

The Ikona
George Raftopoulos

Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery
February 28 : May 3, 2020



'POST GOYA' 2016,
Oil on Canvas, 75 x 37cm

The exhibition *The IKONA*, by George Raftopoulos is a series of paintings that investigate the human condition and its intersection with the notion of the 'ordinary' being elevated to the status of icon.

The *IKONA* references, the Greek word 'ikon' meaning image. Traditionally, icons were considered an essential part of the Eastern Christian tradition and were given special reverence and admiration. They served as guides for those seeking faith and would often depict popular saints and religious scenes. The icon has continued to be a present visual aspect of the Christian Orthodox tradition.

George Raftopoulos' work is a comment on the human condition. He addresses notions of hope, determination and self-realisation. His work is realised in a 'personal mythology' inspired by such artists of the past such as Goya, Rembrandt and Titian. In this body of work he utilises silhouettes by the artists of the 16-17th Century and embarks on the 'modernisation into the 21st Century' by impressing his abstract marks upon these silhouettes.

Raftopoulos references the past. The importance of this is akin to recalling personal memory and re-inventing those memories into a visual language. This engagement with the past finds expression through the abstract mark and is loaded with colour. His technique explodes the recognisable or 'known' as he deconstructs notions of life, in a pursuit to re write his own personal mythologies and belief systems. His gestural mark making and complex use of colour aid in producing a narrative that speaks to themes of power, freedom, hope and belief. Through the work we journey into both the identifiable and the unknown. He calls to question our existence with both veracity, calmness and a contemplation. He presents the extraordinary in the day to day and elevates these characters and scenes to iconic status. He glorifies the everyday and celebrates the somewhat unremarkable to offer the uninitiated with a sense of faith in these characters. He asks that we seek personal meaning from each work.

He seeks to mirror the ethos of what the traditional icon stands for, asking the viewer to invest their own fears, wishes and desires into the imagery. Much the same as the devotional invest their spirit into the icons and receive a sense of hope in return. Raftopoulos offers his images loaded with messages of hope and desire in return for a spiritual exchange. The intention is for the viewer to find solace, a belief system within the imagery, within the characters. The exchange is of equal benefit to both the artist and visual consumer. The mythological and allegorical paintings communicate Raftopoulos' experience while offering the viewer a sense of hope and symbiosis within their own wealth of experience.



small works framed under glass' 2016-2019
various mediums (*Pen, Ink, Pastel on archival paper*)
(*Frame size 46 x 40cm - Image size variable*)
\$1,800 each



'Bacchanalian DANCE' 2019
Oil on Linen, 198 x 184cm

'Ambition Commission' 2019
Oil on Canvas, 119.5 x 159cm





'Thievery Corporation' 2017
Oil on Linen, 198 x 198cm

'Ghost of the HENRIETTA' 2016
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 890 x 1360c





'Bird as Protector' 2017
Oil on linen, 99.5 x 73.5cm



'MAIMOO' 2017
Oil on linen, 92.5 x 75cm



'Bangaree' 2016
Oil and Acrylic on
Canvas, 985 x 2025cm

'Faceless Nameless job DONE' 2017
Oil on Polyester, 132 x 157cm





'Ricci e POVERRI' 2016-2019
Oil on linen, 76 x 51 cm



'Sir GEEZAR' 2016-2018
Oil on Archival Board, 60cm Diameter



'Protector' 2016-2018
Oil on Archival board, 60cm Diameter

'Space Invader' 2016
Watercolour, Pencil and spray paint on Arches,
212 x 112.5cm



'Rock of Contemplation' 2017
Oil on linen
198 x 181cm



'Persona NON GRATA' 2019
Oil on Linen, 119 x 160cm

For all sale enquiries, please contact:
artgallery@brokenhill.nsw.gov.au



BE TRUE BE YOU

George Raftopoulos and the Broken Hill Community
Public artwork completed on site, 2020