

Dog Days

25 February – 25 March 2017



The humble studio dog has played confidante, silent critic and muse to the artist for centuries.

Some of the more celebrated subjects include David Hockney's dachshunds, Stanley and Boogie, who had their portraits painted literally hundreds of times, "I make no apologies for the apparent subject matter... these two dear little creatures are my friends" Hockney once wrote.

Lucian Freud's whippets Pluto and Eli sat for the artist on several occasions – either on their own or posed with his human subjects, and Picasso's dog, Lump (also a dachshund), was the artist's loyal friend for many years and died just ten days before Picasso himself, whilst Andy Warhol's dachshund, Archie, became something of an alter ego with the artist deflecting interview questions that he didn't want to answer to his four legged friend.

Artists represented by Jan Murphy Gallery also have studio dogs. Many of these dogs sit quietly on studio floors while their owners paint, sculpt and produce work. Lucy Culliton owns several dogs – indeed Lucy's studio is scattered with mattresses for her five trusty studio assistants. Ben Quilty's dog Betsy was given to him as a puppy by his friend and fellow artist Luke Sciberras and Rhys Lee's dog Stan is a 15 year old Kelpie-Collie beloved by the entire family. Speaking about her dog, Strocchi states:

"Jaffa is our studio dog. She came to us at three months old from Yuendumu. The Warlukurlangu Art Centre at Yuendumu has run the dog adoption program Aussie Desert Dogs since 2007. They have adopted out over 500 dogs. The sweet puppy is now five years old and spends most of the day in repose"

They sit quietly, don't criticise and stay alert for visitors. Studio dogs inherently know not to chew brushes, bark during moments of concentration or lift their legs on stacked canvases!

Dog Days is a simple ode to these special friends. It is an opportunity for their owners to honour their companions, to thank them for their tireless devotion and late nights burning the midnight oil before exhibition deadlines. Some have 'borrowed' their subjects but all have portrayed them with the respect they deserve.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS: Jason Benjamin, Lucy Culliton, Jason Fitzgerald, James Guppy, Claudia Greathead, Linde Ivimey, Rhys Lee, Adam Lester, William Mackinnon, Robert Malherbe, Guy Maestri, Leith Maguire, Ben Quilty, Monica Rohan, Martin Smith, Marina Strocchi, Deborah Williams and Heidi Yardley.

Dog Days will be running concurrently with *Creatures: Great and Small* at Philip Bacon Galleries and Bruce Heiser Gallery will be showcasing cats – this is war!

Image credit: Lucy Culliton *Five studio dogs (Hepzibah, Reddy, May Day, Super Zippy and Tessa)* 2017