

Baldessin/Whiteley: Parallel Visions

31 August 2018 – 28 January 2019 | The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square | Admission fees apply



George Baldessin and Brett Whiteley were born in the same year – 1939 – and in the 1960s and 1970s experienced meteoric success in their respective cities of Melbourne and Sydney. Tragically, both artists also died unexpectedly young.

Baldessin/Whiteley: Parallel Visions brings together the work of these two major figures in the story of twentieth-century Australian art and reveals, for the first time, the startling and unusual synergies found between their provocative and expressive imagery.

Featuring over 120 rare and important works, *Parallel Visions* is the most comprehensive display of works by each artist presented in the last two decades and surveys the careers of both Baldessin and Whiteley.

Highlights include Whiteley's magnum opus *The American dream*, 1968-69, an immersive painting spanning over 20 metres in length created in response to his time in New York City, which is on loan from the Art Gallery of Western Australia. The exhibition also includes Baldessin's *MM of Rue St Denis* series, 1976,

which transposes the Christian figure of Mary Magdalene into the streets of Paris.

Also on display are five of Baldessin's large-scale pear sculptures, *Pears* 1971–72, three of which have been newly cast especially for this exhibition, and Whiteley's provocative and career-defining *Christie* series, 1965, which boldly explores the crimes and psyche of convicted British murderer John Christie.

Primarily a printmaker, sculptor and graphic artist, Baldessin's practice reflected the rich multicultural humanism of Melbourne, infused with inspiration from France, Japan and Italy, his country of birth. Whiteley, principally a painter, printmaker and sculptor, was a celebrated figure of the Sydney art scene, who found early success in London and basked in the avant-garde culture of New York before returning to Sydney.

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV said: 'This is the first ever exhibition to draw parallels between the practices of George Baldessin and Brett Whiteley. This exhibition showcases the ground-breaking pictorial language of both artists and reveals, among many aspects, their shared use of the human figure as a vehicle to comment on the human condition with a uniquely Australian sensibility.'

This exhibition has been guest curated by Emeritus Professor Sasha Grishin AM.

Baldessin/Whiteley: Parallel Visions is on display from 31 August 2018 – 28 January 2019 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square. Tickets and information are available from the NGV website: NGV.MELBOURNE



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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IMAGE CAPTION

Brett Whiteley

Sacred baboon 1975

brush and ink, wood stain, watercolour,
gouache and cut printed colour
illustration on cardboard

81.6 x 67.6 cm (image and sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1978

© Wendy Whiteley

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