

ROOM 3 - OLLEY ROOM

QUEEN SHARED BATHROOM



One of the Hotel's features is our rooms are named after Australian artists. Room 3, one of our queen rooms, is named after Margaret Olley.

Margaret Olley AC (24 June 1923 – 26 July 2011) was an Australian painter, the subject of more than ninety solo exhibitions. Olley is one of Australia's most significant still-life and interior painters. She drew inspiration from her home and studio and the beauty of the everyday objects she gathered around her. Many of her paintings feature arrangements of fruits and flowers, set amid the pottery, art and exotica of her travels. A widely-recognised figure in Australian art, she was a major benefactor to public institutions, and the subject of two Archibald Prize winning portraits.

Born in Lismore in northern New South Wales, Olley studied art at Brisbane Technical College then at East Sydney Technical College (later the National Art School), graduating with first-class honours in 1945. In the late 1940s she worked as a set designer in the theatre. Artists in her circle included Sidney Nolan, Russell Drysdale and Donald Friend. With Friend, she was among the first artists to paint in the Hill End area near Bathurst in western New South Wales.

In 1948, Olley held her first solo exhibition at Sydney's Macquarie Galleries, from which the National Gallery of Victoria and Art Gallery of NSW both purchased works. A self-portrait from that show – Portrait in the mirror 1948, now in the Art Gallery of NSW collection – shows her surrounded by the things that would preoccupy her throughout her career, as well as paying tribute to past great masters of art, seen in the postcard reproductions, which would become another frequent feature of her work.

In 1964, Olley bought a terrace house and adjoining former hat factory in Duxford Street in the inner Sydney suburb of Paddington. This home and studio became almost as famous as the artist herself. With richly coloured walls, it was jam-packed with thousands of objects, many of which featured as subjects in her artworks. It appeared chaotic but actually was arranged by the artist like a still life. In the 1970s and 80s she visited America, Crete, Egypt, China, Russia, Italy, France and England, but despite her travels, her subject matter remained focused on her immediate surroundings and the evidence of her experiences appeared in the objects included in her still-life arrangements, such as Homage to Manet 1987.

Olley continued to paint and exhibit into the early 2000s. She was awarded the Order of Australia in 1991 and made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1996. A portrait of her, by Ben Quilty, won the Archibald Prize in 2011. When she died later that year, a state memorial service was held at the Gallery. [Source: AGNSW website]

359 BARKER ST CASTLEMAINE



northernartshotel.com.au

0491 074 343 | enquiries@northernartshotel.com.au

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Margaret Olley by Ben Quilty
Archibald winner 2011



Some works of and by Margaret Olley