



Clarice Beckett: The present moment at AGSA

'To give a sincere and truthful representation of a portion of the beauty of Nature, and to show the charm of light and shade, which I try to give forth in correct tones so as to give as nearly as possible an exact illusion of reality'

– Clarice Beckett

Adelaide, Australia: The Art Gallery of South Australia will present the most comprehensive retrospective ever staged of Clarice Beckett, one of Australia's most enigmatic and admired modernist painters. *Clarice Beckett: The present moment*, will see nearly 130 works by the artist on display as part of the 2021 Adelaide Festival in February 2021.

Associated with a legendary story of rediscovery, Clarice Beckett is today celebrated for her ethereal, atmospheric landscape paintings that capture the commonplace. In 1935 Clarice Beckett died at the age of forty-eight, and for the next thirty-five years her work vanished from art history before being rescued by Dr Rosalind Hollinrake. Hollinrake salvaged 369 of the artist's neglected canvases from a remote, open-sided shed in rural Victoria. Hollinrake's extensive research and promotion led to Beckett's recognition as a major force in Australian modernism.

The present moment includes many of the salvaged paintings, as well as her master works drawn from national public collections as well as private collections including Russell Crowe and Ben Quilty. Misunderstood in her lifetime, *The present moment* presents Beckett as a visionary mystic who saw nature as all powerful and as an artist driven by spiritual impulses rather than worldly success.

Her timeless and incidental everyday scenes have been curated to chart the chronology of one single day. *The present moment* exhibition will take visitors on a sensory journey from the first breath of sunrise, through to the hush of sunset and finally a return into the enveloping mists of nightfall.

AGSA Curator of Australian Art Tracey Lock says, 'Audiences experience an affinity with the art of Clarice Beckett. On one level Beckett represents the triumph of the spirit over adversity and certainly the ideal of an artist driven by something beyond worldly success. On a deeper level they sense a profound humanity, something that has united the world in such adversity over the past year.

'There is a certain magnetism to her paintings: an experiential quality of sound, sight or feeling that transcends language. Enveloped in diffused light and exuding peacefulness, her paintings invite a sense of stillness that points to a healing, spiritual quality.'

AGSA Director Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'The Art Gallery of South Australia is thrilled to stage this important exhibition which was initiated following the significant acquisition of 21 paintings by Clarice Beckett early in 2020, made possible thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Alastair Hunter OAM.'

Tickets for this major exhibition are currently on sale.

Key Dates

Opening Weekend

Media Preview | Fri 26 Feb, 11am for 11:15am start | RSVP media@artgallery.sa.gov.au
[Simone Slattery Premiere Soundscape Tour](#) | Sat 27 Feb, 12:30pm
[The Delicate Illusion of Reality Premiere Performance](#) | Sun 28 Feb, 6pm

Other events

[The Poetics of Painting](#) | Fri 5 Mar, Fri 2 Apr & Fri 7 May
[Painting in the Moment](#) | Fri 5 Mar & Fri 7 May
[Simone Slattery Soundscape Tours](#) | Sun 21 Mar & Sun 16 May
[A Month of Mindfulness](#) | Every Wednesday during the month of April
[The Delicate Illusion of Reality Performance](#) | Fri 7 May & Sat 15 May
[Mother's Day Event: Tracey Lock in Conversation with Dr Rosalind Hollinrake](#) | Sun 9 May

IMAGES

https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/2021/Clarice_Beckett_AGSA_2021_Images.zip

EXHIBITION DETAILS 27 February – 16 May 2021, North Terrace, Art Gallery of South Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE

Header image: Clarice Beckett, Australia, 1887 - 1935, The red sunshade, 1932, Melbourne, oil on board; Gift of Alastair Hunter OAM and the late Tom Hunter in memory of Elizabeth through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.