

Date: 7 August , 2018

Gothic Beauty

Victorian notions of love, loss and spirituality

From a nineteenth century Victorian horse-drawn hearse, to the pulsating futurist video work of Jess Johnson, ***Gothic Beauty*** traces early Victorian rituals of mourning and the pursuit of 'pleasurable terror' evident from the 1800s to contemporary times.

The exhibition, curated by and exclusive to **Bendigo Art Gallery**, includes dark and evocative works by contemporary artists Jane Burton, Bill Henson, Michael Vale and Janet Beckhouse, amongst others; alongside historic Pre Raphaelite paintings and objects, mourning jewellery and costumes drawn from public and private collections.

Gothic Beauty: Victorian notions of love, loss and spirituality draws inspiration from Horace Walpole's ground-breaking novel *The Castle of Otranto*. When first published in 1764, this landmark book sparked a keen interest in dark, psychological narratives and heightened emotional states, mostly amongst middle and upper-class women escaping dull, sheltered lives.

By the early nineteenth century, Gothic literature had become commonplace, and the ideals, including feelings of horror and escapism and the beauty and sublime of landscape, manifested throughout art and society and continue to endure into modern times.

This exhibition draws on works from Bendigo Art Gallery's historic and contemporary collections, as well as key loans and new works from contemporary artists who maintain a fascination with the Gothic.

Highlights include:

- A series of significant mourning objects, including an 1882 child's mourning dress from major state collections.
Eighteenth and nineteenth century first edition novels by Jane Austen, Ann Radcliffe and Horace Walpole from the Collection of the State Library Victoria.
- Miniature memorial portraits and mourning brooches containing intricately woven hair of the deceased.
- Historic works including Aubrey Beardsley; JMW Turner, Herbert Schmalz's iconic *Too Late* (Collection of Bendigo Art Gallery)
- A late 19thC horse-drawn Hearse
- New works by Janet Beckhouse, Michael Needham, Michael Vale
- A newly commissioned sound work by Australian composer Zoe Barry

Gothic Beauty will highlight the many motifs and ideas that emerged in the late eighteenth century and were cemented during the Victorian period – supernatural fixations, the thrill of terror, the mysteries of the afterlife – all of which carry through to the present day and

continue to inform and inspire contemporary artists,' said **Karen Quinlan, Director of Bendigo Art Gallery.**

'We are delighted to be able to draw on our own, and the State's finest collections – including the National Gallery of Victoria, State Library Victoria and Museums Victoria - to bring this evocative exhibition to life,' she said.

Contemporary artists include: Penny Byrne, Bill Henson, Sally Smart, Kate Just, Michael Vale, Julie de Ville, Georgia Metaxas, Michael Needham, Carolyn Dew, Jess Johnson, Janet Beckhouse, Jane Burton, Juz Kitson and more.

Gothic Beauty: Victorian notions of love, loss and spirituality
Curated by Tansy Curtin and Jessica Bridgfoot, Bendigo Art Gallery.
6 October 2018 – 10 February 2019

Media Contact:
Katrina Hall
Publicity/Communications
0421153046 kathall@ozemail.com.au

www.bendigoartgallery.com.au | T: 5434 6088 |   

Bendigo Art Gallery is proudly owned and operated by the City of Greater Bendigo with additional support from Creative Victoria.

