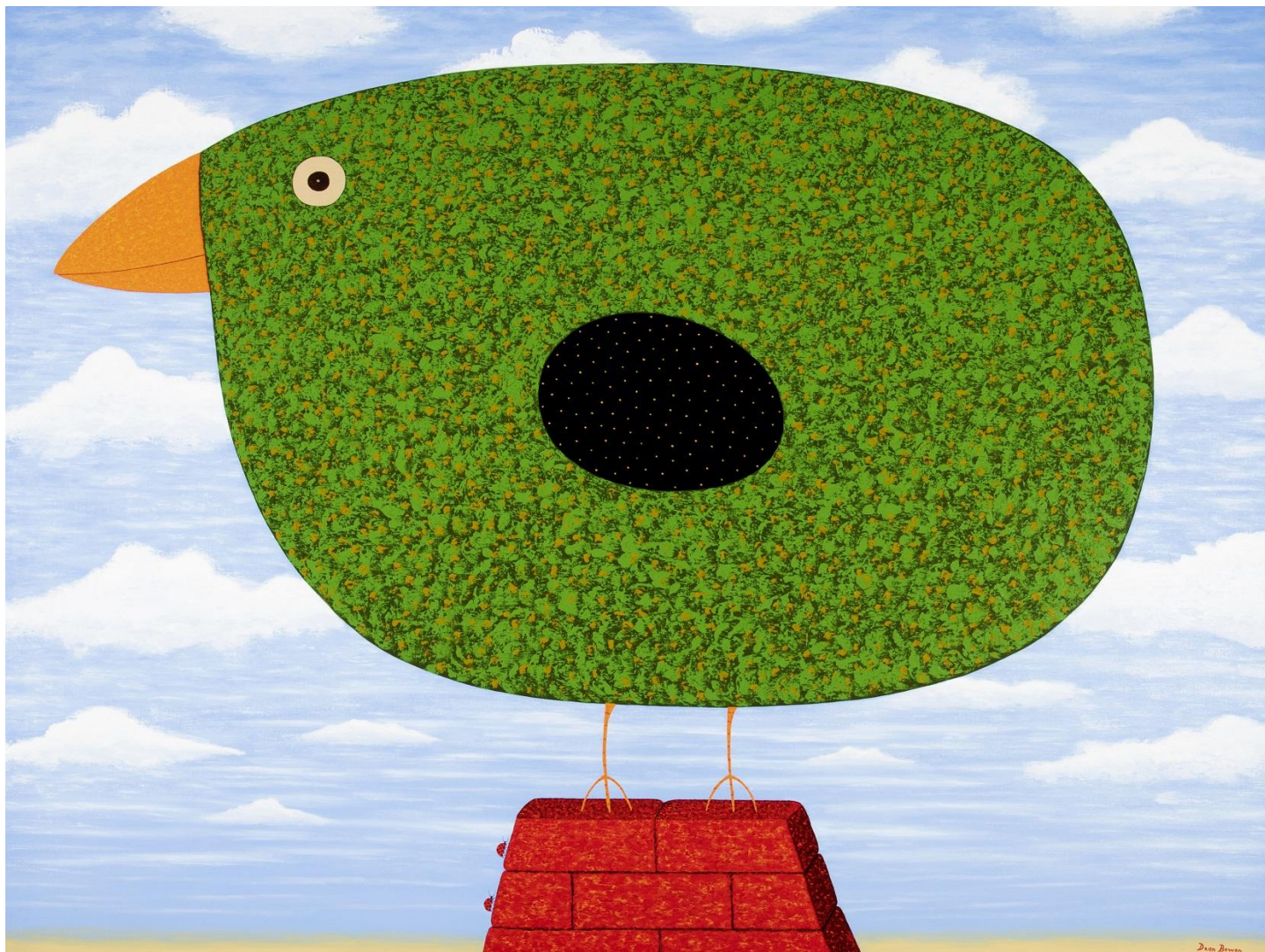
oil on linen

125 x 186 cm (framed)

\$18,000



Perching Green Bird
oil on linen
140 x 186 cm (framed)
\$19,500



Ladder to the Stars

oil on linen

140 x 156 cm (framed)

\$18,000



The Tree of Owls
unique bronze
100 x 108 x 21 cm
\$18,700

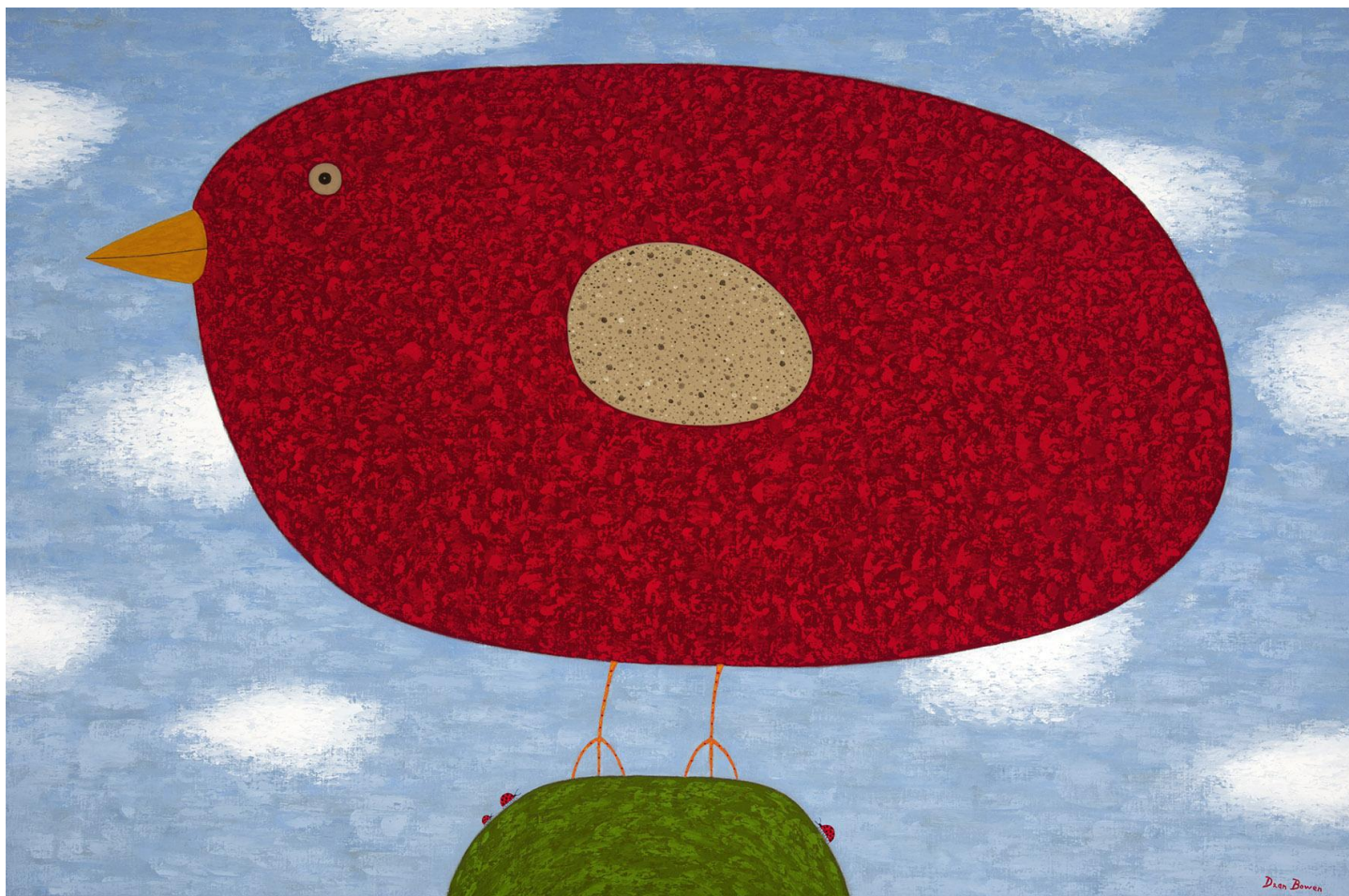


Mother Bird

oil on linen

125 x 186.5 cm (framed)

\$18,000



Meteor Tempest

oil on linen

156 x 156 cm (framed)

\$19,500

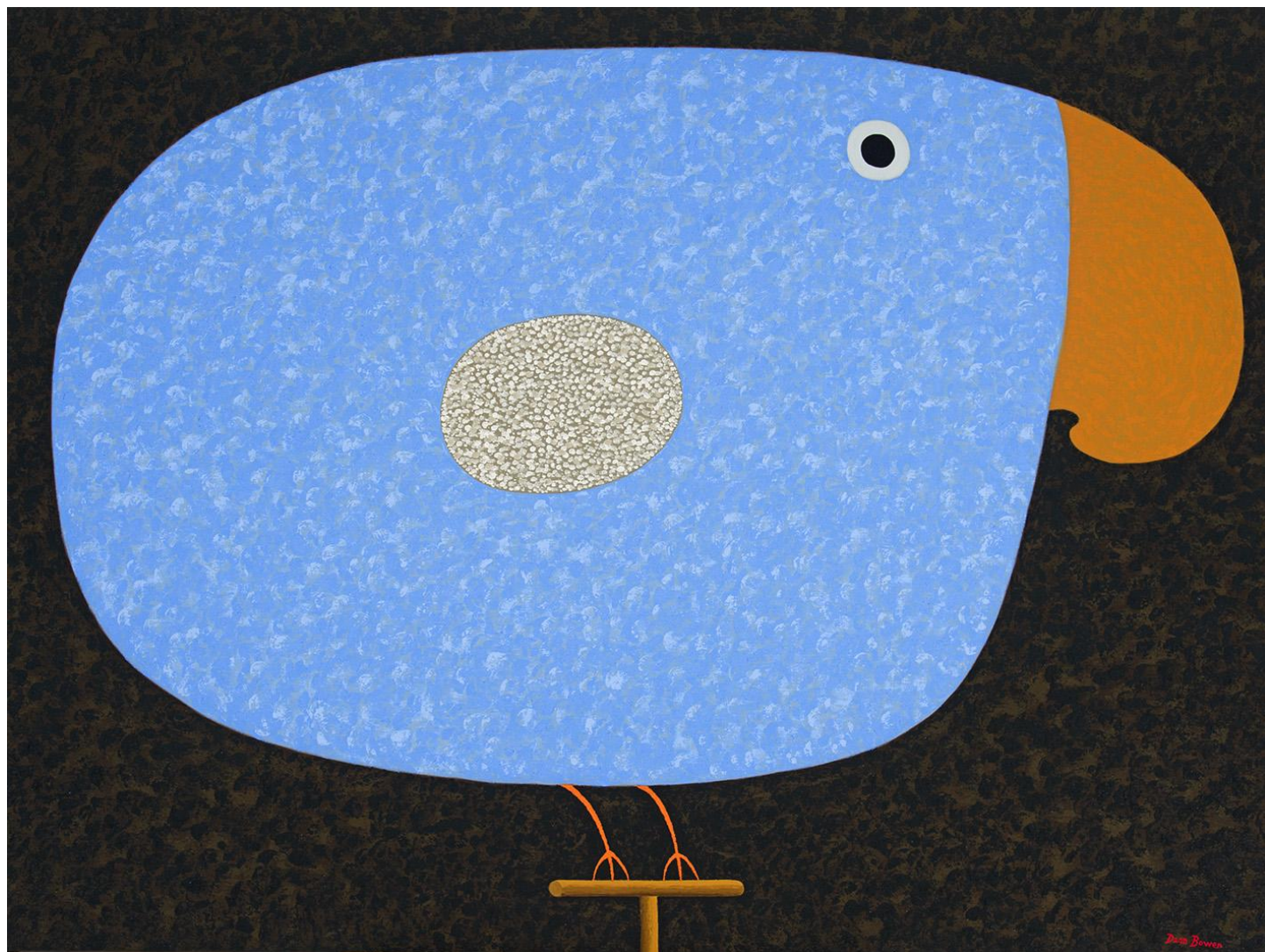


Blue Dodo

oil on linen

140 x 186 cm (framed)

\$19,500



Wombat (small)
bronze (ed. of 9)
32 x 63 x 26 cm
\$24,000



Moon Cat
oil on board
94 x 125 cm (framed)
\$11,000



Long Tailed Bluebird
oil on linen
49 x 56 cm (framed)
\$4,950



Boy with Kookaburra Family

bronze (ed. of 9)

18.5 x 62 x 12 cm

\$12,000



Bird Totem (Blue)

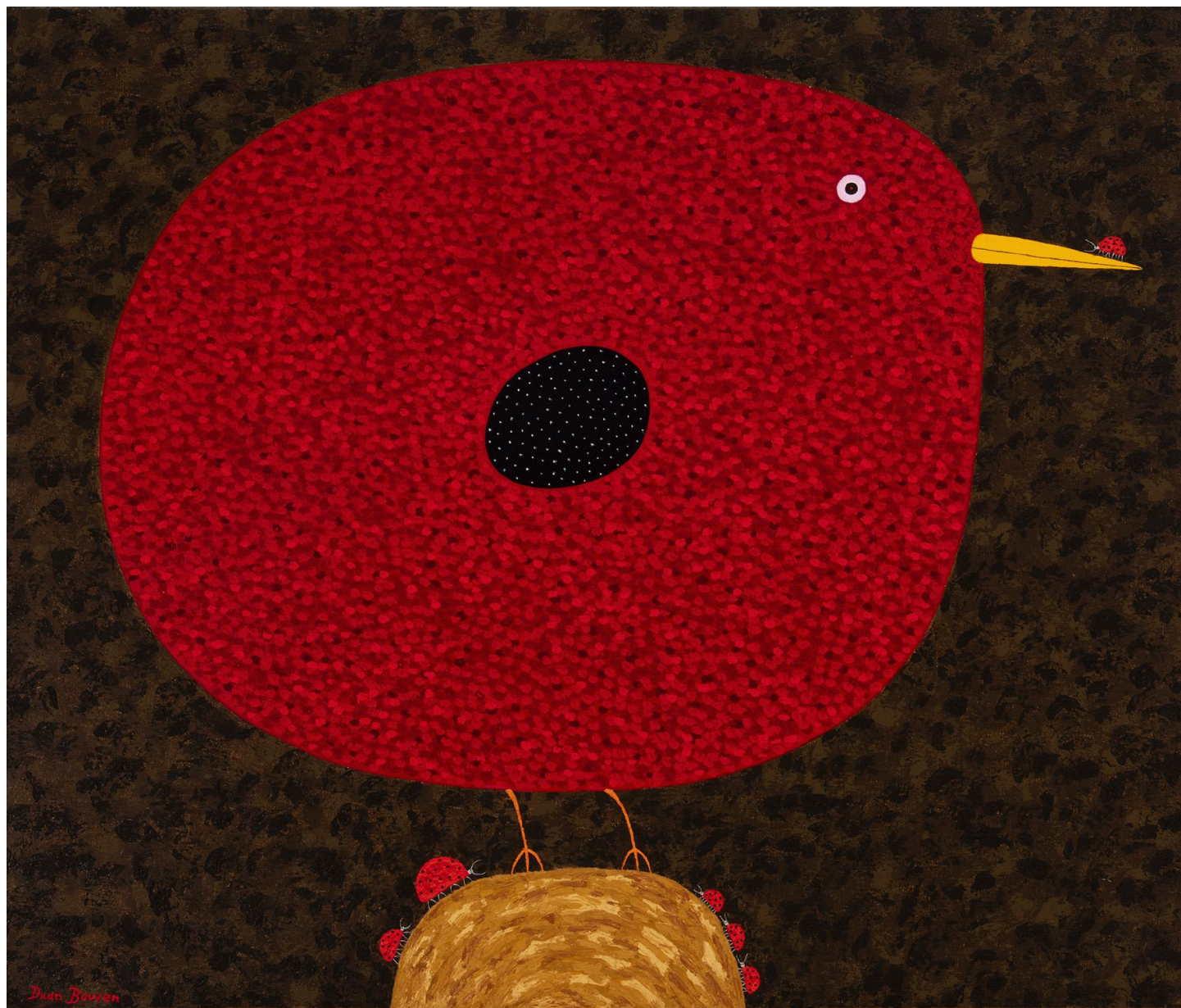
oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Guardian
oil on linen
94 x 109 cm (framed)
\$9,900



Echidna with Friendly Kookaburra

bronze (ed. of 9)

42 x 77 x 19 cm

\$24,000

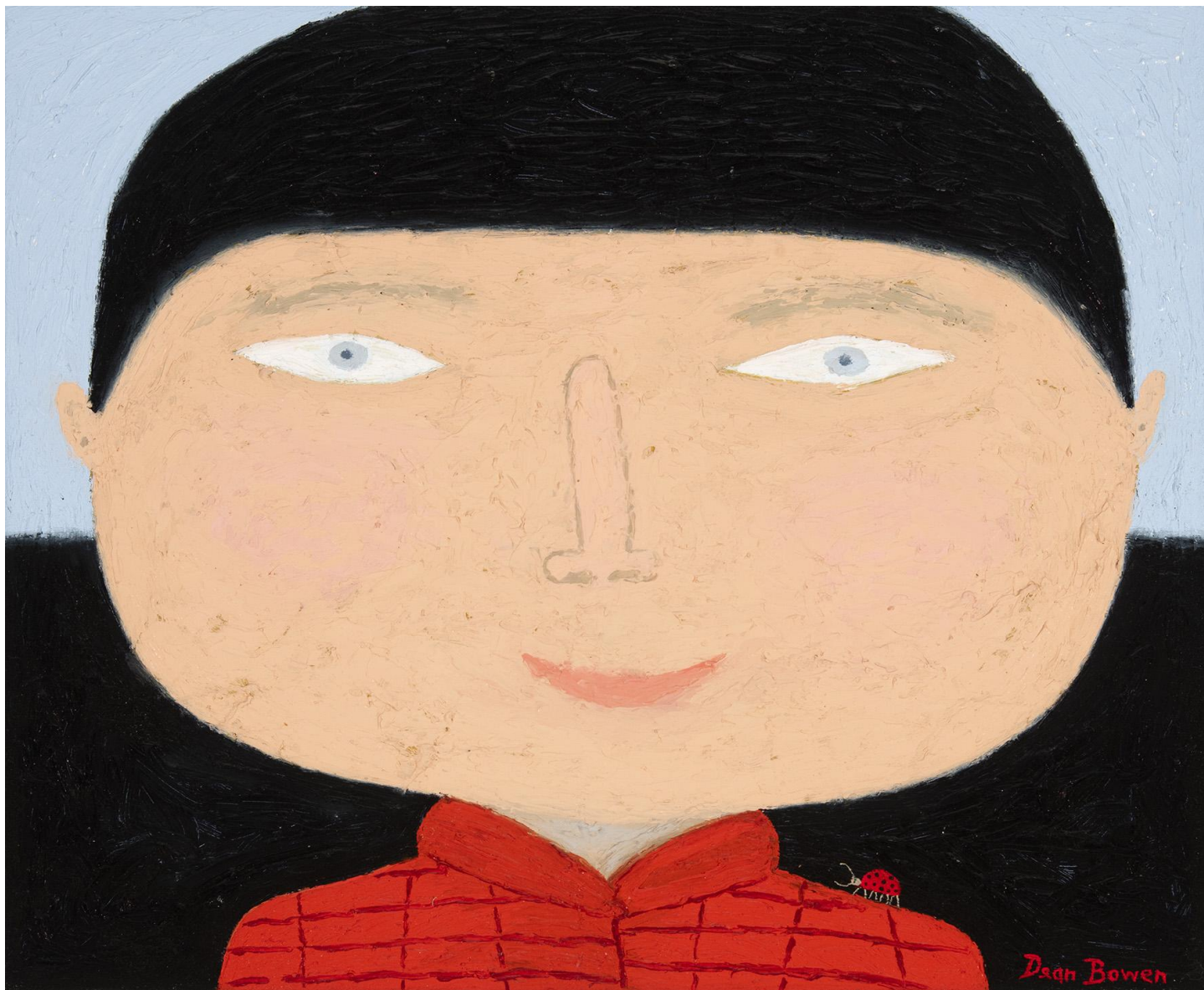


Boy with Ladybird

oil on linen

40.5 x 48.5 cm (framed)

\$4,400



The Little Man (Second State)

bronze (ed. of 9)

31.5 x 27 x 7 cm

\$9,900



Home with Comet
oil on linen
30 x 63 cm (framed)
\$4,400



Echidna with Perching Kookaburra (two leaves)

unique bronze

42.5 x 79 x 17 cm

\$16,500



Barking up the Wrong Tree

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Gargantuan Toucan

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Plump Bird
oil on linen
49 x 56 cm (framed)
\$4,950



The House of Love (Medium)

bronze (ed. of 9)

37 x 19.5 x 8.5 cm

\$8,800



Leaf Bird with Wandering Ladybirds

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Dogs Barking at Ladybirds

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



The Country Home
oil on linen
49 x 56 cm (framed)
\$4,950



House of Love (Nitty-Gritty)

bronze (ed. of 9)

14 x 19 x 5 cm

\$6,600

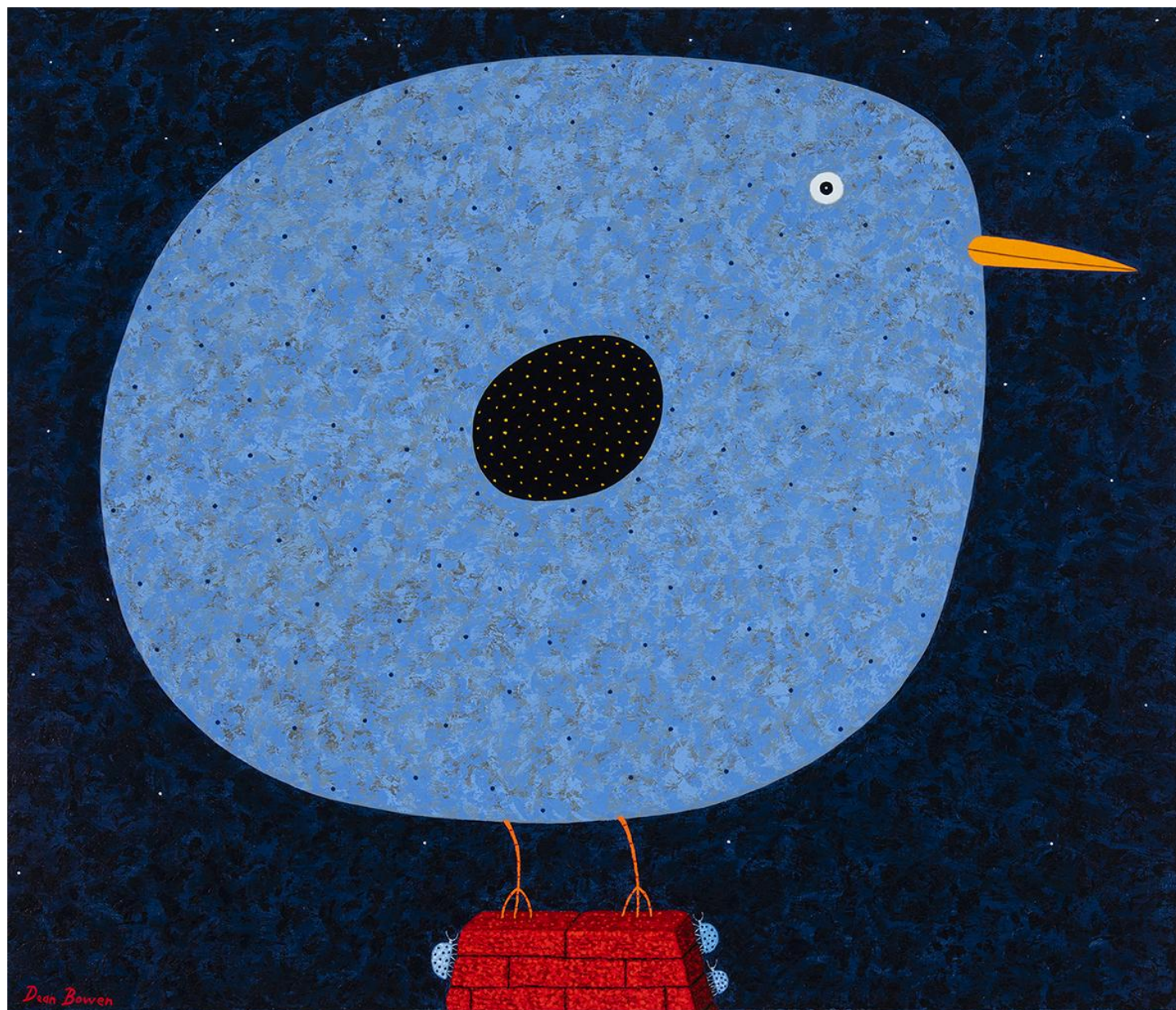


Bird with Blue Beetles

oil on linen

94 x 109 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Aeroplane Boy (Umbler Shirt)

bronze (ed. of 9)

8 x 47 x 7 cm

\$8,800



Blackbird with Ladybird Friend

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Home - The Starry Night

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Echidna On My Head (Third Version)

bronze (ed. of 9)

38 x 12.5 x 10 cm

\$8,800

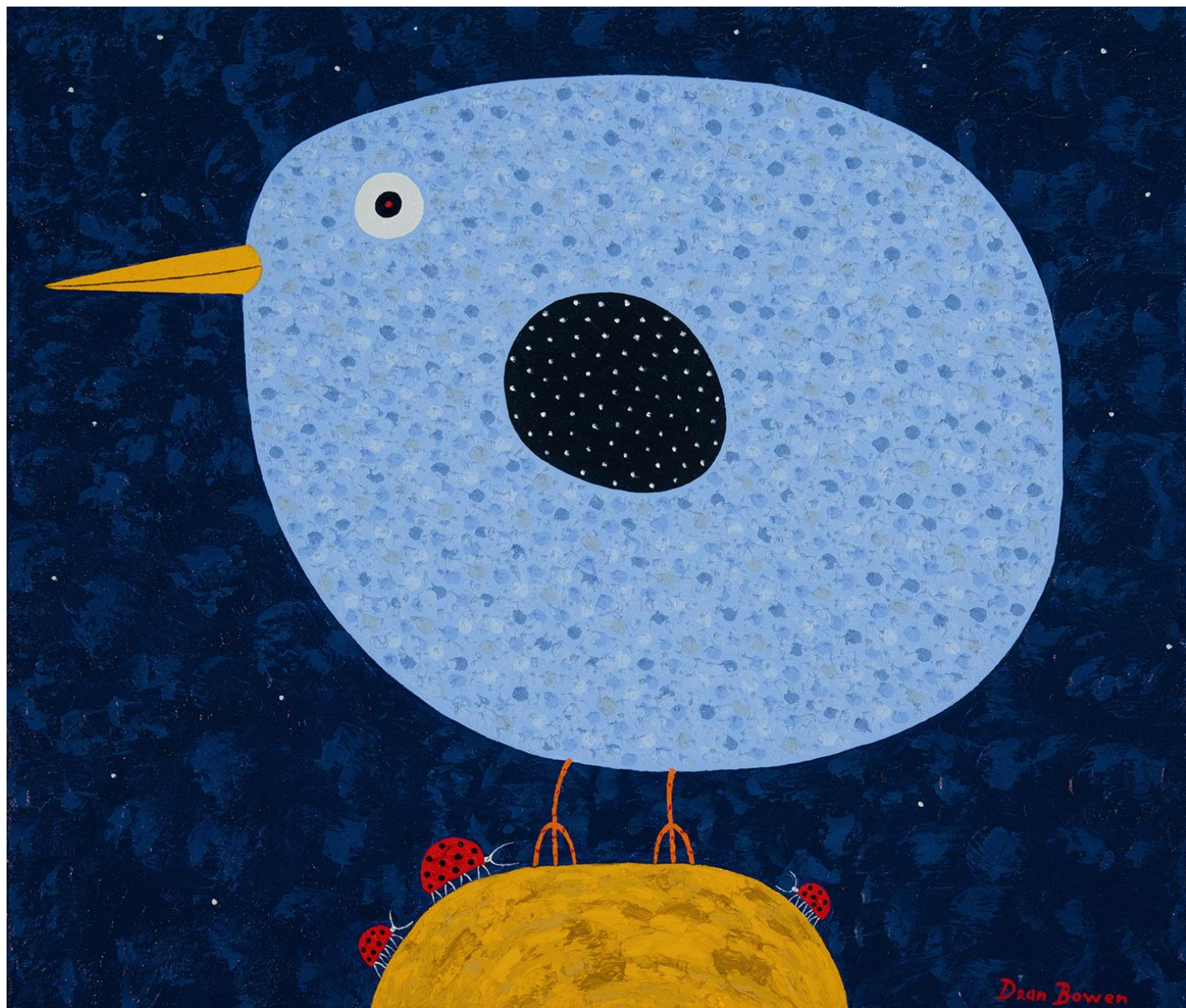


Blue Bird with Ladybird Family

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Echidna (Adolescent)

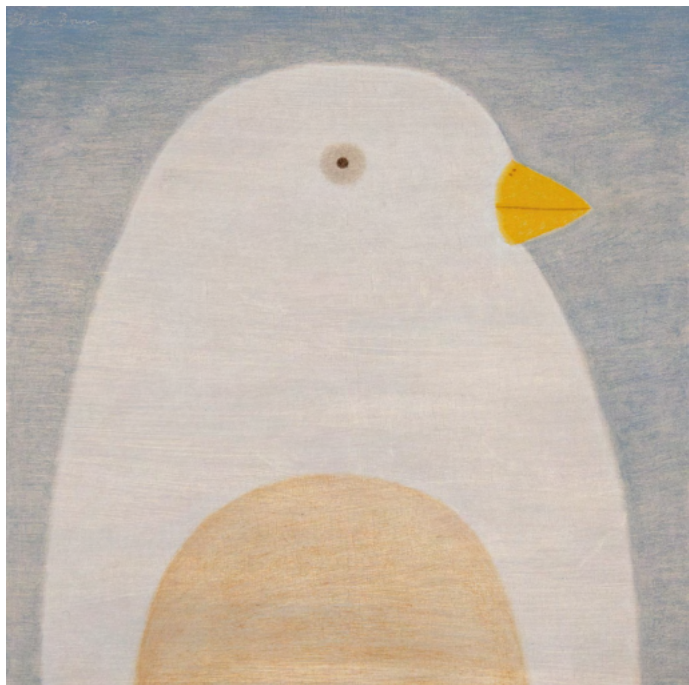
bronze (ed. of 9)

31 x 58 x 17.5 cm

\$19,800



Love Bird (III)
oil on board
32.5 x 32.5 cm (framed)
\$3,300



Love Bird (IV)
oil on board
32.5 x 32.5 cm (framed)
\$3,300



Perching Kookaburra with Wombat

unique bronze

60 x 58 x 17 cm

\$16,500



The House of Love (morning)

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



The House of Love (evening)

oil on linen

49 x 56 cm (framed)

\$4,950



Small Echidna
bronze (ed. of 9)
16 x 29 x 8 cm
\$8,800



Green Bird with Ladybird Family

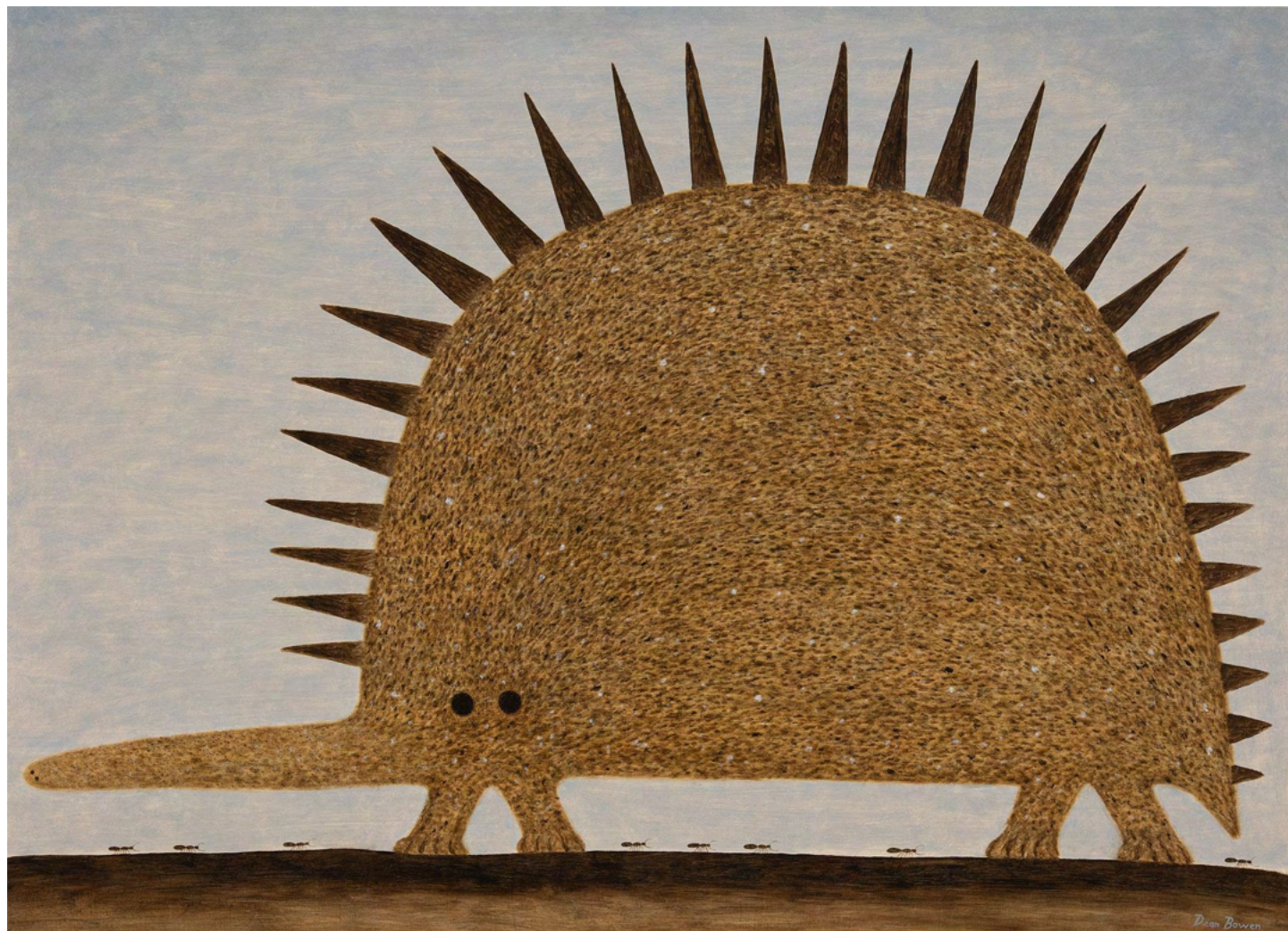
oil on linen

94 x 109 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Echidna with Ant Trail
oil on board
90 x 123 cm (framed)
\$11,000



Owl
bronze (ed. of 9)
21.5 x 9 x 9 cm
\$5,500

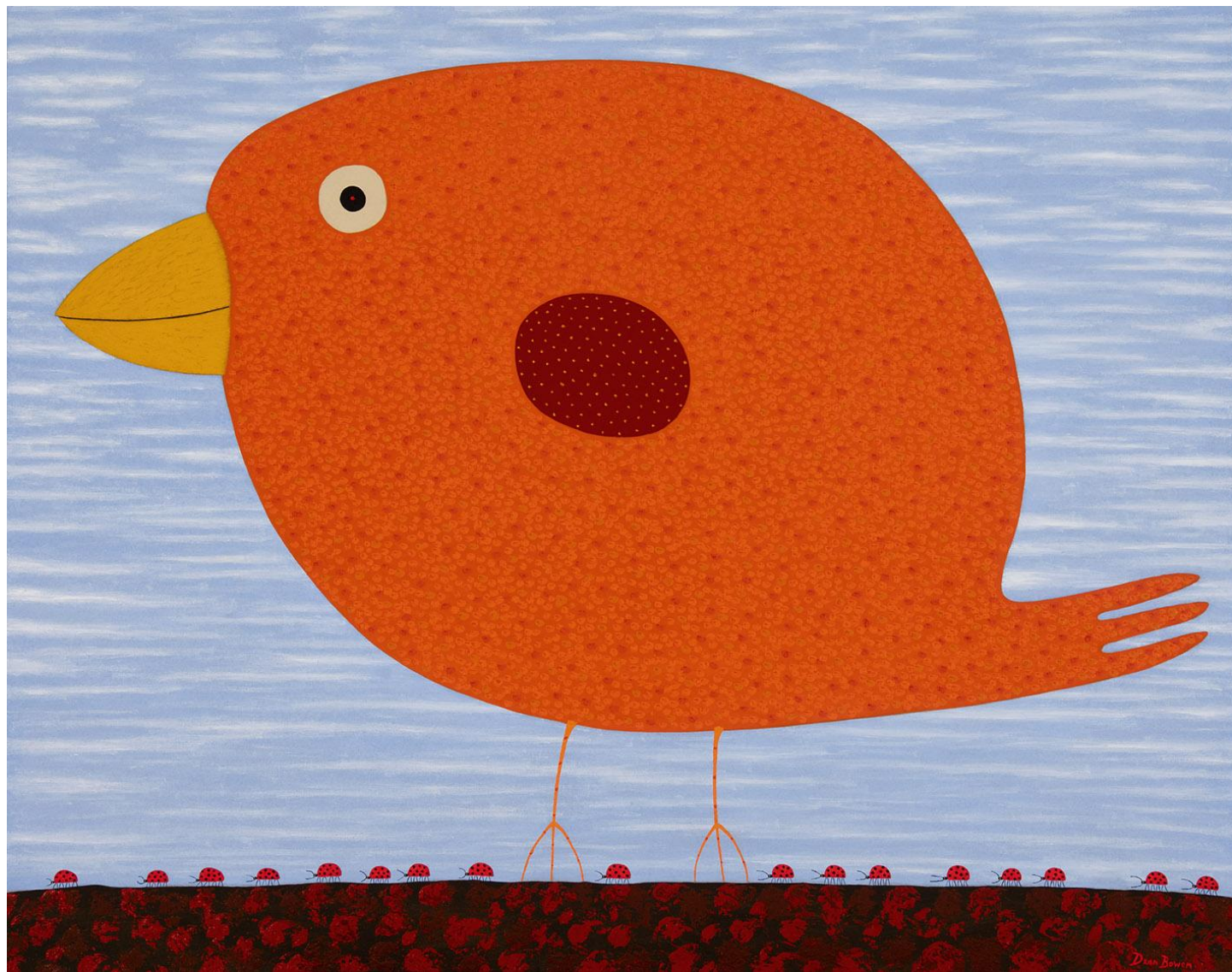


Orange Bird with Ladybird Friends

oil on linen

94 x 119 cm (framed)

\$11,000



Young Echidna
bronze (ed. of 9)
13 x 17 x 11 cm
\$6,600



Canary Watching Moon

oil on board

33.5 x 33.5 cm (framed)

\$3,300



The Home of Love (medium)

lithograph (ed. of 45)

28 x 34 cm (unframed)

\$1,100 (unframed)



Twilight Magpie
lithograph (ed. of 25)
48 x 68 cm (unframed)
\$1,400 (unframed)



Spotted Bird with Ladybird Family

lithograph (ed. of 20)

50 x 66 cm (unframed)

\$1,400 (unframed)



Black Canary
lithograph (ed. of 25)
48 x 68 cm (unframed)
\$1,400 (unframed)



The Home of Love – Starry Night

lithograph (ed. of 25)

64 x 48 cm (unframed)

\$1,400 (unframed)



Yellow Canary (East)
watercolour on paper
76 x 56 cm (unframed)
\$4,200 (unframed)

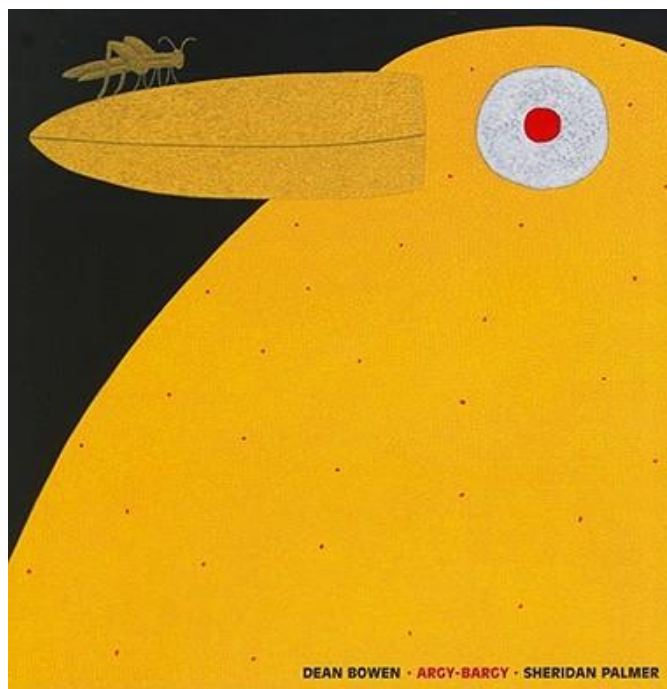


Nitty-Gritty: The Sculpture of Dean Bowen
by Andrew Stephens
hardback monograph
\$80



NITTY-GRITTY : THE SCULPTURE OF DEAN BOWEN

Argy-Bargy
by Sheridan Palmer
hardback monograph
\$80



DEAN BOWEN • ARGY-BARGY • SHERIDAN PALMER

DEAN BOWEN

Born 1957, Maryborough, Australia

EDUCATION

1999	PhD, Monash University, VIC
1993	Master of Arts, Monash University, VIC
1976	Diploma of Fine Art (Printmaking), RMIT, VIC

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025	'Flourish', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
	'Sanctuary', Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC
2024	Galerie Miyawaki, Kyoto, Japan
2023	'Dean Bowen – Australia: Land, Sky, Birds and Creatures', Tokushima Art Museum, Japan
	'Dean Bowen – Australia: Land, Sky, Birds and Creatures', Gunma Museum of Art, Japan
	'Petrichor', Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC
	'Ladder to the Stars', Sculpture Survey, Central Goldfields Gallery, Maryborough, VIC
2022	'Nitty-Gritty', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2021	'Journey', Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT
2020–2022	'Imagining Centaur', Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, VIC
	'Blue Constellation', Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC
2019	'Da Unten Dean Bowen Prints', Buchbinderei Lang, Leverkusen, Germany
	'New Paintings, Sculpture & Prints', Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT
	'Ladybird Mountain', Cascade Art, Maldon, VIC
	'The Home of Kindness', Anthea Polson Art, Main Beach, QLD
2018	'Abode', Eastgate Gallery, Hawthorn, VIC
	'Home is Where the Heart is', Whitehorse Artspace, Box Hill Town Hall, VIC
	'The Welcome Stranger', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
	'Dean Bowen Now', Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC
2017	'Home', Mossgreen Gallery, Melbourne. VIC
	'Auto Export', Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC

DEAN BOWEN

- 2016 'Prints, Paintings, Sculpture', PG Printmaker Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
'Currawong', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Paintings, Prints, Sculpture', Hamilton Gallery, VIC
'New Morning', Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT
- 2015 20th Anniversary Exhibition, Galerie Miyawaki, Kyoto, Japan
'Prints, Paintings & Sculpture', Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC
'Prints, Paintings & Sculpture', Customs House Art Space, Port of Echuca, VIC
'Dean Bowen: Paintings, Sculpture & Prints', Castlemaine State Festival, VIC
- 2014 'Day by Day', Survey Exhibition, Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum, VIC
'Jar of Stars', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2013 'Birds, Insects, Sky', Galerie Miyawaki, Kyoto, Japan
'Bird Lover', Motorworks Gallery, Melbourne Grammar School, VIC
Mars Gallery, Pop up Space, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC
'Paintings, Prints & Sculpture', Gecko Studio Gallery, Fish Creek, VIC
'Cluster', Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT
'Day by Day', BMG ART, Adelaide, SA
'Recent Lithographs', Port Jackson Press, Melbourne, VIC
'Selected Paintings, Prints & Sculpture', Falkner Gallery, Castlemaine, VIC
- 2012 'The House of Love', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Returning Comet', Central Goldfields Art Gallery, Maryborough, VIC
'Aviary', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'A Jar of Stars', Maroondah Art Gallery, Ringwood, VIC
- 2011 Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
- 2010 Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
Galerie Miyawaki, Kyoto, Japan
Greenhill Galleries, Perth, WA
- 2009 'Argy Bargy - the Art of Dean Bowen', Benalla Art Gallery, VIC
Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT
'The Art of Dean Bowen', Warrnambool Art Gallery, VIC
'Transmetropole', Axia Modern Art, Melbourne, VIC
- 2008 Sculpture Survey, Gomboc Gallery, WA
- 2007 Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Illumination: Recent Watercolours & Gouaches', Galerie Miyawaki, Kyoto, Japan

DEAN BOWEN

COMMISSIONS + PUBLIC ART

2022	Sidewood Vineyard and Winery, Adelaide Hills, SA
2021	Bronze Commissions, City of Wodonga, VIC
2019	Bronze Commissions, City of Wodonga, VIC
2018	Bronze Commissions, City of Wodonga, VIC
2017	Pt Leo Estate Sculpture Park, Merricks, VIC
2014	Lavington Library Sculpture Commission, Albury City Council, VIC Bronze Commission, Grimwade House, Melbourne Grammar School, VIC Bronze Commission, Burwood Campus, Deakin University, VIC
2013	Bronze Commission, Hamilton Art Gallery, VIC
2012	Sculpture Commission, Glen Park, Maroondah City Council, VIC Bronze Commission, Wyndham Vale Community Learning Centre, Wyndham City, VIC
2011	Public Sculpture Commission, artsACT, Canberra, ACT Glen Park Public Sculpture Commission, Maroondah City Council, QLD
2010	Linking Laverton Public Sculpture Commission, Hobsons Bay City Council, VIC Colas Foundation, Paris, France
2008	Centennial Sculpture Commission, Canterbury Primary School, NSW
2007	Public Art Acquisition, Petrie Plaza, artsACT, Canberra, ACT Public Art Acquisition, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, VIC
2006	City of Greater Shepparton Sculpture Commission, Shepparton Showgrounds, VIC
1999	Small Tapestries Project, Victorian Tapestry Workshop, VIC
1995	Melbourne Town Hall Tapestry, City of Melbourne, VIC
1991	Transitional Times, Print Council of Australia (Member Print)
1990	ICI Print Commission

DEAN BOWEN

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Artbank

artsACT, ACT Government

Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Baillieu Myer Collection

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery

Benalla Art Gallery

Bendigo Art Gallery

Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum,

Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford, UK

City of Melbourne

Cremona Public Museum, (Prints Cabinet), Cremona, Italy

Deutsche Bank, Geneva, Switzerland

Flexovit Abrasives, Australia

Fukuoka Museum of Art, Japan

Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum

Heide Museum of Modern Art

Monash University, Gippsland Campus

Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre

Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw, Poland

National Bank of Australia

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

National Library of Australia, Canberra

Tweed River Regional Art Gallery, Murwillumbah

University of Ballarat

University of Melbourne, Institute of Education

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba

University of Sydney, New South Wales

[Read Dean's full CV here](#)



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