



JOHN BAIRD
Harbour Swimmers



Photograph by James Geer

JOHN BAIRD

Harbour Swimmers

1 – 24 February 2024

Opening Celebration, Thursday 1 February, 5 – 7pm

The visual symphony of colour, memory and imagination are the cornerstones of John Baird's new exhibition 'Harbour Swimmers'. Floating in glorious nostalgia and beauty, Baird's paintings depicting Sydney Harbour and his enigmatic still lifes are an invitation to the viewer to celebrate the Australian summer and find harmony in the everyday.

Painting on board, Baird applies shellac between layers of paint, incorporating wallpaper and vintage fabrics creating tactile surfaces and areas of mark making. His work is a physical process as much as an aesthetic one, with the board providing a steady surface for him to manipulate his mediums, adding layers and layers until the work is complete. A new process for Baird has been using wet paint to capture the 'wetness' of the water, painting on the boards sitting upright instead of lying flat, to allow the diluted acrylic to drip down the surface.

Based in Melbourne, Baird has a deep love for the water, with Sydney Harbour being a seascape of particular affection. A keen sailor, he often joins regattas on the Harbour seeking inspiration for his paintings. His works are not literal depictions rather memory informs his work as an ode to the sea, celebrating its bewildering beauty and complexities.

I can go to the harbour and luxuriate in it, and then take what's happened back with me to make paintings of that experience. They're never accurate. – John Baird, 2024

'Harbour Swimmers' marks Baird's return to figurative work, with swimmers depicted leaping and diving into the large expanses of water with childlike joy, excitement and carefree, reckless abandon. Baird consciously conflates the foreground and background, forging a surreality that adds a dream-like dimension to his constructed spaces, enkindling our memories and inspiring our imaginations.

The Irish abstract painter William Scott has been a major influence for Baird and his still life paintings featured in this exhibition. Scott's ability to render everyday objects as simple, flat yet sensual forms that evoke memory and the beauty of objects is seen in Baird's works such as *White Jug*. The objects take on figurative elements with the fluid, curved lines of the jug, intertwining, melding and folding into the wine bottle reminiscent of two lovers embracing. Like Scott, imagination and memory is carried into these works, where these everyday objects take on whimsical form; sails of a yacht become reminiscent of dancing figures, the crew bobbing like buoys on the water.

With a career spanning over thirty years, Baird has participated in numerous solo and group shows around Australia, and his work is held in major national collections including the National Gallery of Victoria, Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, Artbank and Bell Potter Group, as well as international and national corporate and private collections.

In 2025, Baird will present a major retrospective exhibition at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery.

Emily George
Arthouse Gallery

Hornby Light

acrylic & shellac on board

123 x 123 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Distant Ship

acrylic & shellac on board

123 x 123 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Harbour Jump

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

123 x 123 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Leap into Green

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

123 x 123 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Harbour & Spinnaker
acrylic & shellac on board
123 x 123 cm (framed)
\$9,900



Spectator

acrylic, shellac, wallpaper & wood veneer on board

123 x 123 cm (framed)

\$9,900



Green & Cream

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

103 x 103 cm (framed)

\$8,900



Cream Arrangement

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

103 x 103 cm (framed)

\$8,900



Swimmer
acrylic & shellac on board
103 x 103 cm (framed)
\$8,900



Shark Island II

acrylic & shellac on board

103 x 103 cm (framed)

\$8,900



Distant North Head

acrylic & shellac on board

103 x 103 cm (framed)

\$8,900



Floral Shorts

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

103 x 103 cm (framed)

\$8,900



Shark Island I

acrylic & shellac on board

73 x 123 cm (framed)

\$8,900



Table & Chair

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

83 x 83 cm (framed)

\$7,900

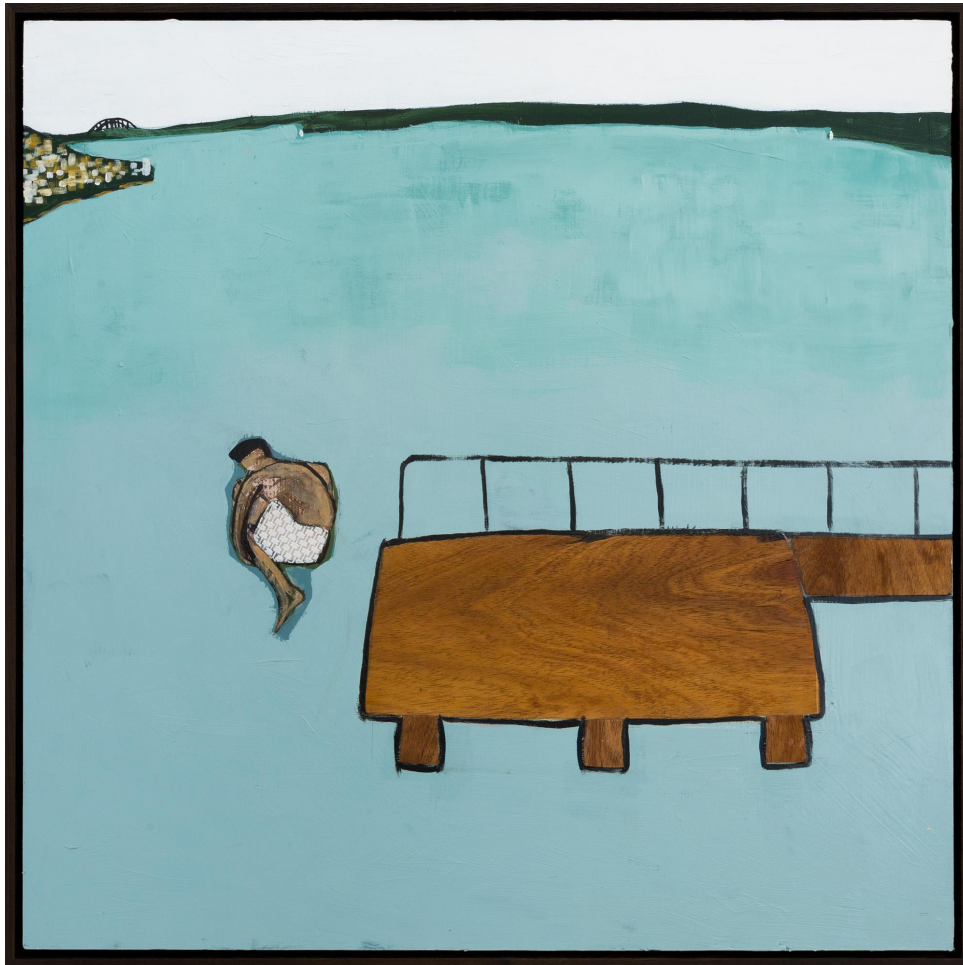


Bomb

acrylic, shellac, wallpaper & wood veneer on board

83 x 83 cm (framed)

\$7,900



Redleaf

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

83 x 83 cm (framed)

\$7,900



Jumping & Reading

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

83 x 83 cm (framed)

\$7,900



Eastern Shoreline

acrylic & shellac on linen on board

83 x 83 cm (framed)

\$7,900



Twist

acrylic, shellac & wallpaper on board

53.5 x 53.5 cm (framed)

\$3,900



White Jug

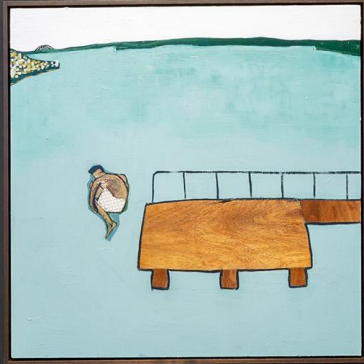
acrylic, shellac, wallpaper & wood veneer on board

73 x 63 cm (framed)

\$4,900















Photograph by James Geer

JOHN BAIRD

Born 1954, Melbourne, Australia

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 'Harbour & Interior Views', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'The Rip & Otherwise', Salt Contemporary, Queenscliff, VIC
- 2020 'Synesthesia', James Makin Gallery, Collingwood, VIC
- 2018 'Regatta', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2017 'Running and Windward', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2016 'Paintings & Ceramics', Eastgate Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
'John Baird', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2015 'Horizon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2014 'John Baird', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'New Paintings', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2013 'Spectacular Behaviour', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Paintings', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2012 'Recent Paintings', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2011 'Paintings', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2010 'Recent Works', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2008 'John Baird', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2007 'John Baird', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2006 'Recent Paintings', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2005 'Sculpture & Paper', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2004 'Paintings & Sculpture', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2003 'John Baird', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2002 'Recent Paintings', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 1992 'Aspects of Fatherhood', A.R.T Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 1990 'John R Baird Peinture', Australian Embassy, Paris
- 1989 'John R Baird Paintings', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC
- 1987 'Fertility', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC

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SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2023 'Present Tense', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
 - 'Paper & Clay', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2022 'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2021 'Coming Home', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
 - 'Still Life', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
 - 'Summer Salon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2020 'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2019 'Reflections of a Fading Sky', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
 - 'Summer Salon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2018 'Summer Salon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2016 'Under the Sun', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
 - 'Works on Paper', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2015 'In the Still', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
 - 'Unfolding Splendour', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2013 'Under the Sun', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2008 'Salon 08', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2007 'The Art of the Dog', Castlemaine Regional Gallery, VIC
- 2004 'Collectors Show', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 2003 'Collectors Show', Eastgate & Holst, Melbourne, VIC
- 1999 'From the Arts End', Mornington Regional Gallery, VIC
- 1993 'Roar Ten Years On', Artzone, Adelaide, SA
- 1992 'Roar Ten Years On', LaTrobe Valley Arts Centre, VIC
 - 'Roar 11 Count to 10', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC
- 1991 'Art in City Windows', City of Melbourne, VIC
 - 'Random Sample', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC
 - 'Roar 2 Summer Salon', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC
- 1989 'Roar Summer Salon', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC
- 1988 'The Yellow Show', Roar Studios, Melbourne, VIC

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SELECTED COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Victoria

Artbank

Bell Potter Group

Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum, VIC

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GALLERY