

Ah Xian: Axiom

Exhibition dates: 10 November – 26 February 2017

Official Opening: Thursday 10th November 2016, 6:00-7:30pm



A major exhibition featuring the work of one of Australia's leading contemporary artists Ah Xian, is expected to draw much intrastate visitation to Hamilton.

Ah Xian: Axiom, developed by Hamilton Gallery, brings together works from public and private collections from around Australia including Queensland Art Gallery, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. Such a large body of his work in a solo exhibition has not been seen in Australia since the 2003 exhibition, *Ah Xian: A retrospective exhibition* at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

The Chinese born Australian artist has been a resident of Sydney since 1990. His art-practice is conducted between both here and China, although he originally sought political asylum in Australia following the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. The themes explored in his art include humanity, cultural identity and spirituality.

A highlight of the exhibition is the Gallery's latest acquisition, *Bust 35*, 1999 from the artist's *China China* series. This work and indeed the exhibition unites many of the Gallery's major strengths: Asian art, porcelain and contemporary Australian art.

The Asian art collection of Hamilton Gallery originates from the Herbert and May Shaw bequest, which constituted around a quarter of the entire bequest, and has grown to become one of the defining elements of the collection. This core aspect of the collection now rivals some State Gallery collections of that type.

In recent years, Ah Xian has extended his interpretation of the sculpture bust into performative art, with *Serenity: Self portrait* (2016). Lasting up to 3 hours in duration, the performance involves the artist sitting silently, encased within a perspex plinth. He describes this performance as "a true still life" that was a "meditative and peaceful" reflection on the experience of seeking refuge. This performance can only be viewed at the official opening on the 10th November.

Jason Smith, Director of Geelong Gallery will officially open the exhibition on Thursday evening. Jason was previously the Curatorial Manager of Australian Art at Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, where he worked on projects including the highly successful Australia Pacific Triennial. He was Director and CEO of Heide Museum of Modern Art from 2008 to 2014.

The exhibition *Ah Xian: Axiom* will be on display at Hamilton Gallery until 26th February.

<Ends>

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Image caption:

Ah Xian (China b.1960, Australia, arr.1990), *Bust 35*, China China series, 1999, Porcelain in underglaze cobalt-blue with flower and bird design, Purchased by the Hamilton Gallery Trust with additional support from private benefactors.

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ohje7v914bba17k/AAAJlfAgFWs5jPQND71GmJL9a?dl=0>