

Howard Arkley (and friends...)

5 December 2015 – 28 February 2016



Howard Arkley *Tattooed Head* 1983, Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 160 x 120 cm
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO 2001, TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection
© The Estate of Howard Arkley. Licensed by Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art

The first major exhibition of works by significant Australian artist Howard Arkley (1951–1999) in nearly a decade will be held at TarraWarra Museum of Art, 5 December 2015 – 28 February 2016.

Co-curated by TarraWarra Museum of Art Director, Victoria Lynn and Curator, Anthony Fitzpatrick, *Howard Arkley (and friends...)* includes over 60 works from 1974 until 1999, the year of the artist's untimely death. The exhibition features many works that have not been seen before along with some of his most quintessential and iconic images.

The last major Arkley exhibition was held at National Gallery of Victoria in November 2006 to February 2007.

Victoria Lynn says *Howard Arkley (and friends...)* offers a new generation the opportunity to explore the progress and highpoints of Arkley's magnificent work.

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"Arkley pursued a singular vision that incorporated aspects of high art and popular culture, such as punk and pop; a love of urban and suburban imagery and architecture; an ongoing preoccupation with pattern and colour; and a life-long dialogue with abstraction.

"Some of his most loved series of works will be on display, including the sparse black and white paintings from the 1970s; his breakthrough into figuration with works such as *Primitive* and *Tattooed Head*; his surreal *Zappo Head* and cacti series; the electrifying house exteriors and interiors; and his final freeway paintings," Ms Lynn said.

The exhibition introduces three new perspectives to Arkley: his archive, his music and his friends.

"The artist accumulated, sorted, copied and soaked up a vast range of material in the process of formulating ideas for new work – sampled from magazines, comics, books, toys, masks, television, science journals, art history, fashion and hardware catalogues, real estate material, and the mass media. Photographs, visual diaries, sketch books, source material and working notes, on loan from the State Library of Victoria, will be on display. This combination of archival materials, studies and paintings is an intrinsic part of the exhibition's aim to reveal Arkley's ideas, influences, processes and working methods in developing his images," Mr Fitzpatrick said.

The exhibition will also consider the influence of music on Arkley's work and reveal how the artist incorporated elements of rhythm, tempo, notation, sequencing and sampling within his compositions. Arkley was influenced by the development of minimalist music, punk, new wave and electronic music. A selection of tracks from his record collection will be played throughout the exhibition, including pieces by The Birthday Party, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, The Cramps, Billie Holiday, Iggy Pop, Charles Mingus, Kraftwerk, Erik Satie, Talking Heads and Tom Waits.

Arkley worked with many friends and colleagues over the years, and was an influential part of a vibrant, artistic milieu. His colleagues and collaborators Alison Burton, Tony Clark, Aleks Danko, Juan Davila, Elizabeth Gower, Christine Johnson, Geoff Lowe, Callum Morton, John Nixon, Kathy Temin, Peter Tyndall, Jenny Watson and Constanze Zikos have each contributed a work of their own, or a collaboration with Arkley, to the exhibition. In addition, some artists have lent the Museum pieces that Arkley gifted to them in the tradition of the 'artist's swap'.

"This exhibition will demonstrate the complex processes that Howard Arkley contributed to each work of art, and traces his journeys through abstraction and figuration; pop and punk; sampling and the spray painted line. It reveals the ways in which the artist utilised and altered his source material through the use of high-keyed

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colour, pattern and repetition, abstraction and the fuzzy, optical effects of the airbrush, transforming our perception of the everyday world around us," Ms Lynn said.

Howard Arkley (and friends...) offers a rare insight to the man behind the image.

"Each year TarraWarra Museum of Art surveys a significant Australian artist from our collection. *Howard Arkley (and friends...)* continues the Museum's intention to view the history of modern Australian art through the filter of the present," Ms Lynn said.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be produced for the exhibition.

A public forum on the work of Howard Arkley will be held at the Museum on Saturday 6 February, 2016 at 2pm.

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Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm

Open all public holidays except Christmas day

Exhibition Admission: 5 December 2015 – 28 February 2016

Adults \$12.00

Seniors \$10.00

Concession \$8.00 (students and pension card holders)

Children 12 and under free

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