

Justin O'Brien

1917–1996

Life & Career

- 1917 Born in Hurstville, New South Wales.
- 1932–36 Studied painting privately under Edward Smith
- 1936–39 Taught in eleven convent schools in Sydney
 Joined the Fra Angelico's Painting Guild which met at Peter Dodd's Art School on Bathurst Street
 Attended first meeting of the Contemporary Art Society in Sydney
 Exhibited in the Archibald Prize in 1937, 1938 and 1939
- 1940 Enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps. Was sent to Palestine and then Greece.
 Taken prisoner in Greece in and after seven months in Athens was sent to a prisoner-of-war-camp in Poland
 Here he ran art classes and painted with materials supplied by the red cross
- 1944 Returned to Australia with Jesse Martin and held a joint exhibition of works done in a prisoner of war camp at
 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1945 Joined the 'Sydney Group' of Artists
 Moved into the house 'Merioola' in Sydney, also occupied by a number of others involved in the arts
- 1946–67 Became art master at Cranbrook School, Sydney
- 1947 Held solo exhibition at David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney
 Exhibited with The Merioola Group then left Sydney for a two year study tour of Europe
 Travelled in England, France and Italy with Peter Dodd who taught him much of dynamic symmetry and colour theory
- 1949 Held solo exhibition at the Hanover Galleries, London, and then returned to Australia
- 1951 Awarded the Blake Prize for Religious Art
 Exhibited with 'Unseco' Exhibition, London and Paris
- 1953 Included in Arts Council of Great Britain Exhibition to celebrate the Coronation in London
- 1956–57 Included in Exhibition organised by Orient Line on SS Orcades and in 'Twelve Australian Artists' at the New Burlington Gallery,
 London.
- 1959 Commissioned to paint the series 'Stations of the Cross', St Francis Xavier Cabrini Hospital Chapel, Malvern, Victoria
- 1962 Awarded Darcy Morris Memorial Prize
- 1963 Included 'Antipodean Vision' Exhibition at Tate Gallery, London
- 1964 Lives on the Greek Island, Skyros for four months
- 1967 Resigns from the teaching post at Cranbrook School and returns to Greece living first on Lesbos and then on Skyros Island
 Late in 1967 goes to Rome where he lived until his death in 1996.
- 1968 Commissioned to design a mosaic to represent the Southern Hemisphere in the Church of the Annunciation, Nazareth, Israel
- 1972–74 Works in the Tuscan Landscape
- 1980 Travels to Turkey
- 1987 Retrospective exhibition at National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Retrospective 'Justin O'Brien and Friends' at the S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
- 1989 Spends several months in Sydney receiving treatment for cancer. Does a number of drawings in the house of fellow artist Margaret Olley
- 1992 Appointed Member of the Order of Australia (A.M.)
- 1996 Died in Rome, 17 January

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2006 Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane
- 1995 Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane
- 1993 Australian Galleries, Melbourne and Sydney
- 1990 Australian Galleries, Sydney
- 1988 Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 1987 Retrospective, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1986 Painters Gallery, Sydney
- 1984 Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 1983 PhilipBacon Galleries, Brisbane
- 1982 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1980 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1978 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1976 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1974 South Yarra Galleries, Melbourne

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- 1972 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1968 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1965 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1961 South Yarra Galleries, Melbourne
- 1959 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1956 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1953 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1950 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1949 Hanover Galleries, London, United Kingdom
- 1947 David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1995 *The Artists of Hill End*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- 1987 *Justin O'Brien and Friends*, S.H. Irvin Gallery, Sydney
- 1986 *Modern Australian Paintings*, Charles Nodrum, Melbourne
Merioola and After, S.H. Irvin Gallery, Sydney
- 1979 *The Alan Renshaw Bequest*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
- 1978 *Quadriennale*, Rome, Italy
- 1963 *Antipodean Vision*, Tate Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 1960 *Royal South Australian Society of Artists*, Adelaide,
Contemporary Australian Artists' Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
Raffins Gallery, New South Wales
- 1957 *Twelve Australian Artists*, New Burlington Galleries, London, United Kingdom
Canberra Art Club Gallery, Canberra
Sydney Painting, Victorian Artists Society, Melbourne
- 1956 S.S. Orcades Orient Line, touring Auckland, New Zealand; Honolulu, United States of America; Vancouver, Canada;
and San Francisco, United States of America
- 1955 *Royal South Australian Society of Artists*, Adelaide
- 1953 *Group Exhibiton for Coronation*, New Burlington Galleries, London, United Kingdom
- 1952 *Sydney Painting*, Finneys Gallery, Brisbane
- 1951 *Unesco Group Exhibition*, Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris, France
Unesco Group Exhibition, Australia House, London, United Kingdom
- 1947 *The Merioola Group*, Myer Mural Hall, Melbourne
The Merioola Group, David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1946 *The Sydney Group Exhibition*, David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1945 *The Sydney Group Exhibition*, David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1944 *Joint Exhibition with Jesse Martin*, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney

Collections

- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- Artbank, Sydney
- Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, Victoria
- City of Hamilton Art Gallery, Victoria
- Manly Art Gallery, New South Wales
- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales
- Newman College Melbourne University, Melbourne
- Pinacotheca Vaticano, Modern Art Section, Rome
- Rockhampton Art Gallery, Queensland
- SH Ervin Gallery National Trust of Australia, Sydney
- St Francis Xavier Cabrini Hospital, Melbourne
- Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
- University of New South Wales, Sydney
- University of Sydney, Sydney