



Arthur Boyd: The Life of Saint Francis

Only at The David Roche Foundation, Adelaide

An exhibition of rarely seen monumental tapestries by celebrated Australian artist **Arthur Boyd** will go on display at **The David Roche Foundation House Museum** in North Adelaide from **28 April** until **2 September**.

Curated by Museum Director, **Robert Reason**, with work generously loaned from **The National Gallery of Australia** (NGA) collection, the exhibition marks the first time that twelve of Arthur Boyd's twenty tapestries, which illustrate the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, have been displayed together. Nearly 50 years after their acquisition by the NGA the tapestries are now coming to Adelaide.

Titled **Arthur Boyd: The Life of St Francis** the exhibition also includes drawings, pastels and lithographs from the series created by Boyd while in London between 1964 and 1965, after his earlier travels to Italy. Encouraged by fellow artist John Olsen, Boyd had his pastels translated into tapestry cartoons in 1969-70 at the Tapeçarias de Portalegre atelier in Portugal, who then wove the Saint Francis suite under his direction between late 1970 and 1974. Each tapestry measuring 2.5 x 3.0 metres and with a density of 2500 stitches per square metre, explore the universal human conditions of love and pain, sacrifice, and compassion through the artist's highly original interpretation of the legend of the medieval Italian saint, St. Francis.

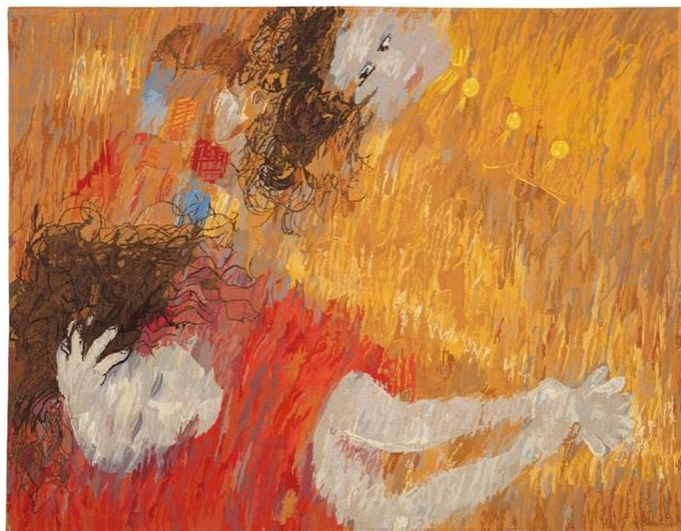


Image: Arthur Boyd, designer, Tapeçarias de Portalegre, manufacturer, St Francis when young dreaming of fine clothes and armour 1973, dyed wool on cotton high-warp tapestry, 263.0 (H) x 340.0 (W) cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Reproduced with the permission of Bundanon Trust.

Robert Reason, Museum Director said ‘Arthur Boyd’s tapestry commission remains one of Australia’s largest and most ambitious bodies of work and is a remarkable contribution to Australian art and Franciscan history. Boyd delves into Francis’s psyche and through his work the monumental figure of the saint burns bright with spiritual light, at times hungry and devouring, while at others soft and dreamlike in the company of his followers. Devoid of saintly halos and traditional religious iconography, Boyd takes you on a deeply personal journey to consider our humanity and relationship to spirituality, desire, worldly possessions, and our fellow kind.’

The Saint Francis suite of lithographs also has a connection to Adelaide, with the well-known gallerist Kym Bonython supporting their production and exhibiting them at his Hungry Horse Art Gallery in Sydney in 1966.

During the run of the exhibition in Adelaide, visitors will have the opportunity to hear from Margaret Pont, the leading authority on Arthur Boyd’s St. Francis suite; Leonie Bessant from the Australian Tapestry Workshop; and Jennifer Thompson from Bundanon, the property gifted by Boyd to the nation in 1993. Further details on these events can be found at www.rochefoundation.com.au.

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

28 April – 2 September 2023

Arthur Boyd: The Life of Saint Francis

Principal Lender: National Gallery of Australia

The David Roche Foundation House Museum
241 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide
Open: Tuesday to Saturday 10AM-4PM

Exhibition Entry: \$15 adult. \$12 concession. Children under 12 free.

No booking required.



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