

Home rebuild snapping into place

Monday, 10 March 2014

This is the fifth in a series of feature articles about the Margaret Olley Art Centre and the celebrated artist it honours.

Curators are relying on 'photographic memory' to help assemble the thousands of items that will populate the Margaret Olley Art Centre (MOAC).

A small team of curators and assistants are referring to about 600 photographs to determine the precise location of each of Margaret Olley's personal belongings, to ensure the centre, constructed as an extension of the Tweed Regional Gallery in Murwillumbah, is an accurate reproduction of the celebrated artist's Sydney home.

MOAC Project Coordinator Sally Watterson said each of those photographs was linked to documented records - text and map descriptions - which described exactly where each of the items was situated within the three rooms which have been recreated at the gallery.

Ms Watterson, MOAC's new Curator and Collections Manager, Ingrid Hedgcock, and two project assistants have been working swiftly and meticulously to unpack and assemble the eclectic assortment of belongings which characterised Olley's cluttered and dazzlingly colourful Paddington home.

After spending a year documenting and packing the belonging in Sydney, Ms Watterson said the process has been much quicker at the other end.

"There is no documenting and cleaning to do this time, so while recreating the rooms has been very meticulous, we're estimating we could have it done in two weeks," she said.

Ms Watterson said the experience of first entering MOAC was a little overwhelming, after becoming so familiar with Olley's home.

"I was dizzy when I walked into the space. It was Margaret's home but I was hundreds of kilometres away and in the middle of a gallery," she said.

"The authenticity was amazing, with a lot of the original fixtures and fittings taken from her home."

The uncanny resemblance only gets stronger as the team progressively fills each room with Olley's possessions to the point where - true to the original home - there is no longer any room for Ms Watterson and her team.

"We will be placing the last item as we step back out the door," she said.

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

2 Mistral Road (Corner of Tweed Valley Way) in Murwillumbah South. PO Box 816 Murwillumbah, NSW 2484
P: (02) 6670 2790 F: (02) 6670 2797 tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au
The Gallery and Café is open from Wednesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm.