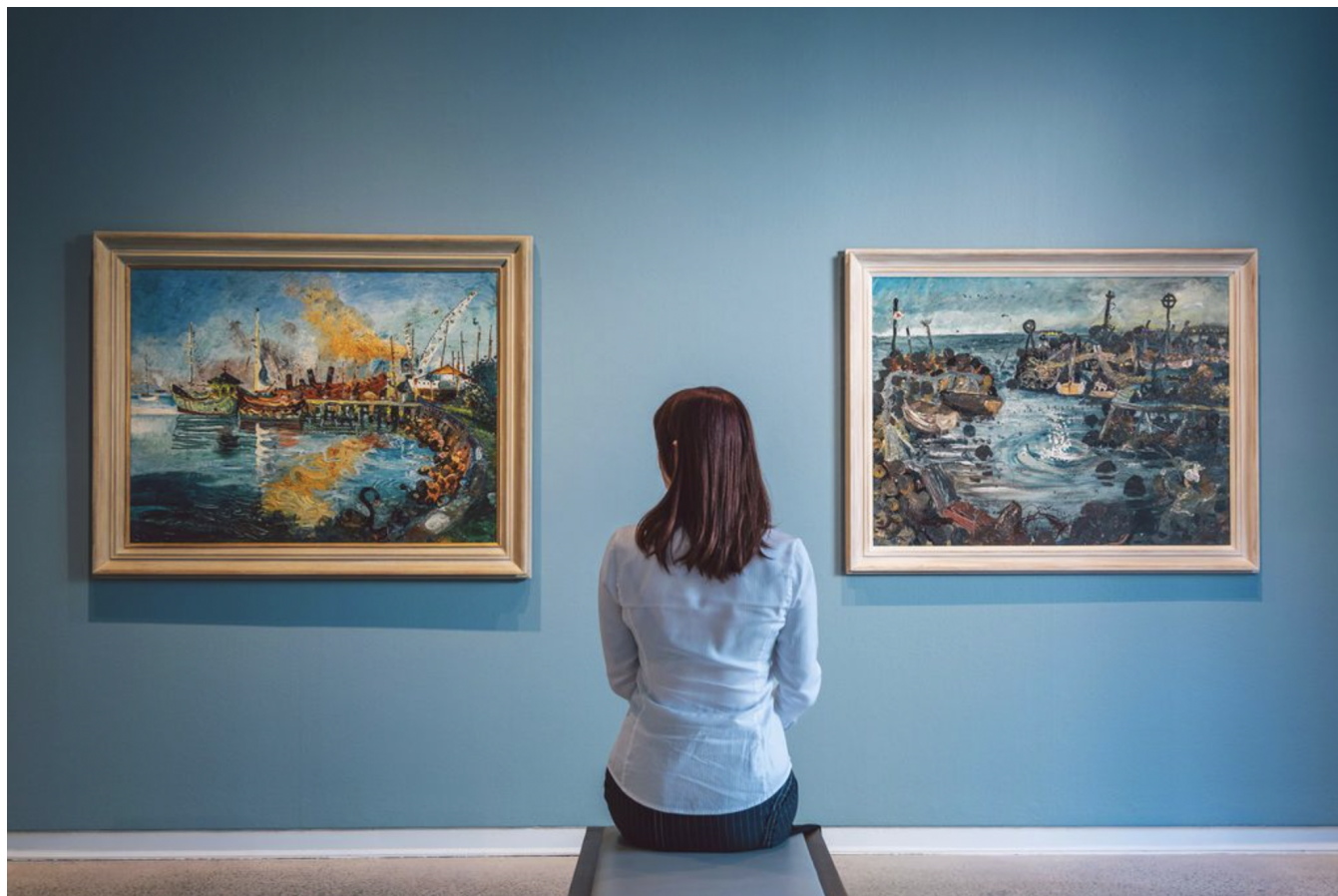


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HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART UNVEILS *JOHN PERCEVAL: ALL THAT WE ARE* THE FIRST MAJOR SURVEY OF AUSTRALIAN ARTIST JOHN PERCEVAL IN 30 YEARS



Installation view, *John Perceval: All That We Are*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, photograph: Clytie Meredith

Heide Museum of Modern Art has unveiled *John Perceval: All That We Are*, the first major survey exhibition of works by the maverick Australian artist **John Perceval** since 1992. Curated by Heide's Head Curator **Kendrah Morgan**, the exhibition is now showing in the Main Galleries until **12 July 2026**.

This exhibition continues Heide's long-standing commitment to artists of the Heide Circle, following a series of significant exhibitions presented over the past two decades.

John Perceval: All That We Are brings together more than **100** works spanning **three decades**, drawn from significant public and private collections, including **several masterpieces that have rarely been seen**.

A highlight of the exhibition is a rare collection of **28** of Perceval's ceramic angel sculptures, alongside an award-winning yet little-known 1962 animated film featuring the angels, directed by Tim Burstall and produced

MEDIA RELEASE

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by Patrick Ryan, titled *The Dance of the Angels: Ceramic Sculptures by John Perceval*. This will be the first time the angles have been shown together on this scale.

A central figure in the creative circle associated with John and Sunday Reed at Heide, John Perceval was a significant contributor to the evolution of Australian modernism. By the age of nineteen, he was already producing works of considerable technical skill and psychological intensity. Over the following decades, he experimented across painting, drawing, ceramics and sculpture, exploring an expansive range of subjects while remaining deeply engaged with the complexity of the human condition.

All That We Are traces Perceval's creative development from the late 1930s, beginning with experimental early works that showcase his ability to tap into the world of childhood experience and the joys and anxieties of being human. Carnavalesque scenes and recurring motifs, such as jack-in-the-box toys, clowns and domestic animals, reveal how seemingly innocuous objects and characters can become unsettling, foreshadowing darker psychological themes.

The exhibition includes a selection of Perceval's night images painted during the Second World War, when US troops arrived in Melbourne in 1942 following the bombing of Darwin. These works depict a city transformed by entertainment and nightlife, alongside visions of hardship and human suffering and the subdued atmosphere of Melbourne's wartime 'brownout'.

In the post-war period, Perceval worked closely with fellow Australian artist Arthur Boyd, studying the European old masters and translating their narrative scenes of teeming life and energetic compositions into the local context. This period is further represented through a selection of unique ceramic objects including tiled tabletops and vessels produced during Perceval's time at the Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery in Murrumbeena, Melbourne.

Works from the mid to late 1950s include a range of expressive land and seascapes, with several paintings from Perceval's renowned Williamstown series that capture the lively docks, shipyards and waters of Williamstown, Victoria, and are marked by an increasing vibrancy and freedom of approach.

Head Curator, Heide Museum of Modern Art, **Kendrah Morgan** says: "*Heide is delighted to present 'John Perceval: All That We Are', an exhibition that resonates with the profound humanism underpinning the artist's entire oeuvre. I've been thinking about this project for several years, and it's a privilege to finally bring together such a comprehensive survey that reflects both the breadth and humanity of Perceval's practice. We are deeply grateful to the many lenders, in particular the private collectors, who have generously allowed us to showcase their cherished works and present a full picture of these important years of Perceval's career.*"

Always Modern: Radical Nurture is showing concurrently in the **Heide Cottage**, exploring the early decades of Heide, when art and life were deeply intertwined. Guest curated by **Lily Mora**, granddaughter of Heide Circle artist Mirka Mora, the exhibition is on view until **9 August 2026**. Featuring more than **60** works from the Heide

MEDIA RELEASE

23 March 2026



Collection and the Estate of Mirka Mora - including works by **Sam Atyeo, Charles Blackman, Joy Hester, Mirka Mora, Sidney Nolan, John Perceval, Albert Tucker** and **Danila Vassilieff** - the exhibition celebrates artists who broke from social convention, living and working alongside founders John and Sunday Reed in a uniquely nurturing environment. It positions Heide as both home and catalyst: a place where living differently became a creative act, allowing Australian modernism to take root and flourish.

Ends

IMAGES for *John Perceval: All That We Are* available [HERE](#)

IMAGES for *Always Modern: Radical Nurture* available [HERE](#)

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ABOUT HEIDE

Heide is a public art museum and sculpture park located on a stretch of the Birrarung/Yarra River in Naarm/Melbourne that has long served as a meeting point and as a creative hub.

Once a significant Wurundjeri gathering place, the site later attracted the artists of the Australian Impressionist School before becoming the home of art patrons John and Sunday Reed in 1934.

The Reeds and their circle of artists and writers embraced the brave and the new in art and ideas and their spirited legacy inspires the museum's activities today, from collaborating with emerging and mid-career artists to celebrating those who have made major contributions to Australian and international art.

Set on 6.5 hectares of parkland with five gallery spaces, award-winning architecture and a distinctive collection of more than 3,600 works of art, Heide holds a special place in the cultural landscape of Australia.

heide.com.au