



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BLAZE: people made known

9 September- 9 December 2023

BLAZE: PEOPLE MADE KNOWN EXHIBITION CELEBRATES PORTRAITURE AND ARTISTIC AGENCY

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery (LWAG) is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition, *BLAZE: people made known*, featuring portraits drawn from the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art. The exhibition highlights the recent acquisitions of renowned artists Virginia Ward, Rhonda Sharpe, Angela Brennan, Virginia Fraser and Elvis Richardson. It also pays special tribute to Susan Cooper Wyatt, a Wongatha artist, whose practice celebrates the significant impact of Aboriginal leaders.

The exhibition's title, *BLAZE: people made known*, draws on the historical usage of the word 'blaze,' to use fire and sound to signal an individual's arrival. This exhibition explores the power of portraiture to communicate aspects of a person, acknowledging the vital role of artists in encouraging public recognition of specific individuals.

One of the remarkable works in the exhibition is Virginia Ward's sculptural self-portrait, *IWABWY. OTSON. NI. Self-portrait As A Not Instrument With Bow Tie*, 2018, which has been crafted using offcuts of wood from the making of ukuleles, mandolins, and guitars. Drawing inspiration from Dada and Surrealist practices, the artist employs found and repurposed materials to delve into a multi-layered geometry. Ward's self-portrait presents a multi-dimensional self that reveals new intricacies when viewed from different angles. The central void operates like an instrument's soundbox to enhance and amplify the sound—in this case, the artist's own distinctively warm and humorous voice.

Ward states, "I use the offcuts and discards from human industry... delving into the multi-layered geometry, exploring all the visual possibilities of language formation though illusion using space, shape, colour, and the significance of application and materials."

Susan Cooper Wyatt's paintings of Aboriginal leaders are public statements of agency and visibility. Among the featured portraits is a full-length depiction of Doris Pilkington Garimara, renowned author of *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*, 1996 and *Under the Wintamarra tree*, 2002 who is acclaimed for her writing of the ongoing impact endured by generations of her family as part of the Stolen Generations. Another prominent figure depicted is activist Ken Colbung, a Noongar leader and cultural custodian.

Wyatt's latest painting portrays her son, Meyne Wyatt, a notable actor, writer and producer. The blazing yellows and oranges allude to his rising fame and power, most notably for his award-winning performance in his play *City of Gold*. In the script, Meyne Wyatt uses the main character's voice to articulate his own sense of purpose. Both Susan Cooper Wyatt and Meyne Wyatt use their respective art forms to affect positive change.

As spoken by the character Breythe, in Meyne Wyatt's *City of Gold*, Act 1, Scene 11:

I have a responsibility. I'm doing this for the community too. Use my platform. Make change. So you can see something positive. Not for them. For us. So our kids can see hope.

Exhibition Curator Lee Kinsella states, "This exhibition showcases portraits – bold self-portraits alongside depictions of artists' friends and colleagues – those people who share political affiliations and creative aspirations. These portraits serve as tangible traces of relationships, and they are intensely personal statements that endure."

BLAZE: people made known is an evocative and thought-provoking exhibition, offering visitors an opportunity to recognise the agency of these remarkable artists and their sitters.

Artists:

Dorothy Braund
Angela Brennan
Virginia Fraser and Elvis Richardson
Rhonda Sharpe
Virginia Ward
Susan Cooper Wyatt

Exhibition launch opening date and time: [Friday 8 September 5.30-8pm](#)

LWAG's exhibition *WILDFLOWER SEASON*, will also open on Friday 8 September, from 5.30pm

Exhibition dates: 9 September – 9 December 2023

The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 12pm to 5pm, and admission is free

For more information, visit the LWAG website: uwa.edu.au/lwag/home

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Images: [Images available here – please note all images must be accompanied by captions provided](#)

Website: uwa.edu.au/lwag/Exhibitions/BLAZE

MEDIA REFERENCE:

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OPEN TUES - SAT 12 - 5PM | FREE ADMISSION
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