

GRAEME DRENDEL

Graeme Drendel is a Melbourne based painter and printmaker whose skilfully executed works appear to be driven by narratives, but it is not necessarily clear what these may be. The subjects in his works, drawn from personal observations, appear as isolated or ensemble players, often in strange groups and in wide open spaces. Professor Sasha Grishin has said of Graeme's works, "I have come to think of his pictorial vignettes as metaphors for some greater reality. There is something awkward and absurd in our situation as human beings and something which is not immediately intelligible or easily verbalised. These small enigmatic parables may refer to this broader reality". Old photographs, books, newspaper cuttings and films inspire this imagery and his sketchbooks are filled with studies of people, objects and landscapes. The landscape of Graeme's childhood, the Mallee region in Victoria, often forms the backdrop to these unfolding narratives. Drama-laced vistas display an ambiguous relationship between the ground and sky, with dark tonal variations suggesting the shadowy onset of dusk or the lull before a storm. The actions of Graeme's characters often appear paradoxical, fluctuating between highly theatrical gestures and the tragic consequences of mortality, yet they are harnessed with a rhythmic sense of balance. Graeme's work continues to confound and delight but ultimately it is always left to the viewer to determine what they will take from each work.

Graeme Drendel completed a Diploma of Teaching Art and Craft from Melbourne State College in 1974. After teaching for several years, Graeme travelled extensively throughout Italy, United Kingdom and United States. Graeme is regularly a finalist in significant prizes throughout Australia such as the Archibald and Sulman Prizes, Paul Guest prize and Doug Moran National Portrait Prize and Rick Amor Self Portrait Prize. In 2022, he was announced the winner of the prestigious Doug Moran National Portrait Prize with his portrait of fellow artist Lewis Miller. In 2016, Graeme's work was included in one of the National Portrait Gallery's principal exhibitions, 'The Popular Pet Show' curated by Dr Sarah Engledow. "Silos + Silence", a major survey exhibition of Graeme's works was held at the Mildura Art Centre in 2016/2017. With over thirty solo exhibitions to his name, Graeme's work can be found in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Artbank, Australian Print Workshop and numerous regional galleries.

BIOGRAPHY

- 1953 Born Ouyen, Vic
- 1974 Diploma of Teaching Art/Craft, Melbourne State College
- 1984 Travelled to Italy
- 1987 Travelled to Italy, England, United States
- 2001 Artist in residence, Bundanon, NSW (former residence of artist Arthur Boyd now run by Bundanon Trust)
- 2004 Travelled to Italy
- 2006 Travelled to Europe and the United Kingdom
- 2007 Artist in residence, Flying Fruit Fly Circus (in association with Albury Regional Gallery, NSW)
- 2010 Artist in residence, The Vault, Mildura, Vic
- 2013 Artist in residence, The Vault, Mildura, Vic
- 2017 Artist in residence, The Vault, Mildura, Vic

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 "Backdrop" (with Lucy Culliton), Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2022 "Recent paintings", Australian Galleries, Sydney
- 2021 "The first dance", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2020 "The messengers", Post Office Gallery, Federation University Australia, Ballarat
- 2019 "Card carriers", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2018 "On uneven ground", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- "Isolation and inclusion", Brimbank Community and Civic Centre, Melbourne
- 2017 "Graeme Drendel: Paintings and works on paper 1984 – 2017", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2016 "Silos + Silence", Mildura Arts Centre, Vic
- 2015 "Contact", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2014 "Surrender", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2012 "Harvest", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- "Outsiders", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2010 The Art Vault, Mildura, Vic
- "The Passage", Melbourne Art Fair, Melbourne
- 2009 "The Female Nude", Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Melbourne
- Jan Murphy Galleries, Brisbane
- 2008 Australian Galleries Painting and Sculpture, Sydney
- 2007 Jan Murphy Galleries, Brisbane
- "States of undress", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne

- 2006 "Channelling", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
2005 "Slipping through the cracks", Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney
2004 "Dancers in the dark", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
2003 "The market street paintings", Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Melbourne
"Small pictures", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney
"Trophy hunters", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney
2002 "The bridge", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney
2001 "The bridge", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
2000 "Tourists", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney
1999 "Recent paintings 1999", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
"Recent gouaches", Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney
1998 "Recent paintings", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney
1997 "Paintings", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
1995 Mallee Tourist Association, Ouyen
1991 Mildura Regional Gallery, Mildura
1990 York Street Gallery, Melbourne

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 Small works, Beaver Galleries, Canberra
2021 Archibald Prize and Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
2018 Archibald Prize and Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
"Paul Guest Prize", Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo
"Swan Hill Print and Drawing acquisitive award, Swan Hill, Vic
2017 "Rick Amor Self Portrait Prize", Montsalvat, Vic
"Doug Moran National Portrait Prize", Juniper Hall Paddington, Sydney
2016 "The Popular Pet Show", National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
"Panoply", Metropolis Gallery, Vic
2015 Kilgour Prize, Newcastle Art Gallery, NSW
2014 Adelaide Perry Drawing Prize, Presbyterian Ladies College, Sydney
Rick Amor Drawing Prize, Ballarat Art Gallery, Vic
Kilgour Prize, Newcastle Art Gallery, NSW
Benalla Nude Art Prize, Benalla Art Gallery, Vic
"Rochester Fine Art Exhibition", Rochester Shire Hall, Vic
The Gallipoli Art Prize, Gallipoli Memorial Club, Sydney
"one of each", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
"Australia Day 2014 Celebratory Exhibition", Australian Galleries, Sydney & Melbourne
2013 "Small Works", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
"5th Anniversary Exhibition", The Art Vault, Mildura, Vic
"Figuration", Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
Rick Amor Portrait Prize, Melbourne
"Twenty Artists", Gallows Gallery, Perth
2012 Adelaide Perry Drawing Prize, Presbyterian Ladies College, Sydney
2011 Adelaide Perry Drawing Prize, Presbyterian Ladies College, Sydney
Len Fox Painting Award, Castlemaine Art Gallery, Vic
Dobell Drawing Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
"Reframed", Counihan Gallery, Melbourne
Amor Prize, Monsalvat, Eltham, Melbourne
Geelong Print Prize, Geelong Gallery, Vic
"Nether Regions", Convent Gallery, Melbourne
Print Council of Australia Print Commission, Megalo, Canberra
Salon des Refusés, S. H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
2010 "Impressions", Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
Melbourne Art Fair
2009 "Figurative Painting", Hill Smith Gallery, Adelaide
Salon des Refusés, S. H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
James Farrell Self Portrait Acquisitive Award, Castlemaine Art Gallery, Vic
2008 "Step Right Up" The Circus In Australian Art, Albury Regional Gallery travelling exhibition

Kilgour Prize, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, NSW

"Inside Out", works from the Anthony/ Bell Collection, Albury Regional Gallery, NSW

"Who let the dogs out - the dog in contemporary art", Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, and Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, NSW

- 2007 "Summer Stock Show", Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney
"Small Pleasures", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
"Stock Show" Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
"A Selection of Portraits" Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture
- 2006 "Summery", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney
"Stock Show", Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Melbourne
"Summer Stock Show", Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Melbourne
"Impressions", Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
"The 55th Blake Prize for Religious Art", Blake Society at The Gallery, National Art School, Sydney
"50th Anniversary Exhibition", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

AWARDS / COMMISSIONS

- 2022 Winner, Doug Moran National Portrait Prize
- 2021 Finalist, Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Finalist, Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
- 2018 Finalist, Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Finalist, Paul Guest Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery, Vic
Finalist, Calleen Art Award, Cowra Regional Gallery
Finalist, Swan Hill Print and Drawing acquisitive award, Swan Hill, Vic
- 2017 Finalist, Rick Amor Self Portrait Prize, Montsalvat, Melbourne
Finalist, Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, Sydney
- 2015 Finalist, Kilgour Prize, Newcastle Art Gallery, NSW
- 2014 Finalist, Benalla Nude Prize, Benalla Art Gallery, Vic
Finalist, Rick Amor Drawing Prize, Montsalvat, Melbourne
Finalist, Kilgour Prize, Newcastle Art Gallery, NSW
- 2013 Finalist, Rick Amor Portrait Prize, Montsalvat, Melbourne
- 2012 Finalist, Adelaide Perry Drawing Prize, Presbyterian Ladies College, Sydney
- 2011 Finalist, Dobell Drawing Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Finalist, Adelaide Perry Drawing Prize, Presbyterian Ladies College, Sydney
Finalist, Rick Amor Drawing Prize, Montsalvat, Melbourne
Finalist Geelong Print Prize, Geelong Gallery, Geelong
- 2008 Finalist, Kilgour Prize, Newcastle Art Gallery, NSW
- 2006 Finalist, Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

PUBLICATIONS

- 2023 "Lush Monaro and an eerie Mallee world make a compelling backdrop for figurative masters", Sasha Grishin, *the-riotact.com*, 10 September
- 2022 "Doug Moran Prize : Graeme Drendel wins...", *Guardian Australia*, November 2022
"Doug Moran National Portrait Prize awarded to Graeme Drendel...", *ABC Arts*, November 2022
- 2021 "Master of enigma explores our strange sense of alienation", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 18 October
- 2019 "Be Frank", Sarah Engledow, *Portrait – Magazine of Australian & International Portraiture*, Summer 2019/20
- 2017 "Bigger Picture", Christopher Allen, *The Australian*
"Revamp celebrates Ballarat's art schools", Michelle Smith, *The Courier*, Ballarat,
"Home is where the heart is", Caitlyn Morgan, *Sunraysia Daily*, Sept 25
- 2016 *Graeme Drendel*, Gavin Fry, Australian Galleries Publishing
The Popular Pet Book, Sarah Engledow, National Portrait Gallery
- 2014 *Australian Art: a History*, Sasha Grishin, TheMiegunyah Press
- 2013 "History and Collections:", David Golightly, Castlemaine Art Gallery
- 2012 "Fun trying to figure it all out", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, March
"Behind Their Eyes", Chloe Mandryk, *BMA Magazine*, February
- 2011 "Sad Slide in Prize Swamp", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, May
"The Blake Book", Rosemary Crumlin, *Macmillan Art Publishing*

- 2010 "Nuanced Works Draw on Disciplined Language", Christopher Allen, *The Australian*, December
- 2010 "The passage", Merryn Gates, catalogue essay, Melbourne Art Fair
- 2009 "About Face", Christopher Allen, *Weekend Australian*, March
- 2007 *Untitled: Portraits of Australian Artists*, editor Sonia Payes, essay by Caroline Field, Macmillan Art Publishing
- 2006 "Channelling", Caroline Field, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
McCulloch's Encyclopaedia of Australian Art, The Miegunyah Press
- 2004 "Quests for companionship", Caroline Field, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2003 "Not in front of the children", Christopher Heathcote, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2001 Christopher Heathcote, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
Australian Painting 1788 - 2000, Bernard Smith et al, Oxford University Press
- 2000 Melbourne Art Fair catalogue
Christopher Wallace-Crabbe, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 1999 Dr Graham Burrows, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
Christopher Heathcote, Christopher; catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Melbourne, July 1999

COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Artbank, Sydney; Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin; Charles Sturt University, NSW; Deakin University, Vic; Albury Regional Art Gallery, NSW; Castlemaine Art Gallery, Vic; Geelong City Art Gallery, Vic; Mildura Arts Centre, Vic; Ballarat Art Gallery, Vic; Newcastle Region Art Gallery, NSW; New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale, NSW; Customs House Gallery, Warrnambool, Vic; Grafton Regional Art Gallery, NSW; Print Council of Australia, Melbourne, Vic; The Art Vault, Mildura, Vic; Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Qld; Tweed River Regional Art Gallery, Murwillumbah, NSW; Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne; Bundanon Trust, Bundanon, NSW; City of Moreland, Melbourne; Department of Education, Vic; Methodist Ladies College, Melbourne; City of Maroondah, Vic; City of Whitehorse, Vic; Presbyterian Ladies College, Burwood, Vic; Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston, Tas; St Michael's Grammar School, St Kilda, Vic; St Kevin's College, Toorak, Vic; Tintern Schools, Ringwood, Vic