

MEDIA RELEASE

**Tom Phillips: *Running on Empty***

27 July – 31 October 2024

Guildhouse, the Art Gallery of South Australia and the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation present Tom Phillips: *Running on Empty*, an outcome of The Guildhouse Fellowship. The exhibition of new paintings will be officially launched at 6.00pm on the 2nd of August as part of AGSA's *First Fridays* free public program. Featuring an in-conversation talk between the artist and Liz Nowell, Executive Director Arts Projects Australia (Victoria).

Adelaide-based expressionist artist Tom Phillips was awarded the twelve-month fellowship in 2022 valued at \$50,000, with the selection panel commending his dedication and steadfast commitment to his painting practice over the past 25 years.

The Guildhouse Fellowship was inaugurated in 2019 with the generous support of leading philanthropists, the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation, to recognise and elevate South Australian artistic ambition. The annual fellowship offers a transformative opportunity for one mid-career South Australian visual artist each year, awarding funding to support research and development, including the creation of new work, with a presentation outcome at AGSA.

Painting from a place of personal experience and highlighting issues of social justice, Phillips' work captures the everyday experiences of loneliness, alienation, vulnerability and hardship.

Gestural layers of oil paint and oil pastels are built up laying bare the human struggle.

Tom Phillips says “My paintings are raw as I choose to use the marks as a vehicle to express my ideas and feeling through paints. I use the rawness of colour to create a tense emotional experience within my paintings. I start drawing the figure crudely out with oil pastels then I start experimenting with the underpainting, by playing around with colours, as to bringing the forms forward and back in the space. I use my hands, rags along with a pallet knife to layer the paint on to the canvas and then I start scratching back into the paint by taking it off, add it on and off again.”

Kerry de Lorme, Executive Director of the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation says “This year’s Guildhouse Fellow, Tom Phillips, welcomed us into his studio, where he showed us some of the works that will be part of his exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA). I was deeply moved by the stories behind his paintings and hearing what this opportunity means to him. The Foundation is very proud of the success achieved by past and current Fellows, as we have seen their careers flourish. We are delighted that through this Fellowship, Tom now has this wonderful opportunity to showcase his work at AGSA.”

Guildhouse Chief Executive Officer Sarah Feijen says, ‘The Fellowship offers a vital platform for artists to explore, grow and promote their practice. We are so excited and congratulate Tom on a significant range of achievements including spectacular and meaningful new works, an abundance of new ideas and a cemented commitment to his career. Huge thanks to our partners at the Art Gallery of South Australia for mentoring and showcasing Tom and to the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation for making this transformative gift possible. Supporting creative careers enriches the lives of all.’

AGSA Acting Director Emma Fey says, ‘The Guildhouse Fellowship offers a powerful opportunity for the genuine investment and faith in a South Australian mid-career artist. We are proud to partner with Guildhouse to deliver this fellowship since its inception, and we recognise the leadership of the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation in making this life-changing opportunity for artists possible.’

AGSA Associate Curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture Elle Freak says, ‘Adelaide-based artist Tom Phillips paints from a raw, inner place of personal experience and empathy. He employs an expressionist style to highlight issues of social justice and feelings of loneliness, alienation and vulnerability. The Guildhouse Fellowship has provided Tom with the invaluable opportunity to test new ideas and find fresh inspiration. The result is an expansion of his typically figurative practice into the engaging realm of text. I am delighted that Tom has been honoured with this fellowship and I am excited for audiences to have the chance to connect with the emotional and expressive dimensions of his new body of work.’

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Header image: Tom Phillips in his studio, photograph Lana Adams

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