



MARGARET OLLEY: *Life's journey*

National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney

08 May – 28 June 2009

I always travelled with a sketch book... Margaret Olley

MARGARET OLLEY: *Life's journey* provides a unique insight into the world of celebrated artist and National Trust Living Treasure, Margaret Olley. The exhibition traces the many places Olley has lived and worked from the late 1940s to the 1970s, depicting locations from romantic Paris to the remote and exotic New Guinea Highlands.

This is the first survey exhibition of Olley's work that examines the many sketches and watercolours significant to the artist's journeys of discovery. Concentrating on monotypes, pen and ink and watercolour studies, more than 80 works on paper have been selected from national, state and private collections, as well as the artist's own, providing a rare and unique look at Margaret Olley's extraordinary artistic career.

Olley first ventured abroad, to London and Paris, in 1949. It was the beginning of a life-long romance with travel, of visiting museums, paying homage to great works of art, and of exploring cities and cultures throughout the world. From the late 1940s to the early 1970s, years which help define an important era in Australia's cultural life, a sketchbook was almost always at hand to capture the scenes that presented themselves to her.

Developed by the University of Queensland Art Museum, exhibition curator Michele Helmrich explains further, "Travel abroad has been an important aspect of professional development for many Australian artists, and this exhibition documents the fascinating story of Olley's journeys to Europe in the late 1940s and early '50s, New Guinea in the 1950s, followed by extensive travel through East Asia and Europe in the 1960s and early '70s."

While France, Italy and South East Asia figure prominently in the show, the depictions of local landmarks are also highlights. Audiences will be intrigued by Olley's watercolours of Brisbane, Newcastle and Sydney, areas where the artist lived and worked and that have since been transformed by urban development. Also represented is the New South Wales historic site Hill End, the old gold-mining town that attracted artists such as Donald Friend & Russell Drysdale, art critic Paul Haefliger and his artist wife, Jean Bellette.

An illustrated catalogue, featuring an extended interview with Margaret Olley, accompanies the exhibition. The catalogue includes texts from historians, Christine France, Professor Peter Spearritt & Dr Prue Ahrens. The exhibition catalogue is generously supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation and is available from the Gallery Bookshop for \$29.95. A selection of Margaret Olley art cards and an exhibition poster are also available. Mail orders welcome.

MARGARET OLLEY: *Life's journey*

National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery 08 May – 28 June 2009

A University of Queensland Art Museum Travelling Exhibition

Media information: Leah Haynes lhaynes@nsw.nationaltrust.com.au PH: 02 9258 0150 (Mon-Wed)



Location: (end of) Watson Road, Observatory Hill, The Rocks, Sydney NSW

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Sunday 11am – 5pm (Last admission 30 mins before closing). Closed Mondays & Public Holidays

Admission: \$6 / \$4 national trust members, seniors and concessions

Gallery Front Desk / recorded information: 02 9258 0173 www.nsw.nationaltrust.com.au

Education officer/group bookings: 02 9258 0122

Public Program of Guest Talks - alternate Sundays at 3pm – please view national trust website for regular updates

Trust Café: 02 9258 0175 Bookings strongly advised during this exhibition (closed Mondays). *Limited* parking available on site.