

## **Ben Quilty major survey exhibition opening night to be headlined by The Herd**



**Adelaide, Australia:** *Quilty*, the first major survey exhibition of one of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary artists, Ben Quilty, launches at 5.30pm in Adelaide on Friday 1 March at the Art Gallery of South Australia. The exhibition will be officially opened by the Premier of South Australia, The Hon. Steven Marshall MP with Australian hip hop group, The Herd, kicking off proceedings with a concert on the Gallery's forecourt.

Heralding from Sydney, this is the first time in six years that The Herd will perform in Adelaide. Frontman, Urthboy says "We're looking forward to performing at the Art Gallery of South Australia in support of Ben's exhibition, an artist all of us in the band greatly admire and respect. Adelaide is a special place to be during the Festival and the Fringe so we can't wait to get amongst it."

Developed by the Art Gallery of South Australia and curated by Assistant Director, Artistic Programs, Dr Lisa Slade, *Quilty* will be open in Adelaide from 2 March to 2 June 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 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.'

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.'

Jason Karas, Co-founder, Lipman Karas and National Sponsor, *Quilty* says 'We have great pleasure in supporting the AGSA to bring this body of extraordinary work by Ben Quilty to its largest audience to date. Not only rich in texture and powerful in its physical presence, this exhibition demonstrates the brave evolution of Ben's work, which traverses our public history and personal experiences. Quilty challenges the viewer and offers a deep source of creative inspiration, well beyond the usual sphere of contemporary art.'

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.

### OPENING NIGHT INFORMATION

Friday 1 March, 5.30pm

Opened by Hon Steven Marshall MP, Premier

Art Gallery of South Australia, North Terrace, Adelaide

Official proceedings will be held on North Terrace after which *Quilty* will open for viewing

### 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 and Lipman Karas as National Sponsor. Presented in Adelaide as part of the 2019 Adelaide Festival.

**Media contacts:** For further information and to request interviews and imagery please contact Art Gallery of South Australia: Stephanie Ockenden [ockenden.stephanie@artgallery.sa.gov.au](mailto:ockenden.stephanie@artgallery.sa.gov.au) 0401 571 339 or Articulate: Claire Martin [claire@articulatepr.com.au](mailto:claire@articulatepr.com.au) 0414 437 588

**Images available for download from:**

<https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/Images.zip>

Image: Ben Quilty, Australia, born 1973. Fairy Bower Rorschach, 2012, oil on linen, 240 x 550 cm overall; Patrick White Bequest Fund 2012, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

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Presented in Adelaide as part of the 2019 Adelaide Festival.