

at home

Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty

Margaret Olley Art Centre

12 November 2021 – 20 February 2022

Exclusive to the Margaret Olley Art Centre, this exhibition is a sublime collection of recent still life paintings by Ben Quilty alongside still lifes and interiors by Margaret Olley from the latter half of her extraordinary career.

Online resources:

> [Artist Ben Quilty on fame and jealousy, his new exhibition and making art meaningful](#)

ABC News, March 2019

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-01/artist-ben-quilty-on-fame-and-a-newexhibition/10861950>

> [Portraits of the artists in isolation](#)

Nick Galvin, Kerrie O'Brien & Chloe Wolfson. Sydney Morning Herald, May 2020.

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/portraits-of-the-artists-in-isolation-20200514-p54svk.html>

> [Listen to Ben Quilty talk about his friendship with Margaret Olley](#)

<https://nga.gov.au/timross/quiltyolley.cfm>

> [Learn more about Ben Quilty, Margaret Olley & the Archibald Prize](#)

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/2011/28931/>

> [Visit the Tweed Regional Gallery website for online still life challenges](#)

<https://artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au/ExhibitionsAndPrograms/ProgramsAndWorkshops>

Further reading:

Christine France. *Margaret Olley*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2002 (revised and updated edition).

Ingrid Hedgcock, Lou Klepac & Barry Pearce. *The Mystery of Things: Margaret Olley & David Strachan*, Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, 2016.

Mark Gomes (Ed.). *Margaret Olley: A generous life*. QAGOMA, Brisbane, 2019.



TWEED REGIONAL GALLERY

& MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE | MURWILLUMBAH

The Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre is a Tweed Shire Council Community Facility and is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.



Open Wed – Sun, 10am – 5pm DST
2 Mistral Road, South Murwillumbah NSW

02 6670 2790
tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au

artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au
tweedregionalgallery

at home

Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty



Cover:

Ben Quilty (b. 1973) *Multi Vitamins and Surface Spray* (detail) 2020, oil on linen 132 x 112cm
Tweed Regional Gallery collection
Gift of the Tweed Regional Gallery Foundation Ltd., 2021
© The Artist

This spread, from left:

Margaret Olley (1923–2011) *Ranunculus and Pears* 2004
oil on board 76 x 101cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales
Edward Stinson Bequest Fund 2005 © Margaret Olley Art Trust
Photo: AGNSW

Margaret Olley painting in Duxford Street Kitchen
Photo: Christopher Shain

Ben Quilty painting in his studio
Photo: Mim Stirling image

Ben Quilty and Margaret Olley began a friendship, initially through art, that grew and sustained until Margaret Olley's death. Use the following questions related to the visual art conceptual frameworks to help you interpret and creatively respond to artworks in *At Home* through a subjective frame.

The artist is seen as an individual whose artistic intentions are shaped by their imagination, emotions and personal experiences.

Consider what may have been occurring in the life of Ben Quilty during the time he created these still life works. What is different to his earlier artworks such as *The Gunnery Torana*, 2004? What do the still life works have in common with this and other earlier paintings in the exhibition?

Margaret Olley worked on individual paintings over time, usually several at once! She left her arrangements in place and returned to them at the same time of day over days and weeks to capture subtle effects of light. In spending longer periods of time at home than you normally would, consider how time has passed for you during COVID. Have you had time to notice things that you hadn't before? Has time gone faster or slower, or felt like it has looped?

Reflecting on your own experience of being in lockdown, how might the artist's personal experiences, ideas and events occurring in their life inform the artwork in this exhibition?

Do you think imagination plays a role in the artworks on display? How is it expressed?

Do the artists see artmaking as a way of exploring their emotions? Why do you think this?

Artworks are interpreted as emotional expressions, and reminders of personal memories and experiences.

Ben Quilty's painting *Multivitamins and Surface Spray*, 2020 shows a group of completely ordinary household objects that are significant because of the time in which they were painted. If you had to choose three objects to represent the entire period of COVID what would they be? Are they the same objects you would choose to represent your own personal COVID experience?

Do any of the artworks in the exhibition remind you of your own experiences or feelings? Explain how.

How have Ben Quilty and Margaret Olley used a visual language to convey personal experiences, memories or events?

How do you relate to these artworks? Do you think you would see them differently if the COVID pandemic had never happened?

Audiences interpret the meaning and value of art in relation to personal associations and connections that can be made.

How do you connect with and respond to art by Ben Quilty and Margaret Olley in this exhibition? Do you connect in the same way? Can you

recognise your own experience of lockdown in Ben Quilty's or Margaret Olley's work? Was your lockdown experience entirely negative or positive, or a combination of both?

What personal associations (to events, feelings, experiences) might others make with the artwork in this exhibition? Could it remind them of periods of loneliness and isolation or even peace and security experienced at home?

Personal experiences, memory, the subconscious, and the imagination are a source of ideas. The artist's subjective view of the world informs the artist and artwork.

Margaret Olley freely chose to use her home as a site and subject matter for her art over many years. Ben Quilty took the opportunity that lockdown provided to slow down and respond thoughtfully to his everyday environment. How do you think Ben Quilty's paintings explore shared human experiences during this pandemic?

What might Margaret Olley's still lifes reveal to us about our sense of home and place during this period?

How do you see the artwork of Ben Quilty and Margaret Olley as being a response to the world of each artist?

What type of world is reflected in their artwork? Does Ben Quilty's world feel the same as Margaret Olley's?

A challenge:

Within your home environment what objects and setting would you choose to represent your experience of lockdown?

How do these choices express your feelings about this time?

Consider creating a still life composition to communicate your full range of feelings. What media (materials) might you use? What colours? What kinds of marks? What scale or size might work best? What title will you give your artwork?

The Gallery will be releasing three still life challenges on Facebook and Instagram on 26 December 2021, 9 January 2022 and 6 February 2022. Create your own artwork in response to these compositions inspired by the exhibition *At Home*, and look out for the challenge created by our special guest artist, Ben Quilty.