



Drawing Margaret
Nicholas Harding
The Friends Gallery

Friday 31 May 2013 - Sunday 12 January 2014

Margaret Olley was well known for her support and encouragement of younger artists. Acting as both a friend and mentor, Margaret took certain artists under her wing, giving honest and forthright criticism while offering financial support through the acquisition and donation of their works to public galleries. Nicholas Harding was one of these fortunate artists. In addition to her usual support, Margaret generously allowed Harding to visit her home and make drawings of her and the unique living/studio environment at Duxford Street, Paddington.

Harding remembers, "While drawing and painting Margaret, I noticed she rarely ashed her cigarette. Having completed an oil study of Margaret I laid it flat on the floor. After she had wandered over, ciggie in hand, I noticed the painting's surface to be lightly flecked with ash, which had fallen as she'd inspected the work. It's almost as if her DNA is held within the painting's fabric, like an insect caught in amber."

Drawing Margaret showcases Harding's skills as a draftsman and command of the portraiture genre. His close relationship with Olley is evident in these works, which reveal an endearing conviviality and connection to his subject. Sourced from the artist's personal holdings and private collections, *Drawing Margaret* presents Harding's admiration and gratitude for a much-loved icon of Australian art.

Nicholas Harding is represented by Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane; Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne; Hill Smith Gallery, Adelaide and Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney

Nicholas Harding

Study for Margaret Olley 2002
charcoal and conte on paper
53.2 x 37.4cm
Collection of the artist