

Echoes stir reflections for Archibald winner

Maestri returns to scene of moving residency

Monday, 27 February 2017

Archibald Prize-winning artist Guy Maestri was genuinely moved by his time as artist-in-residence at the Margaret Olley Art Centre, housed within the Tweed Regional Gallery in Murwillumbah.

The Sydney-based artist completed a residency in the Gallery's Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio in 2016, where he began a body of work inspired by objects in Margaret Olley's home studio re-creation.

"I was quite affected by my time spent in Olley's home studio re-creation," he said.

"Though it may only be an echo of her time in this world, it is filled with her treasured artefacts and ordinary objects, just as she left them. The space Margaret created, inhabited and regularly painted, is no longer interrupted and fluid; it's fixed and preserved like a painting."

Maestri will soon return to the Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, which is preparing to feature his exhibition *Echo*, a collection of works spawned from last year's residency, from 17 March.

"Plastic flowers, deemed cheap copies of the real thing, function similarly to paintings of flowers. Both extend the life of something beautiful and sensory, yet ephemeral," Maestri said.

"This is also the case with Margaret Olley's home studio – a home that, until I visited the re-creation, I knew only through her paintings."

During his residency, Maestri painted many of the objects that filled Olley's cluttered Sydney home, including her plastic flowers, and flowers of personal significance.

"I paired the paintings of Margaret's flowers with paintings of my grandmother's orchids. These paired works become reflections, echoes and ghosts of sorts," he said.

"They represent the capacity of objects, and paintings, to both hold and preserve memory and experience."

Maestri won the prestigious Archibald Prize in 2009, with his portrait of Australian musician Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu. He is a regular finalist in the Wynne Prize for landscape at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He won the Premier's Plein Air Painting Prize in 2013 and the King's School Art Prize in 2014.

Echo will feature in the Friends Gallery at Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre from Friday 17 March to Sunday 30 July.

Public programs:

Art in the Pub: Monday 20 March, 6pm for 6.30pm (DST), Free. No bookings required.

The Courthouse Hotel, Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby

Artist Guy Maestri in conversation with Gallery Director Susi Muddiman OAM. A collaborative event between the Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, Contemporary Art Space and Education Inc. and Byron School of Art.

Artist Talk: Guy Maestri on objects and inspiration, Sunday 18 June, 11am
Free. No bookings required.

Join the artist and Gallery Director Susi Muddiman OAM for a discussion on *Echo*, with reference to some of the objects from Margaret Olley's home studio re-creation that inspired his work.

Contact: Art Gallery Director, Susi Muddiman (02) 6670 2792 or Communications Officer – Media, Fran Silk on (02) 6670 2575

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The Gallery and Café is open from Wednesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm.