

Media Information – New Exhibition

RUTH BURGESS: *From The Forest*
30 years of woodcuts and wood engravings

MOSMAN ART GALLERY
16 March – 19 May 2013



From the Forest celebrates the art and life of Ruth Burgess who is widely considered to be a leading force in Australian printmaking as an artist, teacher and mentor. Organised by Mosman Art Gallery's Assistant Director & Senior Curator, Katrina Cashman, the exhibition is the first survey of Burgess' printmaking practice whose career spans more than three decades.

Ruth Burgess' home and studio are located in a verdant rainforest and bush valley on Sydney's north shore. This natural world has provided a rich source of inspiration that has underpinned Burgess' continued practice of distinctive woodcut prints and wood engravings. The enduring themes evident within her works are the spirituality and the immediacy of her bush environment and the interconnectedness of man and nature.

Born in Sydney, Ruth Burgess studied painting with Desiderius Orban in the early 1950's. She graduated from the University of Sydney in 1954 with a degree in Arts/Music and later studied musical composition in Paris while immersing herself in modernist and contemporary art, an independent move that proved seminal to her artistic development. Ruth was introduced to woodcuts in 1976 when she studied with artist Sue Buckley at the Workshop Arts Centre, Willoughby. (Ruth would later teach there from 1984-93). Burgess found working with woodcuts a revelation and the ideal medium to express her visual aesthetics. It soon became a dominant and driving force within her practice.

In 1988 Burgess was invited to attend the Northern Wilderness Woodcut Symposium and exhibition in Harbin, China. This trip, which was to be the first of nine cultural exchanges, proved an artistic and spiritual revelation. Ruth met local artists and spent time at the Central Art Academy, which caused a radical re-think of her own art practices. Over the years, Burgess has been profoundly influenced by China, especially its painting and calligraphy, as well as Buddhism. While her artworks share many of the aesthetic qualities of Chinese and Japanese woodcut traditions, her works have a distinctly Australian sensibility and a visual iconography developed through living with such proximity to the Australian bush, its flora and fauna.

Ruth Burgess has been instrumental in developing relationships between Australia and Chinese printmakers. Through her travels, studies, teachings and exhibitions, Burgess became friends with many of China's artist luminaries, affording her the status sufficient to ensure she had introductions to all the major art schools and woodcut associations across China. Acting as an honorary consultant she was able to collect major works by key Chinese woodcut artists for the Art Gallery of New South Wales' collection. Some of these works will also be on display at Mosman Art Gallery.

RUTH BURGESS: *From the Forest* runs concurrent with the National Portrait Gallery travelling exhibition – Jenny Sages: *Paths to Portraiture*, Mosman Art Gallery, 16 March – 19 May 2013.

A colour catalogue accompanies the survey with essay by exhibition curator, Katrina Cashman.

Exhibition Events include:

An artists' lunch hosted by 702 ABC's Simon Marnie, curator talks & artists' workshops.

Ruth Burgess and Katrina Cashman available for media opportunities.

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Mosman Art Gallery, cnr Art Gallery Way & Myahgah Road, Mosman, NSW 2088

Admission: free / Gallery Hours: 7 days, 10am-5pm / PH: 02 9978 4178 / www.mosmanartgallery.org.au

MOSMAN ART GALLERY SPECIAL EVENT:

AN ARTFUL AFFAIR:

LUNCH WITH JENNY SAGES AND RUTH BURGESS IN CONVERSATION WITH 702 ABC'S SIMON MARNIE

Tuesday 16 April at 12 noon.

Join legendary and much loved Australian artists, Jenny Sages and Ruth Burgess in conversation with 702 ABC radio presenter, Simon Marnie. Be part of the conversation over a delicious two course luncheon - including wine and coffee – in the Grand Hall at Mosman Art Gallery, Tues 16 April. Simon will conduct an entertaining Q&A with both artists in discussion of their current Mosman Art Gallery exhibitions: Jenny Sages: *Paths to Portraiture* and Ruth Burgess: *From the Forest*.

This not to be missed special event is a key fundraiser for Mosman Art Gallery.

Unique raffles prizes on offer. 'An Artful Affair' is sure to be an inspiring and memorable event!

Bookings essential: www.trybooking.com/42432

\$90 per person / \$85 Friends of the Gallery / \$850 - corporate tables of 10

image: Ruth Burgess *Homage to Tanrokubon*, 1985



RUTH BURGESS: *From The Forest* - PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

A Passion for Printmaking:

Ruth Burgess artist' talk and demonstration

Sunday 21 April, 10.30am

Join artist Ruth Burgess and Senior Curator Katrina Cashman for a discussion about Ruth Burgess' passionate engagement with the art of woodcut over the past three decades. Following her talk the artist will demonstrate the wide ranging skills and techniques of this ancient art form.

Event includes morning tea.

Free admission, RSVP essential: www.trybooking.com/42144

'The art of working in China':

Ruth Burgess and Michael Kempson in conversation

Sunday 5 May, 3pm

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Ruth Burgess was actively engaged with and promoted cultural exchanges between Australia and China, with nine trips in just over a decade. Similarly in recent years Michael Kempson, Senior Lecturer and Director of Cicada Press at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales has been responsible for further cultural exchanges, maintaining Australia's artistic dialogue with China. Join Ruth and Michael for a discussion about their various experiences working with such a fascinating culture and its traditions. Event includes afternoon tea.

Free admission free, RSVP essential: www.trybooking.com/42146

Ruth Burgess Studio: Friends Friday Focus Tour

Friday 17 May, 10am – 12 noon

An event especially for the Friends of Mosman Gallery, a tour of artist Ruth Burgess' printmaking studio situated in the verdant rainforests of her Pymble home. Ruth will demonstrate the ancient art of hand printing woodcuts as well as printing wood engravings using her 1925 industrial printers press.

Morning tea will be served on the terrace overlooking Ruth's forest.

Friends of the Gallery event

Admission: \$20.00. Bookings essential: www.trybooking.com.au/42429

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