

Murray Walker



Walk of Life



Murray Walker: *Walk of Life*
installation view, 2023



Sue Walker 1966
woodcut
edition A/P
28 × 23 cm (image)
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program
by Murray Walker 2019

Emerging from Melbourne's figurative, expressionist lineage, Murray Walker has been making art about people, myth and narrative since the 1960s. From his early figure studies as a printmaker, to more recent explorations of street culture in Paris and Berlin as a collagist and painter, Walker has continually reflected on the human condition—in all of its beauty and fright. Although Walker grapples with themes including death, depravity, sex and social misfortune, his work is often inflected with humour, spiritedness and a sense of youthful freedom.

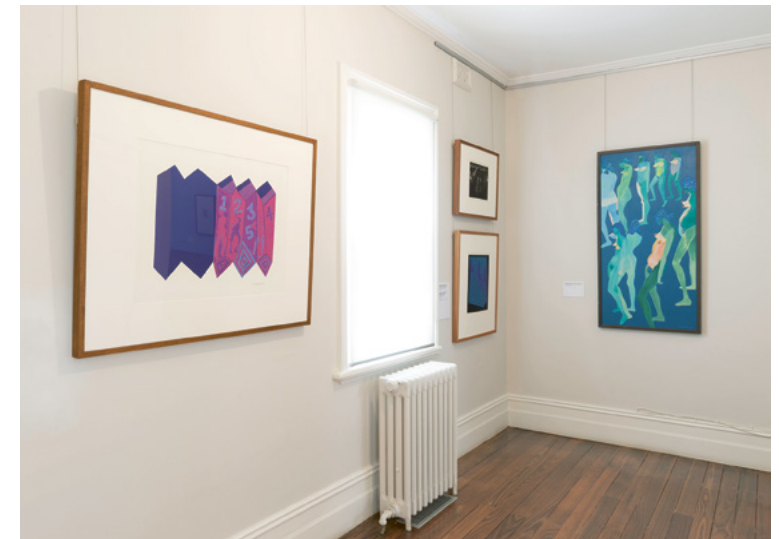
Walk of Life draws from holdings in the Heide Collection and the artist's studio to bring together a cast of characters across his multidisciplinary practice. Held in the original home of John and Sunday Reed, the Heide Cottage, the exhibition spans printmaking, painting, ceramic, collage and assemblage made over sixty years, and explores the human subject thematically by room.

In the private enclave of the bathroom, prints dating from the 1960s depict figures and the female nude drawn from life. These technically proficient and intimate studies precede a more formal and hard-edge style presented in the dressing room. Here, exaggerated nudes are arranged on pop-coloured, segmented picture planes, nodding to the influence of one of Walker's great mentors, John Brack.

In the bedroom, a series titled *Paris Poor*, 2012, is shown for the first time. This suite of paintings is based on one of Walker's multiple trips to Paris, where he observed performers and people of the street—an acute and continued fascination for the artist—with raw emotional sensitivity. The immediate and teeming possibilities of urban life find further resonance in *The Berlin Suite*, 2012, dynamic and at times deviant collages that traverse the hallway walls. With a mash up of found images, drawn elements and hand-written commentary, Walker's collages encapsulate his experience of the people, politics and pulse of the city with characteristic energy and irreverence.



Untitled, from the *Berlin Suite* 2012
watercolour, crayon, ink and collage
on paper
50 × 80 cm
Gift of Murray Walker 2014



Murray Walker: *Walk of Life* installation view, 2023



Murray Walker: *Walk of Life* installation view, 2023



A Homage to John Brack 1995
oil paints on steel
19 x 49 cm
Courtesy of the artist and
Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Anguish and the universal lived experience are recurring themes for Walker, and these are explored in the dining room. The grouping looks at Walker's use of narrative, the mask as a motif, and investigations of the psyche, together with the direct influence of artists Joy Hester, Edvard Munch and James Ensor. The library, a typical sanctum of quiet contemplation, continues this inquiry through the subjects of memory, spirits and people of the past.

Gathered in the kitchen is a selection of works that consider people not by their physical or psychological state, but through the things they employ and discard. Assemblages made of kitchenalia resemble faces with a tongue-in-cheek irony, while former Camembert containers become vehicles for expressive portraits, where painted mouths cling onto found cigarette butts. In the world of Murray Walker, humanity and humour exist in unlikely places.

Walk of Life reconnects Walker—now in his ninth decade—with Heide's founders. Having first met the Reeds as an art student in 1958, the couple became early supporters of his work. More than sixty years later, this exhibition celebrates the legacy of John and Sunday's support of contemporary artists and their continued influence on the history of Australian art.

Laura Lantieri
Exhibition Curator



Angels 1990
driftwood
left: 145 x 22 x 12 cm,
right: 63 x 30 x 5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and
Fox Galleries, Melbourne



Untitled (Yellow Mask) 2008
monotype
55.3 x 36.3 cm (image)
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program
by Murray Walker 2019

List of Works

Entrance

An Albert Tucker Victory Girl Now in Her 70s 1995
assemblage of found wood, nylon string, seaweed, plastic, metals and fabrics

Kitchen

Outdoor Still Life on the Farm 2008
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

A Homage to John Brack 1995
oil paint on steel
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Screened Self Portrait 2016
gouache on found carton with mesh
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Untitled, from the series *Camembert Collages*, Paris 2000
seven containers
watercolour, ink and collage of found materials on Camembert containers

Untitled, from the series *Postcards* 1983
six postcards
watercolour, ink and collage on postcards

Paris Sketchbook 1983
collage in printed diary
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

I Think in Spirals 2008
watercolour, ink and collage on paper plate
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Listening to Music with the Dog 2008
watercolour, ink, coloured pencil and collage on paper plate
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Listening to Music 2008
watercolour, ink, coloured pencil and collage on paper plate
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Three Hunters and Dogs 2008
watercolour and ink on paper plate
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Murray Walker (Decorator)
Chris Sanders (Ceramicist)
A Floorshow of a Different Kind 1982
earthenware
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Murray Walker (Decorator)
Chris Sanders (Ceramicist)
Graffiti and Masked People 1982
earthenware
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Screaming Child in a Push Car 1990
synthetic polymer paint and collage on paper

A Kitchen Portrait 2021
assemblage of kitchen utensils and found metals
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

A Buzz Haircut and Blue Eyes 1994
assemblage of found metal objects
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

My Tongue Pokes Out 1992
oil painted steel
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Bathroom

Sue Walker 1966
woodcut
edition A/P

Untitled (Side View of Model) 1962
drypoint
edition 3/7

Untitled (Two Stoooped Men) 1960
engraving

Jennifer 1965
etching
edition 11/17

Dressing Room

Untitled (One Two Three Four Five Six) 1969
linocut and coloured inks
edition 8/8

Catalogue Design (for my Canberra Catalogue) 1969
engraving, etching and aquatint
edition 1/5

Untitled (Five Figures on Sliding Chairs) 1969
linocut and coloured inks
edition 4/7

Stepping Towards the Light 1967
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Bedroom

The Paris Collection 1991
coloured pencil, ink, watercolour and collage in two spiral-bound sketchbooks with archive box
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Murray Walker Journey Book 1996
watercolour, ink and collage in cloth-bound sketchbook
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Untitled (Sketchbook) 2010
coloured pencil, ink and collage on 70 pages in spiral-bound sketchbook

An Old Grizzled Busker at the Clignancourt Flea Market, Paris 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Paris Busker with Empty Pockets 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Smiling Busker 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Red Bare Cold Feet 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Paris Busker with Cold, Cold Hands 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Young Old Boy Breathes Out a Striped Snake from his Roll Up Smoke 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Baton Twirler 1982
Indian ink on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Accordion Paris Poor Busker Has a Ghost Looking On 2012
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Kid, Cart and Doll at Le Marché des Puces, Paris 2012
monotype
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

A Dancer at the Berlin Cabaret 2017
oil on linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Hallway

All the World is a Stage at a Berlin Cabaret 2009
Indian ink on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

I Hit Berlin Every Year 2012
coloured pencil and collage on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Untitled, from the *Berlin Suite* 2012
eight collages
watercolour, crayon, ink and collage on paper

Dining Room

Murray Walker (Decorator)
Chris Sanders (Ceramicist)
A Votive Offering 1996
earthenware
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Murray Walker (Decorator)
Chris Sanders (Ceramicist)
A Tribute for the Departed in the Paris Catacombs 1984
earthenware
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Lost in the Bush 2005
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Untitled (Yellow Mask) 2008
monotype

Altered States 2010
oil on Belgian linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

The Time Traveller 2010
oil on linen

SKRIK 2013
woodcut
edition 2/7

Untitled (SKRIK) 2013
woodcut and coloured pencil
edition 4/7

Library

Walking Doll 1984
linocut
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

A Walk on the Wild Side 1989
watercolour and ink on pages from a Ballarat grocer's ledger book
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

My Studio is Populated by Ghosts and Demons 2000–01
oil on linen
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Angels 1990
driftwood
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Self Portrait within Hotel Henry IV 2006
watercolour and Indian ink on sketchbook paper
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Henri Matisse Visits Me Whilst I Dream in my Paris Room, 26 April 2006
Indian ink on hotel envelope
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Murray Walker in Paris and Looking in the Mirror, 26 April 2006
Indian ink on hotel envelope
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

Murray at the Hotel Henri IV, Paris, 26 April 2006
Indian ink on hotel envelope
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

I Can See Clearly in Paris, 26 April 2006
Indian ink on hotel envelope
Courtesy of the artist and Fox Galleries, Melbourne

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All works are from the Heide Collection unless otherwise stated

All works © the artist

Installation photography by Christian Capurro

Heide Cottage

11 February — 30 April 2023

Murray Walker: Walk of Life coincides with the release of a new monograph, *The Art of Murray Walker*, authored by art historian and Emeritus Professor, Sasha Grishin and published by The Beagle Press in 2022.

cover image:

Untitled, from the series *Camembert Collages, Paris 2000*
watercolour, ink and collage of found materials on Camembert container
11 cm (diam)
Gift of Murray Walker 2014

HEIDE
MUSEUM
OF MODERN
ART