

year of the BOYDS

WORDS ALEX SPEED

Arthur Boyd was one of Australia's most important 20th century artists and part of a unique artistic dynasty. Born into a large and loving family, his landscapes are an integral piece of Australia's cultural tapestry. Now, two separate but interwoven exhibitions will celebrate the lives of Arthur and his younger brother David, also a celebrated artist, along with their talented family tree.

2012 MAY OFFICIALLY BE YEAR OF THE FARMER BUT unofficially it could also be called Year of the Boyds. Next month and in August, two exhibitions *A Century of Boyd* and *David Boyd: His work, his life, his family* will commemorate the enormous contributions Arthur, David, and the wider Boyd family, past and present, have made to the visual arts in Australia over the past 150 years.

A Century of Boyd will be launched by former prime minister Bob Hawke on March 24 in Kangaroo Valley. Held at Galeria Aniela Fine Art Gallery, it is just a short drive up the winding road from *Bundanon*, the beautiful property on the Shoalhaven River that was home to Arthur and his wife Yvonne for 20 years. In 1993, following Arthur's death in 1991, *Bundanon* was gifted to the nation, along with its priceless collection of more than 4000 artworks and objects. It is said Arthur believed "you can't own a landscape" and it was his wish to share the property which inspired so many of his magnificent masterpieces.

The exhibition will feature more than 100 paintings and bronze sculptures including some pieces from *Bundanon* and others from the wider Boyd family's private collections, some previously unseen. While Arthur is the most celebrated member of his family, the Boyd lineage through the ages is rich with gifted painters, potters, musicians and architects. Arthur and Yvonne's children Lucy, Polly and Jamie are all painters. The exhibition, with pieces from Arthur and David, also contains work from Arthur and Emma Boyd, their grandparents and founders of the Boyd artistic dynasty and their father, potter Merric Boyd. There are also pieces by David Boyd; Lenore Boyd, daughter of Arthur and David's brother Guy; Jamie Boyd, son of Arthur; and Nathaniel Boyd, youngest son of Jamie Boyd.

Many of the works for *A Century of Boyd* will come from Jamie Boyd's home in London. They will include the previously unseen *Lost Bride* painting, believed to have been painted between 1955 and 1957. Discovered by Jamie by chance on two pieces of board that were screwed to the base of his father's old art trolley, it will be the first time it has been on public view in almost six decades, and will be in the same condition it was found – it has not been restored at all. In 2010 Arthur Boyd's oil on board *The Frightened Bridegroom* fetched a record \$1.2 million. It broke his previous record of \$1.1 million for *Bridegroom waiting for his Bride to Grow up* in 2001.

The other exhibition *David Boyd: his work, his life, his family* opens on August 17 and has been planned as a celebration of

the artist's life. David, an internationally-acclaimed figurative painter, ceramic sculptor and potter, and the fourth of five children born to potter Merric and painter Doris Boyd, died last year.

The exhibition will be presented by Eva Breuer Art Dealer and will be held at The National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery in Sydney. It will consist of more than 100 pieces including treasured drawings, paintings, sculptures and ceramics from David's career. A book of memoirs written by David Boyd is being collated by David Boyd's family who are hoping a publication of these memoirs will accompany the exhibition, as will another publication explaining David's art with a foreword by renowned art critic John McDonald. David's memoirs recount the idyllic childhood he spent with Arthur and their siblings Guy, Lucy and Mary at their family home *Open Country* in Murrumbidgee, Melbourne. Both books are said to shine a light into a magical upbringing full of artistic encouragement and inspiration. It is also full of references to the provenance of the pieces in the exhibition, created by generations of Boyds.

Like the Kangaroo Valley exhibition, this show also includes works by Arthur Boyd as well as the wider Boyd family including grandparents and parents, siblings Guy, Lucy and Mary and David's children Amanda, Lucinda and Cassandra, who are also all painters. It will also exhibit important ceramic examples of the work of David and his wife Hermia, and other examples of Hermia's own sculptures, drawings and paintings.

Nicky McWilliam, director at Eva Breuer Art Dealer, has been integral in the David Boyd exhibition and accompanying book projects. Nicky said it is impossible to overestimate how David's childhood and heritage are intertwined and how his family life influenced his art. "David was incredibly close to his siblings and his parents. He and Arthur grew up in a hugely supportive and loving household, and his parents believed every child is born with the ability to be creative given the right circumstances and encouragement. The Boyds nurtured and cared for each other's creative talents." 

A Century of Boyd opens March 24 at Galeria Aniela Fine Art Gallery, 261A Mount Scanzi Road, Kangaroo Valley www.galeriaaniela.com.au

David Boyd: His work, his life, his family August 17 - September 23. The National Trust S. H. Ervin Gallery, Kent Street, Millers Point www.nationaltrust.com.au/placestovisit/sheg



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
 ROSEBUD BY DAVID
 BOYD (PHOTOGRAPH
 COURTESY EVA BREUER
 ART DEALER, SYDNEY);
 SHOALHAVEN AT DUSK
 BY ARTHUR BOYD;
 FIGURES IN FOREST,
 COLLAGE BY JAMIE
 BOYD; A YOUNG DAVID
 BOYD AT WORK.

