

15.05.22

PETER BOOTH

26 November 2022 – 13 March 2023

Curated by Anthony Fitzpatrick



Peter Booth, *Painting (Heads)* 2018, oil on linen, 152.5 x 243.8 cm

Photo: Charlie Hillhouse. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane. © Peter Booth

A survey exhibition of the work of major Australian artist Peter Booth will be held at TarraWarra Museum of Art, 26 November 2022 – 13 March 2023.

With a remarkable career spanning several decades, Melbourne-based Booth is a unique voice in Australian painting and is considered by many to be one of the most significant contemporary artists working in Australia today.

This new survey of paintings and works on paper will be the first major public gallery exhibition of Peter Booth's work since the NGV retrospective in 2003 and will feature a number of the artist's most significant works from the 1970s to 1990s, alongside important recent works from the past two decades.

Curated by TarraWarra's Anthony Fitzpatrick, the exhibition will be presented thematically, honing in on and highlighting particular motifs, subjects and moods which have become hallmarks of Booth's expansive oeuvre: stillness and turbulence; alterity and alienation; mutation and hybridity; the absurd and the grotesque; the road and the ruin; and the despoilation and the resilience of nature.

"This exhibition will reveal Booth's extraordinary capacity to transmute his intensely personal perceptions of the mysteries and forces of nature, and the folly and hubris of human endeavours, into exceptional and deeply-compelling paintings and drawings," Mr Fitzpatrick said.

A small group of abstract paintings from the mid-1970s at the start of the exhibition provide a prelude to an important series of gestural paintings which mark the beginning of the artist's journey into a neo-expressionist figurative style.

The exhibition progresses through Booth's vivid imaginings of an apocalyptic world characterised by grotesque, unsettling, and at times absurd scenes of human and hybrid figures in varying states of apprehension, aggression and conflict.

These works will be accompanied by a small selection of prints by **William Blake**, **James Ensor**, **Francisco Goya**, and **Samuel Palmer**, visionary artists who have been important touchstones for Booth and with whom he shares a number of affinities.

This survey will also bring together important works from the past three decades to convey humanity's often fraught and ambiguous relationship to the natural world.

"Initially Booth's highly visceral paintings of fiery, turbulent environments were the stage for confronting and, at times, violent human encounters. Since the 1990s, many of the scenes he has painted have become increasingly depopulated, implicating the viewer who is called to contemplate and navigate their own subjective relationship to these vivid landscapes.

"Most recently, the artist has returned to the apocalyptic imagery that characterised his first forays into figuration, with large-scale paintings of desolate and devastated scenes of a world in a cataclysmic state of collapse. This is art for a time of ecological and existential crisis in which anthropogenic impacts have driven the planet, and its intricate web of ecosystems, to the brink of utter catastrophe," Mr Fitzpatrick said.

The exhibition will be generously supported by The Balnaves Foundation.

Hamish Balnaves, Chief Executive Officer and Trustee of The Balnaves Foundation, said,

“The Balnaves Foundation is pleased to continue its support for TarraWarra Museum of Art to deliver new major exhibitions by Australian artists.

The Foundation is a proud partner in these important endeavours, providing vital opportunities for Australian artists to be showcased, whilst providing outstanding arts experiences to a broad range of audiences

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Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm. Open all public holidays except Christmas Day. Open 7 days a week from Boxing Day until the end of January.

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