



Ben Quilty sets up a still life challenge in his studio.

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## UNLOCKING MARGARET'S HOUSE

# STILL LIFE CHALLENGE: BEN QUILTY

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Welcome to the third and final still life challenge for the exhibition *At Home: Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty*. Since June 2020 we have been setting still life challenges inspired by exhibitions on display at the Margaret Olley Art Centre, and have loved giving special access to the objects that inspired Margaret Olley. What makes this challenge so unique is that our guest artist Ben Quilty has created a composition from his studio. Like Olley he has used the objects at hand, and we love this challenge as it reminds us that still life can include any object. Taking this view we can begin to see everyday objects, and hence everyday life, in a new way.

Whether this is your first challenge or you have tackled each challenge we have set so far, don't forget to share your creations on social media with the hashtag #unlockingmargarethouse.

A special thank you to artist Ben Quilty for setting this challenge for us. You can view the *Ben Quilty Challenge* video using the following link <https://youtu.be/lrh1coQ8nu0>



ABOVE Objects grouped together on a canvas create a striking still life challenge set by Ben Quilty in his studio as part of our series of challenges for *At Home: Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty*.

***At Home: Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty***, on display in the Margaret Olley Art Centre from 12 November 2021 until 20 February 2022, tells the story of mentorship, art and friendship between Margaret Olley (1923 – 2011) and Ben Quilty (b. 1973). Two of Australia's most celebrated artists, their unique friendship earned them the reputation of the odd couple of the Australian artworld. *At Home* brings the work of these two celebrated artists together for the first time to reflect on the everyday as subject matter for painting and as a humble vehicle for the contemplation of humanity.

The artists first met in 2002, when Olley was a guest judge of the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship. Olley awarded Quilty the scholarship prize that year and, from there, the friendship grew. In 2011, Quilty's Archibald Prize-winning portrait of Olley propelled their friendship into the media spotlight, just months before Olley passed away at the age of 88.

The two friends' artwork has had little, if any, direct association. Quilty's powerful, large-scale works have a fast-brushed, fervent energy – eloquently and relentlessly probing, exploring and questioning big ideas, big issues and big feelings. Olley's works, on the other hand, are more often the result of many layers of paint, patiently built up over the course of multiple sittings. Olley's subject matter was the domestic and the everyday. In this exhibition Quilty, confined at home during Australia's first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, has made a new body of work, turning to ordinary objects as subject matter for painting – just as Olley had done.



FROM TOP LEFT: Whether it is light and shadow on a sheet of cold and flu tablets or a malleable rubber mask, interesting forms offer endless inspiration for painting.



Whether you paint, draw, sculpt or photograph we can't wait to see your responses online. Don't forget to share your creations **#unlockingmargarethouse**.



LEFT Quilty's sublime collection of recent still life paintings on display at the Margaret Olley Art Centre.