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MARTIN SHARP SYDNEY ARTIST EXHIBITION OPENS 31 OCTOBER AT MUSEUM OF SYDNEY

Artists investigate the deepest areas of our lives ... An artist is meant to reveal what is not obvious to people and work on it until it is. Martin Sharp

A new exhibition, *Martin Sharp Sydney Artist* opening 31 October at the Museum of Sydney, celebrates the work of one of Australia's most influential artists.

Featuring rarely seen material drawn from his personal collection and family archive, Martin Sharp's iconic images of Luna Park, his *Eternity* series, cartoons and posters all provide an instantly recognisable portrait of Sydney, its people and places.

With their trademark vivid colours Martin Sharp's art works and album covers provide a fascinating insight into the people, passions and causes he supports, revealing his intellect, humour and unique artistic sensibility.

Yet Martin Sharp's influence — and those who influence him — extends far beyond.

Martin Sharp was born in Sydney in 1942. His early artistic influences were his grandfather's love of cartoons, his mother's use of collage and an art teacher at Sydney's Cranbrook school who introduced him to Vincent Van Gogh.

Martin Sharp says, "Art was the only subject I was good at and it became my way of having a say."

As cartoonist and art director of the anti-establishment *Oz* magazine in Australia and then in London, Martin Sharp's work was central to the turbulent days of the magazine's high profile court cases and censorship issues of the 1960s.

Sharp's posters in particular provide an insight into the people, philosophies, passions and causes he supports from Aboriginal justice to American performer Tiny Tim, and include those designed for the Sydney Festival, Sydney Opera House 10th anniversary and Nimrod Theatre.

Sharp's psychedelic posters of Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix and others are famous around the world and he is the co-writer of one of Cream's most famous songs, "Tales of Brave Ulysses" after a chance meeting with Eric Clapton.

In Sydney in the 1970s, Martin Sharp became a champion of Sydney's embattled Luna Park, redesigning the laughing face that has made Sydney instantly recognisable to millions of people worldwide and choosing it as a theme that recurs in many works along with Australia's longest-running comic strip character Ginger Meggs.

To Martin Sharp, displaying his works at the Museum of Sydney, on the site of Australia's first Government House makes a connection to the artworks hung on the walls of that early building. Sharp's portrait of Aboriginal actor David Gulpillil and his painting *A curiosity in her own country* will speak in new ways in this context, at a site of first contact between colonizers and the first Australians in 1788.

Martin Sharp Sydney Artist at the Museum of Sydney, cnr Bridge & Phillip Sts, Sydney, 31 October 2009 – 4 March 2010 is open daily 9.30am-5pm. T 02 9251 5988. Exhibition related events listed at www.hht.net.au

Martin Sharp Sydney Artist is proudly sponsored by The Grace Hotel

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