

JOHN THOMAS RIGBY

1922 – 2012

Brief biographical details

Compiled by Mark T. Rigby.

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BIOGRAPHY

- 1922 Born in Brisbane (December 9).
- 1942-46 Served in the Australian Military Forces.
- 1946-47 Worked in commercial art in Brisbane and was sports cartoonist for *The Sunday Mail*, Brisbane.
- 1948-50 Studied at East Sydney Technical College.
Awarded Diploma in Fine Art (Jan. 1951).
- 1951 Returned to painting and commercial art in Brisbane.
- 1954 First one-man exhibition (Johnstone Gallery).
- 1956-58 Travelled abroad to live and paint in Italy under the Italian Government Travelling Art Scholarship won in 1955. Later visited England and France.
- 1958-72 Involved in commercial art and painting, Brisbane.
- 1969-87 Trustee of the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.
- 1974-84 Senior Instructor/Officer-in-Charge at School of Fine Art, Queensland College of Art.
- 1984 Returned to full-time painting with travel in Australia and overseas.
- 2012 Died on 18 October.

SELECTED AWARDS AND PRIZES

Rigby won many awards and prizes, including: *Italian Government Travelling Art Scholarship* (1955); *Women's Weekly Portrait Prize* (1958); various Qld Centenary Year art prizes (1959); the *H.C. Richards Memorial Prize*; the *Sulman Prize*; and numerous other awards from around Australia. He was a finalist in dozens of *Archibald*, *Wynne* and *Sulman* Prizes from the early 1950s to 1999, as well as in the *Moran National Portrait Competitions* between 1988 and 2004. Awarded: Honorary doctorate, Griffith University (1994) for his services to the Arts; honorary membership, Royal Queensland Art Society (2001); Companion, Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences (2003).

EXHIBITIONS

Rigby had 40 solo exhibitions between 1954 and 2009, and was represented in numerous mixed exhibitions in Australia and overseas. He was included in National touring exhibitions (often involving State or regional galleries) where winning, finalist or selected works were included, e.g. *Women's Weekly Art Prize*, *Archibald*, *Wynne*, *Sulman*, *Uncommon Australians*, *To Look Within: Self Portraits in Australia* and the *Moran National Portrait Prizes*.

A major survey of portraits by John Rigby was mounted by the Museum of Brisbane in 2004.

From December 2019 to February 2020, the Caboolture Regional Art Gallery mounted a major retrospective entitled *John Rigby: Monumental Colour*.

REPRESENTED

Rigby is represented in the National Gallery of Australia (which acquired a large collection of prints in 2013), most state galleries, numerous regional galleries, the Commonwealth Art Bank, university collections, as well as many corporate and private collections in Australia and overseas. Extensive recorded interviews conducted with Rigby on his life, art and the Australian art scene by Barbara Blackman for the National Library of Australia. Now archived, transcribed and updated by NLA online in 2017.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rigby's work has been highlighted in numerous books, newspaper and magazine critiques, profiles and news items spanning some 80 years. The National Library of Australia commissioned around seven hours of interviews conducted with Rigby by Barbara Blackman in 1985, which has since transcribed and is accessible online. A major book *John Rigby: Art & Life* by John Millington and Mark Rigby was published by Playright Publishing, Sydney, and launched at the Queensland Art Gallery in 2003.

FURTHER INFORMATION

John Rigby Art

johnrigbyart.com.au