

BRUCE ARMSTRONG: AN ANTHOLOGY OF STRANGE CREATURES

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia | 26 August 2016 – 29 January 2017 | Free entry



11 AUGUST 2016: Carved from enormous red gum and cypress trees, Bruce Armstrong's totemic sculptures stand watch over public spaces around Australia. More than thirty of the renowned artist's works will go on display, including a new work especially created for when the exhibition *Bruce Armstrong: An Anthology of Strange Creatures* opens, on 26 August 2016 at NGV Australia.

This major survey of Armstrong's work from the 1980s to the present highlights his on-going interest in mythological and imaginary figures, and the relationship between sculptures and the environments in which they are located.

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV, said, 'Armstrong's sculptures are at once commanding and playful, contained yet expressive. This will be a rare opportunity for visitors to walk amongst so many of these otherworldly creations by one of Australia's most acclaimed sculptors.'

Highlights from the exhibition include Armstrong's *Guardians*, which were acquired by the NGV in 1987 and most recently inhabited the Grollo Equiset Garden from 2005 until their removal in preparation for this exhibition. Armstrong carved the figures from two giant pieces of a 400-year-old red gum

intended to be sawn into railway sleepers.

Visitors will get a glimpse inside the sculptor's process with small preliminary models of Armstrong's works also on display. These maquettes include the 2002 sculpture *Eagle*, one of Melbourne's most recognisable and beloved public artworks. The final 23-metre-tall sculpture is installed in the Docklands precinct, and has been adopted by the community as a symbol of the Indigenous ancestral being Bunjil, creator of the lands surrounding Melbourne, who took the form of an eagle.

Armstrong is well known as a sculptor in wood, however the exhibition also includes a selection of cast bronze works and animal portraits on raw timber panels. The painting *Self-portrait*, in which Armstrong depicts himself as a falconer, was the second artwork to make him a finalist in the Art Gallery of New South Wales' Archibald Prize, in 2005.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a lavishly illustrated publication featuring insightful texts by exhibition curator David Hurlston, and Ted Gott.

Images and a caption guide for *Bruce Armstrong: An Anthology of Strange Creatures* can be downloaded from: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/alorw0kmmmbbt3x2/AAD7HRWNcbR2nAHrtUdrnMCha?dl=0>

Bruce Armstrong: An Anthology of Strange Creatures is on display throughout the foyer spaces of NGV Australia from 26 August until 29 January 2017.



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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Image caption:

Bruce Armstrong

Noir Bird Man 2 2007

Painted Cypress

200.0 x 100.0 x 100.0 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

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