

MEDIA RELEASE | October 2018

The Ideal Home

1 December 2018 – 24 March 2019

Penrith Regional Gallery | Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences



Image: Ex De Medici, *The Seat of Love and Hate*

The Ideal Home exhibition and public programs seeks to explore Australian experiences of home across the past 100 years, encompassing domestic architecture, design, and technology, alongside contemporary social issues which threaten the fabric of our intimate lives: domestic violence, homelessness, housing affordability and the notion of Australia as refuge.

Penrith Regional Gallery (PRG) with partner institution the **Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences (MAAS)** will examine various experiences of home and family life in a new exhibition titled *The Ideal Home*, on display from **1 December 2018 to 24 March 2019**. *The Ideal Home* will present a history of the 20th century Australian home told through household objects, furniture and design classics from the MAAS Collection.

The exhibition will take over the entire Penrith Regional Gallery site, as well as extending to a satellite exhibition of modernist art and design at MAAS venue the **Powerhouse Museum** in Sydney, with each space enabling a different consideration of exhibition ideas and themes.

The exhibition at Penrith Regional Gallery will include approximately 70 objects from the MAAS collection of post-war furniture, home appliances, architectural models, interior design, and everyday domestic objects, with an emphasis on mid-century Australian design. Featured will be recent and commissioned artworks by artists **Catherine O'Donnell, eX de Medici, Blake Griffiths, Richard Goodwin, Karla Dickens, Eliza Gosse, Cope Street Collective, and Victoria Garcia.**

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The satellite exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum features design objects and artefacts alongside modernist artwork from the Penrith Regional Gallery collection, connecting to the mid-century origins of the Gallery as the former home of Margo and Gerald Lewers, two leading artists in the development of modernism in Australia. The Lewers' home, with its beautiful gardens, architecture, and works of art, was known as a place of art and bohemian culture throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Director of Penrith Regional Gallery, Dr Lee-Anne Hall, said "In *The Ideal Home* Sydney audiences can look forward to an exciting program including exhibition, education and public discussion. This exhibition will appeal to a broad audience, having both nostalgic appeal and points of interest for fans of modernist architecture, furniture and contents design. This diverse and interactive exhibition offers a fantastic opportunity for our audience to engage with themes and issues that continue to define home life in Australia today."

MAAS Director Curatorial, Collections and Exhibitions, Peter Denham said the project was a true collaboration between the partners. "MAAS' partnership with Penrith Regional Gallery began in 2016 as a way to bring communities together to explore art and design practices. The inaugural exhibition and display, *Gravity and Wonder*, challenged perceptions of the role of art with an installation that merged art and science with thought-provoking effect. This year's *The Ideal Home* will showcase objects from the state collection as well as recent acquisitions and artwork commissions to explore the notion of home and what that means in contemporary Australia."

The Ideal Home exhibition will be supported by a rich public program, including free and paid events that will run across the four-month exhibition period. Highlights include camp outs in the gallery gardens, community meals, writing workshops and panel discussions.

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FURTHER INFORMATION / INTERVIEWS / IMAGES:

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MEDIA IMAGES: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hnqg4ms3ism49n7/AADOzaduf6n3MamR9kEuxKcqa?dl=0>

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

On show 1 December 2018 – 24 March 2019
Penrith Regional Gallery, 86 River Road, Emu Plains 2750
Free Entry

The Ideal Home display 3 Nov 2018 – 19 May 2019
Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris St, Ultimo NSW 2007
maas.museum/event/idealhome

Ticket included in museum entry Adult \$15 / Children 16 years and under FREE / NSW Seniors Card holders pension & concessions \$8

Exhibition details

For most of the 20th century Australia enjoyed one of the highest rates of home ownership in the world. In the period immediately following the Second World War, Australia enjoyed record growth and prosperity and became a consumer society, excited and liberated by technological advances, social and cultural change. *The Ideal Home* will consider the ways in which design and technology have influenced social change and the developments that have transformed the way we live, with key themes including the home as a haven; concepts of home, place and belonging; development in labour saving technology; and designing the ideal home.

The Ideal Home exhibition within the **PRG Main Gallery** will explore themes including the twentieth century home as private 'castle', rising affluence, consumerism, technology and design. Upon entering the Main Gallery visitors will find three 'island' like constructions, supporting the display of approximately seventy objects from the MAAS 20th century home and design collection. Six large-scale 'tape' drawings by artist **Catherine O'Donnell** will pay homage to the brutalist architecture of the Sirius Building, providing a commentary upon the loss of public housing and community in the inner city.

Across the rest of the Gallery site, exhibition spaces and gardens will be various artworks, installations and community projects which will consider issues such as domestic violence, home as refuge, homelessness and housing affordability.

The Lewers House Gallery, the original four-room Lewers' homestead, will present four contemporary artworks including a major new work by artist **ex de Medici**. Commissioned by MAAS, the multimedia installation will explore the theme of gendered domestic violence, centred upon a three-metre water colour and an 18th century French love settee upholstered with machine-embroidered fabric. The design incorporates representations of both a pair of duelling pistols from the MAAS arms collection, and a crown of thorn plant from the Gallery garden at Penrith.

MAAS's recent artwork acquisition *Bound* by **Karla Dickens** will be displayed in the second room of the homestead. The work presents a series of appliqued straightjackets which explore the experience of some women as 'bound' to the home by domesticity, family, financial dependence, violent controlling relationships and addiction.

In the third room, artist **Blake Griffiths** will present a major new work that assumes the form of a blanket and is woven from the artist's material waste collected over a six month period. Through the second half of November Blake Griffiths will take part in an artist residency, leading community and school participants in the creation of a woven awning for Lewers House using paper and plastic waste. In both works, the acts of shredding, cutting, twining, plying and weaving, the waste is reassigned into a large scale textile which transforms the 'no value' of domestic waste into an object of utility and beauty.

In the fourth room of the homestead **Cope Street Collective** artists **Matthew Cooper** and **Colin Kinchela** will present a powerful digital treatise in exploring race, gender roles and the effects of exaggerated masculinity in the ideal home.

In **Ancher House Gallery**, artist **Eliza Gosse** has produced a suite of gouache paintings depicting classic Sydney modernist houses. Included is a painting of the Gallery's own modernist treasure, Ancher House, designed by modernist architect Sidney Ancher and completed in 1964 for the Lewers family. Gosse's work highlights the clean lines, natural materials and colours favoured by modernist architects and is a reminder of an astonishing design heritage to be found in the suburbs.'

As part of its community engagement program, Penrith Regional Gallery invited the participation of local schools to work with artists to produce artworks examining housing and urban growth in Penrith that feature stories of home.

The **Lounge Room Gallery** will present a selection of digital photographic works led by artist **Khaled Sabsabi** in collaboration with students from St Dominic's College and Caroline Chisholm College. These artworks will be in conversation with objects from the MAAS collection including an architectural model of the Ropes Crossing Estate development.

In the **Gallery gardens** there will be a pop up exhibition of 'pup' tents designed and printed with the collected stories and experiences of community elders, by secondary school children from Caroline Chisholm College in collaboration with artist **Victoria Garcia**. Garcia's own work will be exhibited in the Gallery garden. Inspired by nomadic cultures the work examines the layered meanings of "home" as geographical, emotional and spiritual while considering themes of identity, movement, place and belonging. The work will be on limited exhibition in the garden over Summer 2018/19.

The Gallery garden will also feature a major commission by artist and architect **Richard Goodwin** who will create and install a temporary 'dwelling' entitled *Neutral Habitation* built from salvaged materials including a boat and tarpaulins to enquire in an age of homelessness and refugee movement across the globe, 'what are where is home?' and, 'how much do we really need to live?'

To coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness week (25 November – 2 December), and in conjunction with **PCC White Ribbon Committee**, the river walk fencing opposite the Gallery will be transformed with a temporary installation that seeks to raise community awareness of gender based domestic and family violence. The fence will support a large white ribbon surrounded by thousands of smaller white ribbons with the community being invited to tie ribbons along the fence line over the week prior to the exhibition opening.

MAAS *The Ideal Home* Satellite Exhibition:

The satellite exhibition at the **Powerhouse Museum**, titled *The Ideal Home - Art and Design*, will showcase avant-garde mid-century art and design for the modern domestic environment. Key objects will reveal how Australian artists, architect, designers embraced utopian European ideas of modernism, the language of abstract forms, and a vision that art and design had an important role to play in society. This display also includes an extraordinary contemporary work by artist **Bonita Ely**, *Singer Sewing Machine Gun*. This extraordinary artwork is created with hair pins and a dismantled and reassembled sewing machine, addressing powerful issues associated with the dark interiority of domestic life.

About Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest:

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest is set amidst heritage gardens on the western bank of the Nepean River at the foot of the Blue Mountains at Emu Plains, and was established in 1981 at the former home and property of sculptor Gerald Lewers and painter Margo Lewers. Having an exceptional Modernist and contemporary art collection, the Gallery offers a seasonal program of exhibitions, education and public programs, for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Penrith, the surrounding region and beyond. The Gallery is open daily from 9am - 5pm and admission is free. <http://www.penrithregionalgallery.org/>

About the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences:

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has a vast and diverse collection of over 500,000 objects. It incorporates the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory and Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill. It is Australia's foremost museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences. <https://maas.museum/>