

Five decades of the Tamworth Country Music Festival comes alive in nostalgic art exhibitions

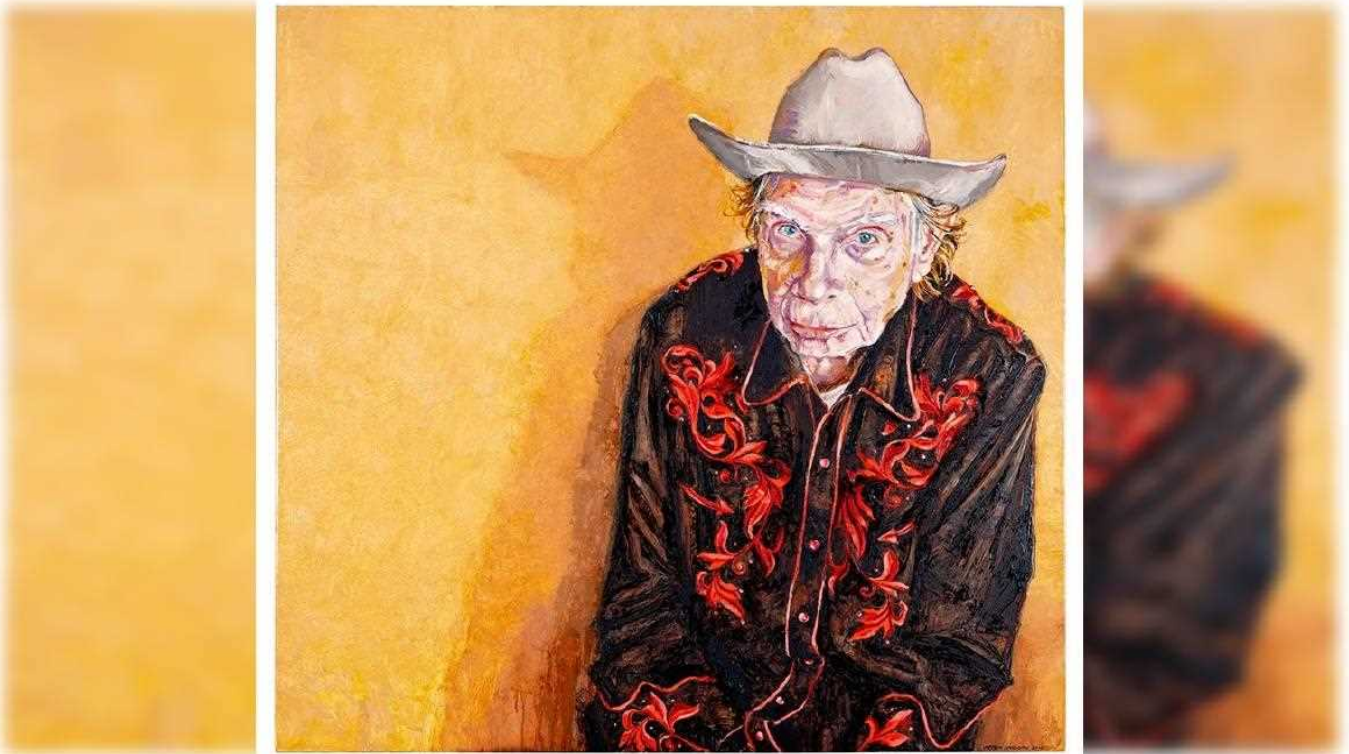
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HEART OF COUNTRY MUSIC: Tamworth Regional Gallery Director Bridget Guthrie prepares for the opening of *Take Me Home to Tamworth*. Photo: Peter Hardin

This April, festival-goers and country music fans can take a step back in time, with two exhibitions in Tamworth celebrating the 50-year history of the Tamworth Country Music Festival.

The *Take Me Home to Tamworth* exhibition is now open at Tamworth Regional Gallery and will run until April 24 showcasing artworks, memorabilia and photographs of the Festival captured across its five-decade history.



ON DISPLAY: The National Portrait Gallery, private collectors and selected works from photographers will also be on display. ABOVE: Peter Hudson, Chad Morgan, 2018, oil on linen on board, 170 x 180 cm. IMAGE: Mick Richards, Photography.

Tamworth Regional Gallery Director, Bridget Guthrie says the exhibition will showcase Tamworth as the home and heart of Australian country music.

"This exhibition features items and treasures from the Gallery's own collection, the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, the National Portrait Gallery, as well as private collections and specially selected images."

The *Take Me Home to Tamworth* exhibition features iconic artists including Tex Morton, Slim Dusty and Joy McKean, Smoky Dawson, Chad Morgan, Jimmy Little, Auriel Andrew, John Williamson, Keith Urban, Beccy Cole, Kasey Chambers, Paul Kelly, Lee Kernaghan, Uncle Roger Knox and Troy Cassar-Daley.

"It is a mesmerising and encapsulating journey of the Tamworth Country Music Festival, that highlights the artists, their songs, instruments and costumes, and most importantly the fans," Ms Guthrie said.

Tamworth Regional Gallery will also host some of the featured artists during this year's Toyota Country Music Festival, Tamworth.

"Country music legend and proud Kamilaroi/Gomeroi man, Uncle Roger Knox will be performing during the Festival for free on April 20," Ms Guthrie said.

In addition to the *Take Me Home to Tamworth* exhibition, the *Working Peel Street* showcase pays tribute to the buskers, hawkers and punters of the Festival.

The exhibition by Spiros Coutroubas and Peter Wright captures the heart and soul of the Festival - Peel Street, highlighting the fans, fun and fervour of the 1992 Tamworth Country Music Festival.

Photographer and curator Spiros Coutroubas said: "Peter and I originally went to the 1992 Festival with plans to write an article on the busking scene on Peel Street, but that never happened."

"The photographs and audio recordings we captured in 1992 have been transformed into a nostalgic exhibition that recreates the look and feel of Peel Street all those years ago."

As well as portraits and street scenes, the exhibition includes two video portraits that integrate sound and pictures.

"This showcase really takes you back to the hustle and bustle of Peel Street in 1992 and you get a real sense of the atmosphere. You meet the people, see the faces and hear what they loved about the Festival all those years ago," Ms Guthrie said.

The *Working Peel Street* exhibition is now open in Ray Walsh House.

Web link:

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/7689614/artworks-memorabilia-and-photographs-of-the-festival-captured-across-its-five-decade-history/>