George Baldessin exerted considerable influence on the revival of printmaking in Melbourne during the 1960s and 70s. His innovations in intaglio printing—constantly exploring the techniques of etching and aquatint—progressed in tandem with his work in sculpture and painting; however, it is as a printmaker that he is best known.

This selection of Baldessin’s prints and drawings from the Heide Collection ranges from the time of the artist’s first exhibition at Melbourne’s Argus Gallery in 1964 through to the year of his untimely death in 1978, aged thirty-nine. In his intensive career Baldessin attracted critical acclaim for his radical approach to the human figure, specifically his dramatic navigation of the female form. While the inner meaning of his works often evades direct interpretation, Baldessin drew on a number of artistic and cultural sources, from traditional Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints to experimental New Wave cinema. From such influences he evolved a powerful pictorial language as a means to express the tensions, paradoxes and ambiguities found in so much of human experience.

The exhibition also includes prints by artists closely associated with Baldessin, including Jock Clutterbuck, Roger Kemp, Les Kossatz, Jan Senbergs and Fred Williams, all of whose work offers a vivid context for considering his graphic oeuvre. These artists were among the regular visitors to Baldessin’s busy atelier-style studio in the Winfield Building in Collins Street in the late 1960s, and part of the artistic community that subsequently gathered at his property in semi-rural St Andrews, which now operates in memory of the artist as The Baldessin Press. Baldessin’s generous support to his artist-colleagues was a vital part of his contribution to this dynamic period of Melbourne printmaking which, as his widow Tess Edwards Baldessin recalls, was fueled by his ‘passionate belief in art, creativity and people’.
LIST OF WORKS

This catalogue is arranged chronologically then alphabetically by title. Measurements are height before width before depth. All images © Estate of George Baldessin

George Baldessin
born 1939 San Biagio di Callalta, Italy; arrived 1949 Australia; died 1978 Melbourne

Dancers 1963
zinc etching plate
26.7 × 18.4 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
No image available

Encounter 1964
zinc etching plate
20.7 × 20.5 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
No image available

Stars and Sawdust III 1963
colour etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 15.8 × 25.6 cm
Collection of Michael and Lisa Jackson, Victoria
No image available

Echo 1965
etching and aquatint
plate 30.1 × 31 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Acrobat 1964
zinc etching plate
30.4 × 30.4 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
No image available

Person Alone 1964
etching and aquatint
edition 2/10
plate 30.1 × 18 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Ancestors of P.H.B. 1964
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 30.3 × 45 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Vridiana I 1964
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 30.3 × 45 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Figures in Enclosure (MM and Friend) 1965
zinc etching plate
30.4 × 27.4 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
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Ancestors of P.H.B. 1964
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artist’s proof 2/10
plate 30 × 22.4 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Figures in Enclosure (MM and Friend) 1965
etching and aquatint
edition 3/10
plate 30 × 27.1 cm
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plate 30 × 27.1 cm
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Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010
Head 1965
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 46.6 × 30.3 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Russell Zeeng 1986

Personage and Window 1965
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 30.1 × 30.2 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Portrait 1965
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 34.1 × 33.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Not Titled [Dinner Plates] c.1966
painted and glazed terracotta earthenware
2 parts: 12.5 × 26 (diam.) cm; 7 × 16 (diam.) cm
Maker: Stacha Halpern
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
No image available

Not Titled [Lidded Pot] c.1966
painted and glazed terracotta earthenware
2 parts: 12.5 × 26 (diam.) cm; 7 × 16 (diam.) cm
Maker: Stacha Halpern
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
No image available

A Recurring Day in the Life of MM II 1966
etching and aquatint
edition 2/10
plate 26.4 × 25.7 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Doors 1966
etching, aquatint and colour stencil
artist’s proof
plate 53 × 38 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

The Cage (Figure in Enclosure) 1966
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 74.8 × 52.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Bequest of Barrett Reid 2000

The Mirror 1967
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 50 × 34 cm (irreg.)
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

The Tea Cup 1967
zinc etching plate
30.5 × 27.8 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
No image available

Performer (White Personage) 1968
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof
plate 50 × 43.3 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Personage and Chair 1968
etching and aquatint
artist’s proof 1/25
plate 57.1 × 50.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
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Heide Museum of Modern Art
BEING HUMAN: THE GRAPHIC WORK OF GEORGE BALDESSIN

page 3 of 5
City Monuments 1970
etching and aquatint
estate edition proof 1/2
plate 57.9 × 50.5 cm (irreg.)
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Window and Factory Smoke II 1970
etching, aquatint and colour stencil
dition 2/25
plate 50.5 × 76 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010
No image available

Final Banquet for No Eating III 1972
etching, aquatint and colour stencil
dition 1/25
plate 47 × 100 cm (irreg.)
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin and Australian Galleries, Melbourne

Seated Figure 1973
etching, aquatint and colour stencil
artist’s proof 1/25
plate 56.2 × 50.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Entrances and Discards 1974
etching, aquatint and colour stencil
dition 1/25
plate 49.8 × 68.4 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Tess, Gabriel and Ned Baldessin 2010

Two aspects of MM 1977
etching and aquatint
2nd state, artist’s proof
plate 90.3 × 60.8 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin and Australian Galleries, Melbourne

No image available

Gold Emblems 1977
etching and aquatint on gold foil
artist’s proof
plate 90.3 × 60.5 cm
Collection of Michael and Lisa Jackson, Victoria

Not Titled (Woman and Chair) c. 1976
charcoal and conte on paper
sheet 39 × 66 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin and Australian Galleries, Melbourne
No image available
Heide Museum of Modern Art
BEING HUMAN: THE GRAPHIC WORK OF GEORGE BALDESSIN

Jock Clutterbuck
born 1945 Edenhope, Victoria

Temple Bar 1973
etching, aquatint and colour stencil
dition 2/15
plate 60.6 × 85.3 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Bequest of John and Sunday Reed 1982

Roger Kemp
born 1908 Bendigo, Victoria; died 1987
Melbourne

Concept Four c. 1975
etching
dition 10/35
plate 69.6 × 98 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Merle Kemp 1992

Les Kossatz
born 1943 Melbourne; died 2011 Melbourne

God’s Walk II 1964
etching
artist’s proof
plate 16.8 × 19.8 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Bequest of John and Sunday Reed 1982

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Jan Senbergs
born 1939 Riga, Latvia; arrived 1950 Australia

Monument 1969
colour screenprint
dition 2/17
image 60.8 × 93 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Russell Zeeng 1986

Fred Williams
born 1927 Melbourne; died 1982 Melbourne

The Boy Friend 1956
etching, aquatint, engraving and drypoint
dition of 16
plate 20 × 16.2 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Purchased from John and Sunday Reed 1980

Trampoline 1956
etching, aquatint and drypoint
dition 2/5
plate 14.8 × 19.4 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Bequest of Barrett Reid 2000

Usherette 1956
etching, aquatint and foul biting
dition 2/10
plate 18.6 × 7.2 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Purchased from John and Sunday Reed 1980

Silver MM 1978
etching and aquatint on silver foil
artist’s proof
sheet 63 × 60.8 cm
Courtesy of the Estate of George Baldessin
and Australian Galleries, Melbourne

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