

Media Release: MIRKA

Embargoed until 6am 15 June 2020

The Jewish Museum of Australia announces MIRKA: A revelatory exploration of the astonishing life of Mirka Mora.

In a landmark exhibition, the Jewish Museum of Australia: Gandel Centre of Judaica, in partnership with William Mora Galleries and supported by Heide Museum of Modern Art, presents MIRKA – the most expansive survey of work by the late Mirka Mora (1928–2018) ever shown, and an intimate, previously unseen view into her rich and fascinating personal history.

Marking its first major showcase since COVID-19 lockdowns, the museum will re-emerge to illuminate the incredible life and work of an artist whose seminal influence on Australia’s art and culture is unrivalled.

Launching in December 2020, MIRKA will transform the Jewish Museum of Australia into an immersive ‘Mirka-world’ that reflects the artist’s trademark mischievousness and bohemian spirit, and shares her powerful story in vivid detail, as told through her many letters, sketchbooks and diaries, and through recorded interviews from the Jewish Holocaust Centre archives.

‘It feels enormously poignant that the Jewish Museum of Australia’s milestone project for 2020 is a celebration of the life and legacy of iconic artist Mirka Mora,’ says Jessica Bram, Director & CEO of the Museum. ‘Beloved and remembered as much for her extraordinary career and contribution to cosmopolitan Melbourne as for her remarkable *joie de vivre*, Mirka’s gift was the magic of hope and resilience.’

A story of survival and migration, interspersed with a generous dose of family, art, food and love, Mirka Mora’s history is a profoundly affecting post-Holocaust Australian Jewish tale which, until now, has not been presented with such depth and scope.

Featuring never-exhibited works from the private collections of the Mora family and Mirka’s studio and archives, alongside pieces from the Mirka collection recently acquired by the Heide Museum of Modern Art, MIRKA will offer the most comprehensive picture of the artist’s life and 70-year-long career, offering fresh insight into her creativity, and allowing audiences old and new to discover her life and artistry like never before.

William Mora, Mirka’s son explains: ‘We, the family, are honoured and delighted to be collaborating with the Jewish Museum of Australia to launch MIRKA – a celebration of her life story and art. Melbourne’s enduring love for Mirka and her art is well-known and we believe this exhibition will give new insights into her world. Mirka’s work embodies humanity and hope; her life of art shows her desire to embrace diversity and to be enriched by our differences.’

Starting with her childhood in Paris and her family’s extraordinary escape and survival during the Nazi occupation of France, the exhibition then charts Mirka’s migration to Australia in 1947 with then-husband Georges Mora. Arriving in Melbourne, the couple rapidly established themselves as a force in the city’s culinary culture and burgeoning arts scene via their businesses, Café Mirka in Exhibition Street, the legendary Tolarno in St Kilda, and Tolarno Galleries – one of Australia’s first commercial galleries.

Later years saw her art indelibly woven into the city’s identity through various murals and public art works including her design of one of Melbourne’s very first Art Trams in 1978, and a collaboration with Australian fashion house Gorman in 2016. With many of her works held in the permanent collections of some of Australia’s most respected galleries, Mirka Mora’s legacy is certain to endure. A joyful and optimistic honouring of a truly miraculous and marvellous life, *MIRKA* at the Jewish Museum of Australia promises audiences the most intimately detailed portrait of this cherished icon of Australian culture.

Further information at www.jewishmuseum.com.au

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