

Exhibitions

Margaret Olley: Life's Journey

8 MAY - 28 JUNE

A University of Queensland Art Museum touring exhibition

Margaret Olley: Life's Journey provides a unique insight into the world around celebrated artist and National Trust Living Treasure, Margaret Olley, from the early 1950s to the 1970s through her watercolours and pen and ink studies. This exhibition traces the places in which Margaret Olley has lived and the cities throughout the world to which she has travelled, that helped define an important era in Australia's cultural life.

Including previously unexhibited works on paper, sketch books and archival material drawn from national, state, private collections, and the artist's private collection, *Margaret Olley: Life's Journey* provides a fresh look at the artist's little known watercolour practice. Studies from outdoor sketching sessions reveal Olley's passion for the world around her, beyond the more familiar still life and interiors subjects.

The exhibition is accompanied by a substantial catalogue publication for sale at \$29.95, generously supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation. Exhibited works are illustrated, and the following authors have contributed texts: historian and curator, Christine France; Professor Peter Spearritt and Dr Prue Ahrens. Exhibition posters and cards available from the Gallery Shop. A series of Public Program events, including a guest talk with Margaret Olley, will accompany this exhibition. Introductory exhibition floor talk, Tuesdays at 12 noon.



MARGARET OLLEY *Concarneau, Brittany* 1952 gouache and ink on paper, image 39.5 x 51.5 cm. Private Collection, courtesy of Australian Galleries

S.H. Ervin Gallery hours

TUESDAY – SUNDAY 11AM – 5PM

Closed on Mondays, public holidays and for exhibition changeover.

Please note the Gallery is closed for renovations: 29 June – 24 September 2009

Cost: \$6, \$4 for members & concessions

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A: Watson Road, Observatory Hill, Sydney, The Rocks.

Limited parking and Café on site.

Leaving a bequest to the National Trust

By Silvana Taleski

Bruce Strath first became a National Trust member in 1983, after a brief lapse he came back to us in 2001.

And his devotion to the Trust has never wavered. He is now more committed to our cause than ever. He has recently decided to bequeath to the Trust his Redfern house which is a Federation-style terrace, recently renovated.

"I realised that my relatives are well looked after, so I didn't feel that I needed to leave the property to one single person. I didn't want to see it dissipate so I thought, 'why not do some good' with the house."

"I had seen a number of bad decisions being made by the State Government in regards to development, as well as a lack of awareness for heritage. It was a cumulative process but I guess the thing that really tipped me over the edge was Catherine Hill Bay. I was really disappointed in the plans for overdevelopment at Catherine Hill Bay and this led me to reassess my position."

Mr Strath chose to leave the house as a bequest to the National Trust as he felt "there is not enough support for heritage from the Government or within the community. I really believe in the work of the National Trust – it plays such an important role. The Trust covers so much more than just buildings; it is concerned with conserving the environment and our sense of culture, which is so important."

Bruce found the process of adding the bequest to his Will, very simple. "My Will is held with the Public Trustee so I simply went to their offices and told them that I wanted my house to be sold, and after any outstanding money on my estate was paid, the remaining amount was



The residence at Redfern bequeathed to the National Trust

to go to the National Trust to be used as they see fit. They took care of everything; it was a very easy process."

After meeting with Executive Director John Neish, Bruce has every confidence in John's vision for the Trust going forward and shares his hopes for the Trust in the future. "I hope the National Trust will continue to be an ongoing advocate and watchdog for the protection of our heritage. I would also hope that the Trust's role as an advisory service is embraced, especially by the Government."

Regional News

From the Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch

Our region has become burdened with the image of corruption, brought upon us by a few. The Wollongong community has lost their elected representatives and have been put in the hands of Administrators, engaged to re-establish best practise in the Council. Throughout the ordeal, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch, together with other community organisations and individuals, has campaigned for the protection of the region's distinctive scenic qualities, proud heritage of rural and industrial development, and for the protection of our cultural places.

In the past year alone, we have successfully argued for the retention of our Wollongong Town Hall, which houses a fine Ronald Sharp Pipe Organ; lobbied to prevent the over development of the Art Deco style surf lifesaving structures at North Beach, which are listed on the State Heritage Register, and we are currently campaigning for the State Government to consult with the community about their plans to develop the highly intact, convict built, sandstone block harbour at Wollongong.

Our branch also conducts workshops and talks, to teach the skills needed to maintain and conserve our heritage resource. To date we have addressed the repair and maintenance of timber items, paper photographs, maps and documents as well as cotton, linen and silk fabric and lace. It is anticipated that people will learn how to house their private heirlooms appropriately, and to know when to seek the advice of specialist conservators.



North Beach Bathers Pavilion, Kiosk and Surf Life Saving Club, Wollongong. Photo Merideth Hutton 2008

We organise exhibitions, concerts, dinners with guest speakers and open house days where both private and public properties are generously made available to show a range of approaches to the maintenance and presentation of heritage properties. We have an open day planned in the Township of Berry on 16th May. Berry encapsulates the rural history of the region, from early cedar cutting days, through dairying to now as a busy regional centre. The people of Berry have been in long term discussions with the RTA regarding a by-pass, the route of which will pass the town to the north, and avoid the active farming land to the south of the town. A second and contrasting open house day is planned for later in the year featuring modern properties that exhibit the latest in architectural design and the rarest of locations.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch committee members are willing guest speakers for other groups, and our activities enjoy strong support from Trust members and the broader community.

Meredith Hutton
Chair, Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch of The National Trust

Sense of Place

By Silma Ihram Dip. Ed. M. Ed. Admin. MACEL

Silma Ihram was the key note speaker at the National Trust annual advocacy conference and spoke on "sense of place and sense of loss in moving and re-establishing schools in heritage properties to maintain the culture and heritage of Muslim immigrant and Australian born children". The following is an extract of her paper.

A very important aspect of any person's mental security is to feel a sense of place, a sense of belonging in an area which is comfortable. For Muslim migrants arriving in Australia, their sense of place was confirmed through the establishment of local Muslim associations, mosques and finally schools. However, their sense of place and security has been challenged on many occasions by the negative reactions of neighbours and the local community to these projects which made them feel unwelcome.

My first school – Al Noori Muslim primary school, began in 1983. There was no school at that time which catered specifically for the needs of Muslim children and there was little or no awareness amongst teachers or school administrators of the needs of Muslim children, their fasting in Ramadan, the wearing of the hijab, halal food or praying facilities. Muslim migrants – many of whom had arrived as refugees following the civil war in Lebanon – found that Al Noori was able to provide familiarity with their customs and beliefs that were not only misunderstood, but frequently portrayed in a negative and hostile manner. Councils and residents consistently rejected

any application for permission to establish the school from 1983 to 1987. Al Noori was not able to establish itself legally for the first 4 years, having to move 9 times in its quest to find a permanent home. Finally the Land and Environment Court ruled in its favour against the objections of the local Council, objections which included "splintering the education system".

The second school I established – Noor Al Houda Islamic College faced similar challenges. Located on Federal Government land it initially avoided the potential for a hostile local Council, but faced a more severe problem when the lessors – the Federal Airports Corporation – were compelled by changes in the law to notify that we had been leased contaminated land. The site had apparently been a former rubbish tip. The extent of contamination was difficult to quantify, the cost of the school's building plans were suddenly magnified and legal advice stated that the school of 720 students should relocate. Of the many properties that Noor Al Houda unsuccessfully sought in relocating, three heritage properties highlighted the difficulty for Muslims in finding a sense of place in Australia. Linwood Hall, a former State orphanage on 5 hectares of land and the former Lidcombe Hospital attracted strong resistance from the local community with protests and the formation of Heritage Committees. There was a sense that part of Australian heritage would be passing into unAustralian hands if a Muslim school was to use these sites. The third site – a former Uniting Church theological College – successfully saw the relocation of the school, again despite local protest.

Despite the substantial growth of Muslim schools in the past thirty years, new schools continue to face a similar level of hostility as seen most recently in Camden and the Gold Coast. The Muslim community continues to be tolerated and seldom welcomed - a situation that hopefully will alter as Muslims are no longer seen as migrants but as citizens with their own place in Australian society.