

## **LOCAL ARTIST REVEALS “A PORTRAIT OF A PLACE”**



*Exhibition Shot, Peter Coates: A Portrait Of A Place, Hamilton Gallery.*

### **The first solo exhibition for Hamilton based artist, Peter Coates, paints a picture of South West Victoria through the faces of its people.**

The latest free exhibition at Hamilton Gallery profiles an ordinary man with an extraordinary talent, known locally as "Hamilton's Rembrandt".

*Peter Coates: A Portrait of a Place* presents a striking visual diary profiling the faces of well-known locals, from significant past residents to fellow artists and community heroes.

A full-time local house painter with a passion for portraiture, Peter is focused on honing his skills, often repainting the same work multiple times.

Peter said, "These paintings have been done over 6 years, and you can see how I've improved my skills over time. I'm fascinated with the skin – there are so many shades and transparencies that are difficult to capture. It's hard to get right. The most challenging portrait in the exhibition was the one of my good Russian friend, Maria, because there were no shadows falling on her face. I'm in the middle of painting a second version on the easel in the Hamilton Gallery to see if I can improve."

Visitors can see Peter painting live at various times throughout the exhibition in the pop-up Art Room where his paints, brushes and oils are poised for use.

Subjects captured on canvas include the artist's friends and family, alongside notable ex-residents, and infamous local characters.

Hamilton-born Melissa (Milly) Tapper - the first Australian athlete to represent the country at both the Paralympics and the Olympics – is honoured, as is late philanthropist, Geoff Handbury AO. Other locals whose portraits are included are fellow artist, Ron Penrose from Harrow, Warrnambool's Acting Senior Sergeant, Jason Dance, and Hamilton SES volunteer, Craig Munro.

Portraits range from soft pastels of local children to the seasoned faces of older residents and even a skull from Rembrandt's house juxtaposed amongst the lifelike faces. Visitors are encouraged to come face to face with each striking portrait and explore their own feelings of identity and 'localhood'.

To complement the artwork on display the gallery has developed a Portrait Palace. This interactive space allows artists of all ages to try their hand at creating a self-portrait or a portrait of someone else, and to display their artwork in a fun pop-up gallery space. The Portrait Palace is free to take part in and open daily.

Education and Engagement Officer, Agostina Hawkins said, "It has been fantastic to see so many children coming to the gallery and creating artworks. Our gallery wall is gradually filling up with the most colourful and inventive portraits!"

*Peter Coates: A Portrait of a Place* runs until Sunday 20 February 2022. Public programs associated with the exhibition include an eagerly anticipated double Exhibition Celebration event on Friday 18 February alongside *HG60*, and an Artist Floor Talk on Saturday 5 February at 11am.

Joshua White, Artistic Director said, "Bringing local artists to the fore is a key responsibility for all regional galleries. We look forward to showcasing more local artists into the future as we will be making them a part of our annual programming. Running engaging workshops and activities for all the community to enjoy, not matter if you are a child, beginner or professional artist is also a key focus for the Gallery."



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For more information on *Peter Coates: A Portrait Of A Place* and upcoming events at Hamilton Gallery, see [www.hamiltongallery.org](http://www.hamiltongallery.org), the Hamilton Gallery [Facebook page](#), or [join the mailing list](#).

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**Additional Quotes by Peter Coates, Artist:**

“The painting that means the most to me is probably the oil of my daughter, Fallon. It was done in her veggie garden on her birthday while she watched her two boys coming down the yard. It’s the only one with a pink fingerprint on my signature rather than my customary red, too. She’s my girl, it had to be pink.”

“My art is not about me, but about who I paint.”

<Ends>

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

**Stacey Barnes** | Acting Marketing and Communications Officer | [marketing@hamiltongallery.org](mailto:marketing@hamiltongallery.org) | 0429 499 373

**HAMILTON GALLERY**

(03) 5573 0460 | [info@hamiltongallery.org](mailto:info@hamiltongallery.org)

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