



Grace Cossington Smith Gallery

28 September to 5 December 2020

Margaret Woodward

Works from the Studio

Curated by Mary Faith and Lisa Jones



Margaret Woodward (b. 1938) occupies a major role in Australian art. She has received many awards, including the 1971 Wynne Prize and Portia Geach Prize in 1983 and 1984, as well as her nominations as an Archibald finalist almost every year of the 1980s. Woodward's artworks are represented in major public art galleries and private collections internationally and in Australia.

Margaret Woodward was born in Hornsby and attended Hornsby Girls High School. In 1956 she enrolled at the National Art School. In 1958 Woodward was awarded a commonwealth scholarship which enable her to continue her studies with painting as a major, and her influential tutors were Peter Laverty, Douglas Dundas and Godfrey Miller. In 1959 she studied with John Passmore and was awarded the Art Gallery NSW le Gay Brereton Prize for student drawing. Following this highly successful period, Woodward taught at local schools, including Abbotsleigh. At Hornsby Technical College she worked to build the full-time art course, and ultimately inspired a generation of art students. Woodward continues to receive a great deal of respect from her peers and collectors alike.

It has been a privilege to select from the works in Woodward's nearby Hornsby studio. It was inspiring to be in the space where she worked, amongst her tables of organised pastel colours and her beloved props, with the heady aroma from the orange blossoms in her garden. The racks of drawings and paintings reveal that Woodward is a masterful draughtsperson, whose paintings and drawings show her love of carefully structured composition and dynamic colour and tone. But it also indicates her battle to succeed as a female artist in the Australian art scene. #know my name

For Woodward, the beautiful studio she built in Hornsby holds a quality of calm and freedom to it. Just to walk into the space produces in me a sense of joy and anticipation – it is almost a ritual sensation in itself....'

With thanks to Margaret Woodward's daughter, Britt Clapson, for the opportunity to exhibit Margaret Woodward, From the Studio.

Mary Faith and Lisa Jones, 2020
Curators

Cover artwork: *Self Portrait*, oil on canvas, 79 x 79 cm

Master and the Passenger, pastel, paper laminated on canvas, 153.5 x 154 cm



I first met Margaret in the mid-'80s when I was teaching part time in the Art Department at Hornsby Tech. It was an exceptional, small art school with Margaret one of the core group of full time teachers with Clem Millward as the head.

I also went on a couple of wonderful painting trips with Margaret and a group of painters to the Northern Territory. Margaret was always a lively presence - witty, enthusiastic and generous.

I remember admiring Margaret's self-portraits in the '80s and '90s in the Archibald and Portia Geach competitions. Her compositions were individual with strong use of the diagonal and tonal contrast. Her portraits had a presence. Her landscape and still life paintings always had unexpected moments with their unusual compositions and subtle colour.

And, of course, her skill as a superb draughtsperson shines through in everything she did. Her drawings of her beloved dogs are a delight.

It is wonderful that the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is showing the excellent collection of her paintings and drawings because it is important that as many people as possible can see what a fine artist she is.

Elisabeth Cummings, 2020
Artist



Memories of Margaret with long plaited hair, large canvas smock, straight from her studio to Hornsby Tech for evening classes.

Her students diverse and oh so fortunate to share her world for a few hours per week.

We were introduced to art and artists throughout the ages; their lives and particular artistic preoccupations.

Mysteries of sacred geometries.

Wonders of colour relationships and alchemical principles.

She reached our hearts, minds and imaginations in ways that continue to resonate through the decades, linking time and space into the contemporary.

It is in studying Margaret's own work the greatest learning curves are to be found. Very few artists are as aware of spatiality. Where should a line meet a mass? How does the viewers eye travel over the surface of an artwork? What negative space supports the positive ... in what proportions?

Her mastery blends intellectual considerations with mysticism.

Whether still life, landscape, portrait (or blends of subject-matter) we are drawn into Margaret's vision, as potent and consuming as Alice peering into the looking glass.

Lyndall Beck, 2020

Artist



I first met Margaret many years ago attending art events of mutual interest, and as a member of the 'Pens and Pencils' group of artists gathered together and directed by Lou Klepac. This group meets once a month to share an artists' lunch, catch up on exhibitions and current art news, and tell appalling jokes. But it was not until relatively recently, maybe less than ten years ago or so that I had the opportunity to spend more time with her.

Margaret has always had such a direct and discerning personality and a quick wit, with an engaging, hearty laugh. For quite some years I enjoyed a monthly visit on Wednesday mornings to Margaret's home with some of her good friends. The purpose of the gathering was to enjoy some life drawing together.

A passionate activity for figurative artists, we sat in the round and sketched in summer on the verandah and in winter around Margaret's massive and wonderful fireplace. The light was terrible, but the process of all being together with a shared love of what we were doing was fantastic. It was always a very convivial occasion, culminating with a shared lunch and a bottle of red wine with conversation around the table.

Later I had the opportunity to paint two portraits of Margaret. One was exhibited in the Portia Geach exhibition and the other is part of a major exhibition launched at Mosman Regional Gallery a few years ago. This exhibition, currently on show at Shoalhaven Regional gallery, is titled 'A Never Ending Shadow' and it deals with dementia. At the time of making these artworks, my husband was also suffering with dementia. It gave me an understanding of the frustrations and limitations that Margaret was experiencing at the time, and perhaps a more empathetic approach.

Margaret's work has always been inspirational. Her draftsmanship, and the complexity of the works she created with her use of line, space and pattern are exceptional. I would hope in future that her work will become appreciated by many more, as well as the group of ardent followers she has had over the years. I feel she is one of Australia's greatest artists.

Ann Cape, 2020
Artist



ABBOTSLEIGH

Gs Grace
CossingtonSmith**Gallery**

Gallery Hours: Mon to Sat, 10 am-5 pm
Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway, Wahroonga 2076
02 9473 7878 | www.gcsgallery.com.au | gcsgallery@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
An Anglican Pre K-12 Day and Boarding school for Girls

Artwork photographs @ Richard Glover

Francisco Lescano Dancing on the back of the Dog, 1998, pastel on laminated canvas, 198 x 162 cm