

MEDIA RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2009



George Baldessin

21 November, 2009 – 14 March, 2010

TarraWarra Museum of Art is pleased to announce the first major survey exhibition on the life and work of artist George Baldessin, one of the most significant yet under appreciated heroes of Australian modernist art.

Exhibition co-curators Elizabeth Cross and Maudie Palmer explore the artist's remarkable, maverick contribution to Australian art, selecting key pieces from the significant body of work produced by Baldessin before his premature death at the age of 39 in 1978. The Italian born artist was notable for the European flavor he brought to art in Melbourne, imbuing the prevailing British style with an unaccustomed elegance, ambiguous sexuality and svelte craftsmanship.

George Baldessin will coincide with the launch of a monograph on the artist by author Elizabeth Cross, who says "This publication explores the complex connections – stylistic, thematic, personal and cultural – in Baldessin's imagery...the monograph endeavours to restore the balance between sculpture and printmaking which his practice reflected".

Baldessin's bold, authoritative presence in the Melbourne art scene of the mid-sixties and seventies was exceptional, as his work was made in radical opposition to the assertive influence of American abstract painting which had transformed it overnight. He was at the forefront of the vigorous movement to re-invent figurative art during that period, and his decision to focus on the production of intaglio printmaking and figurative sculpture was a singular one, definitive of Baldessin's consummate sense of style and individuality.

George Baldessin will feature *Occasional Screens with Seating Arrangement*, a large, yet elegant and complex piece – installation as much as sculpture – which marks a turning point in the artist's oeuvre and his grasp of the possibilities of sculptural form. This key piece is a 'tour de force', and the largest and most theatrical manifestation of his art, providing a powerful demonstration of Baldessin's talent.

Exhibition Co-curators Elizabeth Cross and Maudie Palmer, Tess Edwards-Baldessin, Founder of Baldessin Press and TWMA Director Jane Scott are available for interviews.

For further information or exhibition images please contact Eliza Ordinans or Jenna Blyth
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