

MEDIA RELEASE

Arthur Boyd: An Active Witness

Venue: Blue Mountains City Art Gallery
Opening event: Exhibition Opening Night: Friday, 6 November 6-8pm
Exhibition dates: 7 November 2015 – 3 January 2016

9 October 2015

Arthur Boyd: An Active Witness
A Bundanon Trust touring exhibition

Blue Mountains City Art Gallery, 7 November 2015 – 3 January 2016

Arthur Boyd may have been known as shy and retiring but he was certainly not passive. He felt passionately about society and the world in which he lived. His responses informed his art making. His compassion and concern is reflected in artworks which don't deliver a strident message or a simple solution. They are infused with the complexity of the issues themselves; wrapped in mythological and biblical narratives and set in the Australian landscape he universalised. This is one of the reasons Boyd's work has, and will continue, to endure.

The exhibition honours the work of this internationally recognised Australian artist and the potential of the artist to influence society through their role as *an active witness*. It is the first major exhibition to consider the social and political consciousness that influenced Arthur Boyd's art and contains a rich collection of significant artworks by Boyd and his dynastic Australian artist family members.

Alongside the Boyd collection will be a small archive of photographs, letters and other documents that provide insight into Boyd's historical, cultural and social milieu. Also included are selected works by his significant modern Australian contemporaries, such as Sidney Nolan and Charles Blackman.

Curated by Zara Stanhope, the exhibition is drawn from the collection of the Bundanon Trust and positions Boyd as a critical yet empathetic witness engaged with the urgent issues of his time, issues which remain salient for audiences today.

Highlighted are enduring Boyd subject matters reflecting the ethical paradoxes faced by individuals and humanity, outsider figures and the power of groups and individuals, the futility and violence of war and the beauty, vulnerability and savagery of nature. Constant presences in Boyd's imagery are the metamorphosis between human and animal figures and landscapes experienced and remembered.

Arthur Boyd wrestled with the burden of the artists' role as *an active witness* in his work, but ultimately triumphed in his generous act of philanthropy – gifting his collection and Bundanon properties to the Australian people, saying:

'I want it to be accessible to any Australian whose life can be enriched by the beauty, the history, the landscape, the environment and by the energy and stimulation from social interaction with Australian creative artists.'

Arthur Boyd: An Active Witness opens at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre on Friday night, 6 November 6-8pm will open to the public on Saturday 7 November. The exhibition runs through to Sunday 3 January 2016.

For further information or to arrange an interview contact:

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