

Major Ben Quilty survey exhibition announced by Art Gallery of South Australia



Adelaide, Australia: The Art Gallery of South Australia today announces *Quilty*, the first major survey exhibition in a decade of one of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary artists, Ben Quilty. Developed by the Art Gallery of South Australia and curated by co-Acting Director Lisa Slade, the exhibition will be unveiled in Adelaide on 2 March 2019 before a year of touring to the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Lisa Slade, Curator, *Quilty* and Co-Acting Director, Art Gallery of South Australia says 'The exhibition presents a portrait of a socially engaged contemporary artist who is committed to art's capacity to instigate change. Quilty's subjects are never objectified, but always rendered through the lens of personal experience.

'For most of this century Quilty has been delivering urgent visions of our time in history. An unlikely activist, he wields paint to draw our attention to our responsibility as critical citizens in an increasingly fraught world.'

The exhibition extends from Quilty's early reflections on the initiation rituals performed by young Australian men to his experience as an official war artist in Afghanistan and his campaign to save the lives of Bali Nine pair Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. The exhibition also includes works inspired by Quilty's visits with author Richard Flanagan to Lebanon, Lesbos and Serbia, his revisions of the Australian landscape, and raw, intimate portraits of himself, his family and his friends.

In the words of art critic John McDonald, 'Quilty's radical humanism has lured him outside the sedate spaces of the art gallery into war zones, refugee camps, and the Bali prison where Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan were executed. Not many of us would willingly undertake such journeys, which reveal Quilty's compassion for the victim, and his determination to use his skills (and an increasingly high profile) to make a difference.'

Artist Ben Quilty says 'My work is about working out how to live in this world, it's about compassion and empathy but also anger and resistance. Through it I hope to push compassion to the front of national debate.'

Kerr Neilson, Founder, Neilson Foundation and Principal Donor, *Quilty* says 'We share Ben Quilty's contemplative vision. One asks whether there is an indignant drift towards protectiveness at this time in our history and a shift away from openness. Ben Quilty dares us to ask these questions and engage with our world.'

Presented as part of the 2019 Adelaide Festival, Neil Armfield AO and Rachel Healy, Joint Artistic Directors say 'We are so pleased that the 2019 Adelaide Festival will include a major retrospective of Ben's work at the Art Gallery of South Australia. We know that our local community and visitors will rush to experience the work of this singular artist first hand and the ideas and values that have informed his practice.'

A fully illustrated book, published by Penguin Random House, including essays from exhibition curator, Lisa Slade, author and close friend Richard Flanagan and Head Curator, International Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Justin Paton, will accompany the exhibition.

QUILTY EXHIBITION TOURING DATES

Art Gallery of South Australia | 2 March to 2 June 2019

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art | 29 June to 13 October 2019

Art Gallery of New South Wales | 9 November 2019 to 2 February 2020

National tour presented with support from the Neilson Foundation, as Principal Donor. Presented in Adelaide as part of the 2019 Adelaide Festival.

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Media contacts: For further information and to request interviews and imagery please contact Articulate: Claire Martin claire@articulatepr.com.au 0414 437 588 or Kym Elphinstone kym@articulatepr.com.au 0421 106 139 or the Art Gallery of South Australia: Marika Lucas-Edwards lucas-edwards.marika@artgallery.sa.gov.au 0407 077 102

Images available for download from:

<http://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/QuiltyAnnouncementImages.zip>

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Ben Quilty's painterly obsession with cars, especially his treasured LJ Torana, saw him burst onto the art scene in 2002. The Torana presented, in a single subject, a self-portrait of the artist (an 'auto' portrait) and a contemporary vanitas symbol – one that signified the mateship rituals of his upbringing on the outskirts of Sydney. Since winning the Brett Whiteley Traveling Art Scholarship in 2002 (the same year that his Toranas were first exhibited) Quilty has been awarded several art prizes including the 2007 National Self Portrait Prize, the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2009 and the Archibald Prize in 2011. He has been the recipient of residencies in Paris, Spain and Hill End in New South Wales. In 2011 he travelled to Afghanistan as Australia's official war artist. Quilty has also been represented in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including his first solo museum exhibition *Ben Quilty Live!* at the University of Queensland Art Museum in 2009, and in 2013 *After Afghanistan*, the major Australian War Memorial touring exhibition. International solo exhibitions include the Saatchi Gallery, London and Galerie Allen, Paris in 2014. His work is held in state, national and regional public collections in Australia and in private collections both in Australia and abroad.

Ben Quilty is represented by Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane

Image Left: Ben Quilty, Australia, born 1973, *Self-portrait after Afghanistan*, 2012, Southern Highlands, New South Wales, oil on canvas, 130.0 x 120.0 cm, Private collection, Sydney, Courtesy the artist. Image Right: Ben Quilty, Australia, born 1973, *The Last Supper no.9*, 2017, Southern Highlands, New South Wales, oil on linen, 265.0 x 202.0 cm; The Michael and Janet Buxton Collection, Melbourne, Courtesy the artist.

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