

Exhibition brings historical conflict into contemporary focus

Salient: Contemporary artists at the Western Front opens at Tweed Regional Gallery

Friday, 22 November 2019

Tweed Regional Gallery's latest exhibition *Salient: Contemporary artists at the Western Front* is an opportunity for modern day visitors to reflect upon the impact that the First World War had on their own communities.

In 2017, almost a century after the guns fell silent, a group of leading Australian artists visited battlefields across the Western Front and created new works which look back on the tragic history of these sites as well as the impact of these events upon our history, culture and society.

Salient Exhibition Curator Robert Heather said: "Once these sites were the scenes of desperate fighting involving young volunteer troops from Australia and New Zealand slaughtering their German counterparts and being slaughtered in turn in the world's first real experience of industrialised warfare."

"Today these battlefields are often serene pastoral scenes with fields of crops and livestock, forests, roads, farmhouses, towns and villages with the occasional cemetery or memorial as the only marker that thousands of people died there and the devastation that occurred a century ago. The contrast between the events that happened in these places and their current idyllic landscapes had a strong emotional impact upon all of the artists involved," he said.

The participating artists Deidre Bean, Harrie Fisher, Paul Ferman, Michelle Hiscock, Ross Laurie, Steve Lopes, Euan Macleod, Ian Marr, Idris Murphy, Amanda Penrose Hart, Luke Sciberras and Wendy Sharpe, created new works in response to their experiences of these sites and their history.

Tweed Regional Gallery Director Susi Muddiman OAM said: "These artists have each interpreted the events and the experience differently through the works that they have created, and exploring the physical landscape and tragedy of the Western Front has left an indelible impression upon them."

On Thursday 28 November at 5.30pm DST *Salient* artists Euan Macleod, Amanda Penrose Hart and Wendy Sharpe will be in conversation with Robert Linnegar, Director, King Street Gallery on William, to share their insights and experience of travelling to the Western Front.

On Friday 29 November from 6-8pm DST all are welcome to attend the official opening with guest speaker Rachael Parsons, Art Museum Director, New England Regional Art Museum. *Salient* will open in conjunction with *For Country, for Nation* and *Vicki Stavrou: Coastal Muse*.

Salient: Contemporary artists at the Western Front is presented by New England Regional Art Museum and King Street Gallery.

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Image credit:

- Contemporary Artists at the Western Front, photograph by Robert Linnegar courtesy of King Street Gallery. (Front row left to right) Wendy Sharpe, Harrie Fisher, Euan Macleod, Steve Lopes, Amanda Penrose Hart. (Middle Row left to right) Ian Marr, Deirdre Bean, Ross Laurie, Michelle Hiscock, Luke Sciberras. (Back Row left to right) Paul Ferman, Idris Murphy.
- Euan Macleod, *Heaven and Hell* 2017, oil on polyester, 100 x 124cm. Image courtesy of the artist and King Street Gallery.

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