

THE 2022 QAGOMA MEDAL

For his exceptional and inspiring contribution to the Collection, the Gallery presents the 2022 QAGOMA Medal to **Dr Paul Eliadis AM**.
With the Medal, we acknowledge Paul's outstanding generosity and commitment to supporting the arts in Queensland.

This year, we recognise and celebrate 30 years of giving to the Gallery by benefactor Dr Paul Eliadis AM. Paul joined the Foundation in 1992, motivated to learn more about contemporary artists and collecting, but also to gain a greater appreciation for the value of philanthropy to various communities, a passion he has steadily honed and expanded ever since. His generous support has strategically enhanced collection strengths across the Australian and international art departments. Among the 77 artworks he has gifted are major paintings by Ian Burn and Juan Davila, entire series of photo-media works by Tracey Moffatt and Ed Ruscha, and a group of works on paper by Gordon Bennett.

While his most enduring interest has been ongoing patronage of the Gallery's Collection, Paul's innovative approaches to supporting, collecting and giving have also directly benefited many others. His support of Tracey Moffatt's Venice Biennale project in 2017 resulted in his gifting her entire group of works, seen in the Australian Pavilion, to the Gallery. In another extraordinary gesture, after many years of being a private patron of the Easton Pearson fashion design archive, he gifted the entire Brisbane-based collection to the Museum of Brisbane, from which an array of EP collection displays, touring shows and professional development opportunities has flowed, and formed the Museum's largest-ever single gift by a donor.

Giving wonderful things to appropriate collections is a great way to collect. I know I'm only a temporary custodian and I enjoy the time I have with the work. Ultimately, they are going to be well looked after and not only do I get to enjoy them, everyone else can, which is perfect.¹

In 2013, Paul lent his considerable support to the University of Queensland to fund an academic Chair — a purposeful gift, charged with keeping the teaching and research of

classics and ancient history alive in twenty-first-century education. As a result, UQ then became the only university in Queensland to offer courses in the history, arts and culture of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Each of these examples illuminates part of an important trajectory, one in which his family, modest upbringing and personal connections to Brisbane informed his love and support of Queensland artists and institutions.

As a child growing up in South Brisbane, Paul's first job was in the family's milk bar, where he washed bags of potatoes and cut them into chips at sunrise each day, before opening the doors and heading off to Brisbane State High School, virtually across the road. (Although students were not allowed to go there, Paul would return each lunchtime, carrying a secret list of orders from staff and friends.) While his grandparents and parents did not receive a lot of schooling, they worked hard to emigrate to Australia and provide crucial educational opportunities for Paul and his siblings. After graduating from UQ with a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (1977) and a Bachelor of Science (1978), Paul began his 40-plus-year career in clinical haematology and oncology. In 1988, he co-founded the Wesley Clinic for Haematology and Oncology, now known as the ICON Cancer Centre, where he specialises in clinical trials and the treatment of malignant disease.

Paul's passion for art and culture has served as a kind of work/life-balancing routine. Some of his most enjoyable moments have included serving on the Commissioner's Council for Australia at the Venice Biennale, and the establishment of a private foundation to service his giving priorities. In 2020, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to medicine and for his commitment to charitable and philanthropic initiatives.

I think art is a very important part of our culture and society. It's a peculiar way for an individual to interpret and express the world around them, not just in abstract terms, but in forms that can also be personal, political and poetic. In our immediate environment, it's a key form of freedom and expression in a democratic society, and in its best exponents take us into extra dimensions beyond aesthetics. Take Gordon Bennett, whose work we can respond to on so many levels. Some of his paintings and video work can be very beautiful, and yet confronting, but they each deal with very complex issues in our society now, likely to be debated for many decades to come. Any society that does not hold up art and support artists like this, I think, is ultimately not a society worth living in.²

The 2022 QAGOMA Medal, awarded to Dr Paul Eliadis AM, was presented by the Chair, Professor Emeritus Ian O'Connor AC, on behalf of the Board of Trustees at the Foundation's Annual Dinner on 22 October 2022. On behalf of the Gallery, I thank Paul for his inspiring generosity and commitment to supporting our Collection.

Chris Saines CNZM
Director, QAGOMA

Endnotes

^{1 & 2} Notes from an interview with Dr Paul Eliadis conducted by Angela Goddard (then Curator, Australian Art to 1975, QAGOMA), edited by Simon Wright, for 'The happy accident: An interview with Dr Paul Eliadis', *Artlines* no.2, 2013, pp.36-7, and drawn from the Paul Eliadis Collection of Contemporary Art Archive.

Opposite, from top (l-r) Dr Paul Eliadis AM, wearing the 2022 QAGOMA Medal, with family members Mrs Ellene Eliadis and Mr Vass Eliadis at the Foundation Annual Dinner, QAG, October 2022 / Photograph: Katie Bennett
Tracey Moffatt / Mother and baby (from 'Passage' series) 2017 / Gift of Dr Paul Eliadis AM through the QAGOMA Foundation 2022. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program / © Tracey Moffatt

