

# ROOM 6 - OLSEN ROOM

## KING ENSUITE ROOM



One of the Hotel's features is our rooms are named after Australian artists. Room 6, one of our King ensuite rooms, is named after John Olsen.

**John Henry Olsen AO OBE (born 21 January 1928)** is an Australian artist and winner of the 2005 Archibald Prize. Olsen is one of Australia's greatest living artists. Born in Newcastle NSW in 1928, Olsen is well known for his energetic and distinctive painting style and in particular for his lyrical depiction of the landscape. He is a major figure in the story of Australian art and his unique and sensual pictorial language presents a very personal view of the world.

John Olsen was born in Newcastle and he moved to Bondi Beach with his family in 1935 and began a lifelong fascination with Sydney Harbour. After leaving school in 1943, he went to the Dattillo Rubbo Art School in 1947 and from 1950 to 1953 studied at the Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney, and Auburn School from 1950 to 1956. In 1957 John Olsen went to Europe to paint. After visiting London and Cornwall in England, he left for Europe. Olsen studied printmaking at Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17 etching studio in Paris followed by two years in Deia Spain.

Olsen sent works back from Spain for his first solo exhibition at Macquarie Galleries Sydney 6–8 August 1958. In the exhibition catalogue artist's statement, Olsen referred to Paul Klee's maxim of 'taking the line for a holiday.' Olsen returned to Sydney in 1960 and began teaching at East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School) where he had also studied.

In Deia, Olsen learnt to cook from Elizabeth David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, instilling a life-long love affair with cooking and food. He also worked for brief periods in both Ibiza and Deia, as an apprentice chef. Olsen was influenced by the Taochist artists Antoni Tàpies and Jean Dubuffet, the CoBrA group and Miró. He also developed an interest in Eastern philosophy (specifically D.T. Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture* and Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery*) and poetry through his friendship with poet, Robert Graves, which has continued to inspire his work.

In 1968, Olsen set up and ran the Bakery Art School and in 1970, he was commissioned by the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation to paint a large mural entitled, 'Salute to Five Bells', which was inspired by Kenneth Slessor's poem and completed in 1973. Olsen's work has been marked by a deep engagement with the Australian landscape and he has lived for long periods in different parts of the country and travelled widely in it. He has served on the boards of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Art Gallery. [Source Wikipedia & NGV]

# 359 BARKER ST CASTLEMAINE



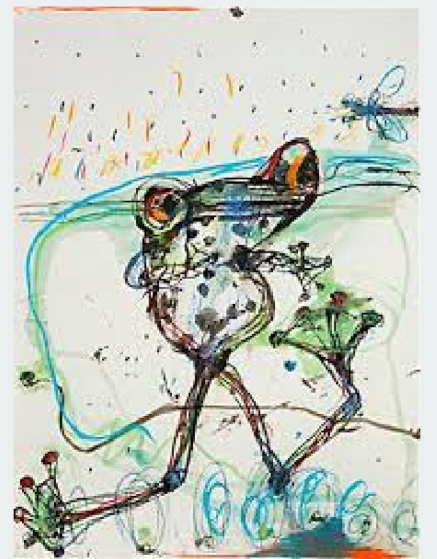
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Some works by John Olsen