



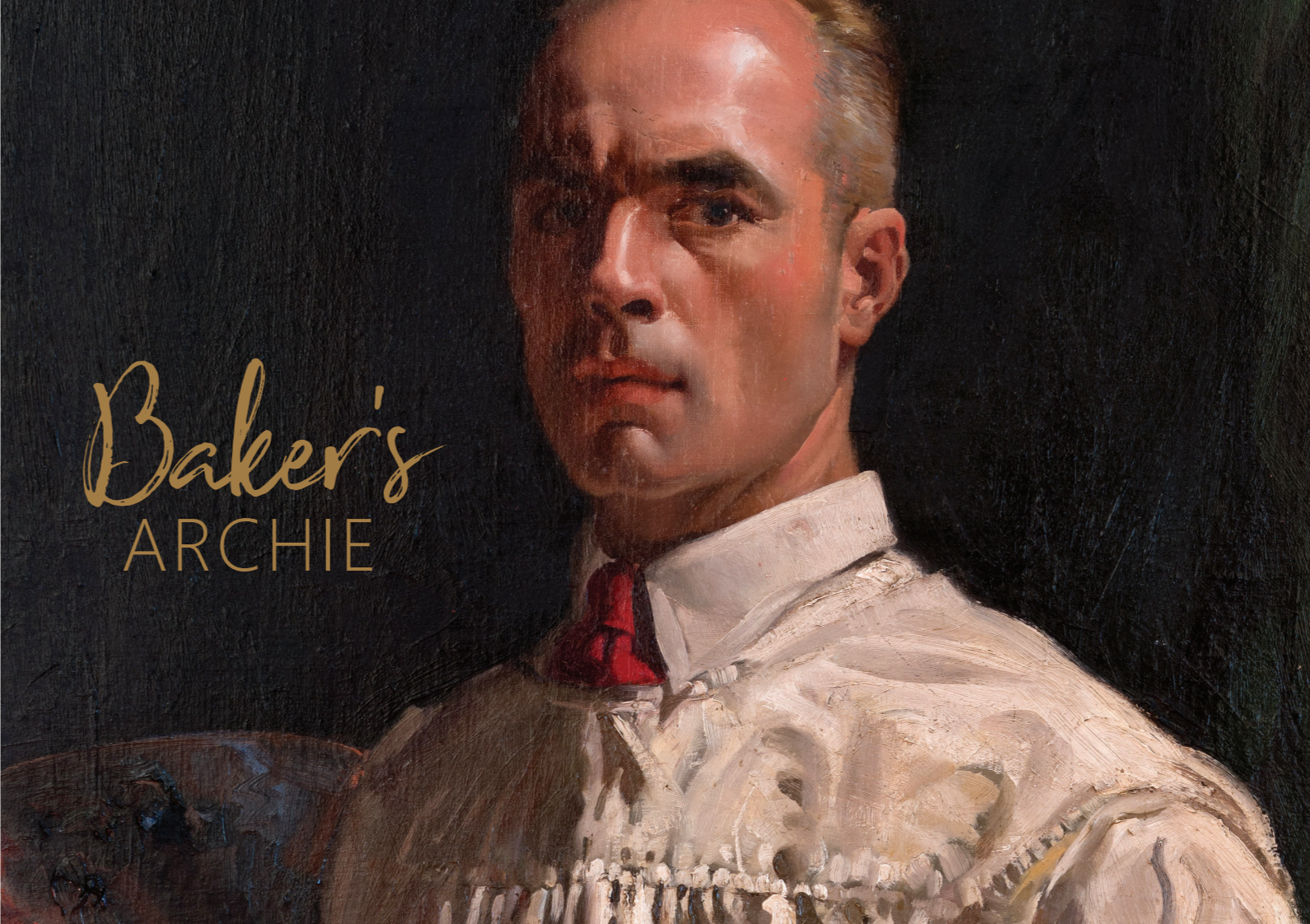
Baker's ARCHIE

APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2021

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- 🕒 *Open Thursday-Sunday 11am-4pm*



ALAN BAKER
ART GALLERY



Baker's ARCHIE

Curator's Statement

The 2021 Alan Baker Art Gallery Anniversary exhibition explores Baker's connection to Australia's most celebrated art exhibition the Archibald Prize. Renowned as our nation's most topical and publicised portrait competition the Archibald represents a 100-year history of both controversy and prestige in Australian Art.

At the time of the inaugural Archibald Prize, Baker was a youth of just 13 years embarking on his artistic journey and living in Ashfield, Sydney. Studying at JS Watkins Art School, alongside future Archibald winners Henry Hanke, William Pidgeon and his brother Normand, Baker was evolving as a portrait artist, his works capturing his skill in classical disciplines including tonal graphite life drawing and painting.

At 22 years of age Baker began his relationship with the Archibald Prize, entering both a self-portrait and portrait of Halila Booth which were to become the first of many. Over the span of 27 years, 1936 to 1972, Baker entered 35 portraits in total. His subject varied from self-portrait, to portraits of his wife Marjorie, Charles Chauvel, the family doctor Mervyn Matheson among many others.

For Baker it was the tradition of the artist and sitter relationship that he believed to be the most intimate experience between artist and subject. Face to face he captured emotion, expression and brought his portrait to life with such fine detail.

True to the classical and traditional, Bakers works of the period began to respond to the vibrancy, fluidity, and energy of the modernist movement. Controversial, in his own right, Baker valued realism and believed that for as long as his audience appreciated his work and exhibitions, and his studio sales continued the modernist movement would not replace the tradition of realism.

The Gallery's third anniversary exhibition, FACE to FACE, captures a chronological suite of Baker's entries inviting the viewer to reflect on his contribution to Australian art history, his great passion for his work and the audience for whom he painted.

