



The Australian Art Quartet is launching a new series of concerts, including Butt Naked Salon, where composer Andrew Batt Rawden will recline nude for concert goers to sketch.

Local

Nudity, electrocution and gaffa tape: the Australian Art Quartet shows off their experimental side

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Imagine listening to a performance of an autobiographical piece of music by a composer, who reclines in the nude for you to draw while you in turn are painted onto the walls a building by an Archibald-prize winning artist.

This is just one of six concerts planned in a series by the newly formed [Australian Art Quartet](#), designed to blur the lines between performer and audience, the watcher and the watched.

Made up of master musicians Dan Russell, Hayley Bullock, Leo Kram, and the quartet's artistic director James Beck, the Art Quartet have wasted no time since starting a three-year residency at the iconic Yellow House in Potts Point.



James Beck (right), artistic director of the Australian Art Quartet with composer Andrew Batt-Rawden.

Their inaugural concert series, which kicks off on February 10 with a collaboration between the quartet and renowned photographer Gary Heery, is already causing a stir — and with planned performances to include electrocution, nudity, and some of the biggest names in the industry, it's no secret why.

"It was really a self-fulfilling prophesy. The most interesting and the bravest artists were the ones who agreed to be involved," James Beck, Artistic Director of the Australian Art Quartet said.

One of these brave souls is Andrew Batt-Rawden — composer, curator, and life model, who signed up to pose in the nude for the fourth instalment in the concert series, *Butt Naked Salon*.



The Australian Art Quartet — made up of (L-R) artistic director James Beck, Hayley Bullock, Leo Kram, and Dan Russell — have taken up a three-year residence at the Yellow House in Potts Point.

A risqué experimental art salon created to evoke the Belle Epoch period of art history, the 90 minute concert will see give the audience plenty of time to draw Batt-Rawden, who said he "said yes (to the idea) without a second thought".

"With composition you're always exposing yourself to the audience...everybody is listening to your work and judging you," Batt-Rawden said.

"(This is just) adding the element of me being completely naked in front of an audience...heightening that experience of being exposed. I don't know what it's going to be like."

Batt-Rawden's autobiographical composition 27 will be performed by the Quartet throughout the event, as Archibald-prize winning artist Wendy Sharpe paints the audience onto the walls of the space, creating a cycle of voyeurism which Beck said he hoped would be truly immersive.

"The reason why we're launching this project is this idea around audience participation and immersion," Beck said.

"I really don't think we've gone as far as we need to go."

The string quartet are definitely putting their music and bodies on the line, as later concerts will give the audience the opportunity to administer electric shocks to the performers, and will see a renowned perfumer releasing notes of fragrance in time to the music.

"We're giving (the audience) the ability to literally change the way we play," Beck said.

"To be immersed fully...to invite them inside the music."