



## **Ben Quilty Solo Exhibition**

Exhibition Dates: 05.09. - 18.10.2019  
Exhibition Opening: 05.09.2019, 6-9pm  
Exhibition Cocktail Reception: Friday 11.10.2019, 6-8pm  
Artist Talk: Saturday 12.10.2019

Arndt Art Agency is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in Germany by Ben Quilty, one of Australia's most acclaimed living visual artists. Quilty's debut solo presentation in Germany includes a suite of new figurative paintings produced in his characteristic bold, abstract expressionist style.

Best known for his gestural oil paintings, Quilty explores notions of identity, trauma and humanitarian causes through his practice that serves as a reflection of current social and political events. His figurative compositions are conveyed via a distinctive, sculptural impasto painting technique that bring his subjects to life. Boldly smeared and slapped onto his canvases, Quilty's pictures examine the process of painting itself while summoning his subjects with a palpable physicality. Often conveying jarring, unsettling or confronting visual depictions, Quilty explores the problematic relationship between the personal and the cultural and in doing so, aims to challenge commonly held assumptions.

Apart from his work as a visual artist, he has assumed the role as a highly visible Australian social commentator, utilising his voice as an artist to incite and campaign for social change. Investigating topics as varied as the current global refugee crisis to Australia's complex social history, Quilty aims to critique and question notions of identity, patriotism and belonging. As Quilty states: "My work is about working out how to live in this world, it's about compassion and empathy but also anger and resistance. Through it I hope to push compassion to the front of national debate."

Included in the show, Quilty examines the position and role of the straight white male figure in society and flawed masculinity in an effort to critique notions of himself and fellow men. Utilising imagery of figures such as Santa Claus and prominent international and Australian politicians as props, power structures and privilege are explored. Here, his subjects are depicted as threatening, grotesque, contorted, amalgamated and mutated. Set amid surrealist backdrops, an apocalyptic global turmoil and imbalance is suggested. One of the artist's recurrent self-portraits is also included within the selection of works, acting as a reference point and anchor for Quilty's own psychological state and anxiety concerning world affairs.



**About the Artist:**

Born in Sydney, Australia in 1973, Quilty lives and works in the Southern Highlands NSW, Australia. In 1994 he completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts majoring in Painting at the Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University, followed by the completion of a certificate in Aboriginal Culture and History at Monash University in 1996. In 2001, he completed a Bachelor of Visual Communications at the School of Design at the University of Western Sydney, and in 2015, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters, University of Western Sydney.

In 2011, the Australian War Memorial commissioned Quilty to travel to Afghanistan as Australia's official war artist. The resulting body of work was exhibited in 2013 at the National Art School Gallery, Canberra. In the same year, Quilty was awarded Australia's most prestigious portrait painting prize *The Archibald Prize* for his iconic portrait of the late Australia artist, Margaret Olley. In 2014, he was selected as the winner of the *Prudential Eye Award*, Singapore, and invited to become the first Australian to hold a solo exhibition at Saatchi Gallery in London.

In 2016, Quilty was invited by World Vision Australia to travel to Greece, Serbia and Lebanon with esteemed Australian author, Richard Flanagan, to witness firsthand the international refugee crisis. This global topic was explored via a series of key works as a result of his experiences abroad in addition to the publication *Home: Drawings by Syrian Children* (2018) produced by Penguin Random House featuring a collection of drawings by Syrian children reflecting on their forsaken homeland.

Quilty's work has been widely exhibited in a number of significant national and international exhibitions. Most recently in 2019, Quilty staged his first major survey exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide entitled 'QUILTY', followed by a tour to Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Ben Quilty's work is represented in public Australian collections that include: the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, NSW; the Bendigo Art Gallery, VIC; Tarrawarra Museum of Art, VIC; the Australian War Memorial, Canberra; and the Australia Parliament House Art Collection, Canberra.

For press enquiries please contact:

Valeska Hageney, [valeska@arndtartagency.com](mailto:valeska@arndtartagency.com)