

Margaret Olley

1923–2011

Life & Career

- 1923 Born 24 June in Lismore, New South Wales
- 1941 Enrols at Brisbane Central Technical College
- 1943–45 Moves to Sydney
 - Enrols in Art Diploma course at East Sydney Technical College
 - Works on theatre sets
 - Graduates with first-class honours
- 1947–48 Paints landscapes
 - Paints at Hill End near Bathurst with Donald Friend
- 1949 William Dobell's portrait of Margaret Olley wins the Archibald Prize
 - First trip to Europe, visiting England and France
 - Spends much of the next few years at Cassis, in the south of France
- 1953 Returns to Australia on the death of her father
 - Works on theatre sets
 - Throughout this period continues to receive commissions for murals, including one for The Leagues Club in Philip Street, Sydney
- 1959 Opens an antiques shop in Brisbane
 - Buys her first house in Paddington, Sydney with some of the proceeds of the sell-out exhibition
- 1965–68 Renovates Paddington house and continues exhibiting in Brisbane, Canberra, Newcastle and Sydney
 - Buys her present house in Duxford Street, Paddington
 - Travels three times to Papua New Guinea
 - Travels extensively in Malaysia, Cambodia and Bali
- 1970–79 Makes several trips to Europe, spends three months painting at Moya Dyring Memorial Studio, Paris and continues to work and collect objects to paint
- 1981 Living in Sydney
 - Travels to America for the first time, visiting museums and art collections in San Francisco, New York, Boston, Baltimore and Washington
- 1982–89 Continues to live and work in Sydney, exhibiting regularly
 - Travels extensively, including to Greece, America, China, Russia, Italy, England and France
 - Begins to buy works for the Margaret Hannah Olley Art Trust for public collections
- 1998 Travels to London for Bonnard exhibition
- 2000 Co-curator with Barry Humphries of Favourites exhibition at National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery
 - Art Gallery of New South Wales names The Margaret Olley Twentieth Century European Gallery
- 2011 Ben Quilty's portrait of Margaret Olley wins the Archibald Prize
 - Dies 26 July in Sydney
- 2014 Opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre, at the Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, by Her Excellency the Governor-General Dame Quentin Bryce

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2019 *Margaret Olley: A Generous Life*, QAGOMA, Brisbane
 - A Shared Obsession: Margaret Olley & Fred Jessup*, Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, New South Wales
 - Margaret Olley*, Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane
- 2016 *Margaret Olley*, Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane
 - The Mystery of Things: Margaret Olley & David Strachan*, Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, New South Wales
- 2012–13 *Margaret Olley: Home: Interiors at Duxford Street*, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales exhibition Museum of Sydney, Sydney
- 2012 *Margaret Olley: The Inner Sanctum*, a Philip Bacon Galleries exhibition, held at Sotheby's Australia, Sydney
- 2008 *Margaret Olley – Honoris Causa Survey Exhibition 1964–2007*, DELL Gallery, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane
- 2007 *Margaret Olley – Life's Journey*, University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, toured to National Trust
 - S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney; Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales
- 1999 Nevill Keating Pictures, London, United Kingdom
 - Brian Moore Fine Art and Philip Bacon Galleries exhibiting at Sotheby's Gallery, Sydney
 - Nevill Keating Tollemache and Philip Bacon Galleries exhibiting at Nevill Keating Tollemache, London, United Kingdom
 - Philip Bacon Galleries and Nevill Keating Pictures exhibiting at Sotheby's Gallery, Sydney
- 1996–97 Retrospective exhibition held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, toured to Brisbane City Hall Art Gallery and Museum, Brisbane;
 - Newcastle Art Gallery, New South Wales; New England Regional Gallery, New South Wales
- 1994 Browse and Darby, London, United Kingdom
- 1990 Retrospective exhibition held at the S.H. Ervin Gallery, National Trust Centre, Sydney, toured to Brisbane City Hall Art Gallery and Museum, Brisbane; Lismore Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales



- 1975 First solo exhibition at Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane
- 1969 Bertouch Gallery, New South Wales
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1963–64 Australian Galleries, Melbourne
Johnstone Gallery, Brisbane
von Bertouch Galleries, Newcastle
- 1955 Johnstone Gallery, Brisbane
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1952 Solo exhibition of monotypes at Galerie Paul Morihen, Paris, France
- 1948 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney

Selected Bibliography

- 2019 *Margaret Olley: A Generous Life*, QAGOMA, Brisbane
- 2012 Meg Stewart's, *Margaret Olley – Far from a still life*, Random House
- 1990 Christine France, *Margaret Olley*, Fine Art Publishing

Awards & Acknowledgements

- 2006 Appointed Companion of the Order of Australia (AC)
Awarded Honorary Doctorate from Griffith University, Brisbane
Awarded Honorary Doctorate from Southern Cross University, Lismore
Awarded Honorary Doctorate from University of Newcastle, Newcastle
- 1997 Awarded Honorary Doctorate of Letters, University of Queensland, Brisbane
Awarded Honorary Doctorate of Visual Arts, University of Sydney, Sydney
Declared an Australian National Living Treasure
Made Life Governor of the Art Gallery of New South Wales
- 1991 Appointed Officer of the Order of Australia
Awarded Honorary Doctorate of Letters, Macquarie University, Sydney
- 1963–64 Wins the Bendigo Art Prize, Finney's Centenary Art Prize and the Redcliffe Art Prize
Wins the Johnsonian Club Art Prize
- 1962 Wins the Helena Rubinstein Portrait Prize and the Redcliffe Art Prize
- 1947 Awarded Mosman Art Prize