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Composer Andrew Batt-Rawden



Composer Andrew Batt-Rawden will nude model for award-winning artist Wendy Sharpe during a public concert.

Nudity has been an ever present element of the visual arts for thousands of years. From the bronze and marble statues of the ancient Greeks to Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, Ingres' *La Grande Odalisque* to Lucian Freud's *Naked Portrait on a Red Sofa*, the human form in all its anatomical glory has been studied and captured by visual artists countless times and has rarely been considered taboo. The same cannot be said for nudity in other arenas of the arts. Whether it be dance, theatre or performance art, nudity still has the power to scandalise.

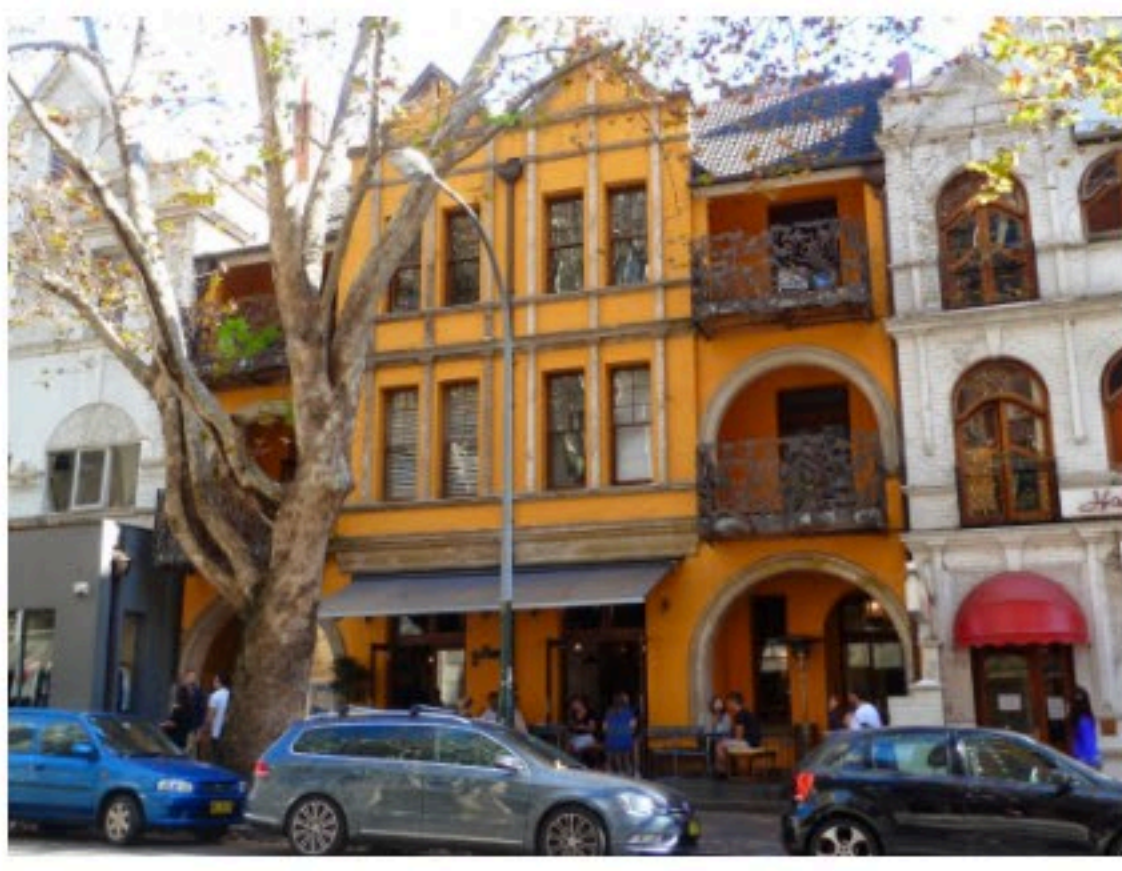
Butt Naked Salon, an upcoming collaboration between the Australian Art Quartet, composer and publisher Andrew Batt-Rawden and Archibald Prize-winning artist Wendy Sharpe hopes to bridge the gap between the visual arts and live performance and breakdown some of the stigmas still attached to viewing the naked form in the flesh.



The Australian Art Quartet

At Sydney's Yellow House, during a performance of Batt-Rawden's 2012 quartet 27, the composer will appear as a life model, reclining naked for Sharpe and other artists present to sketch him. Sharpe's study will be painted onto the walls of the performance space, capturing the event while it is taking place. "Absurdist dancer" Clemmie Robertson will also perform *Beetroot Dionysus*, set to the quartets of Shostakovich and Ravel.

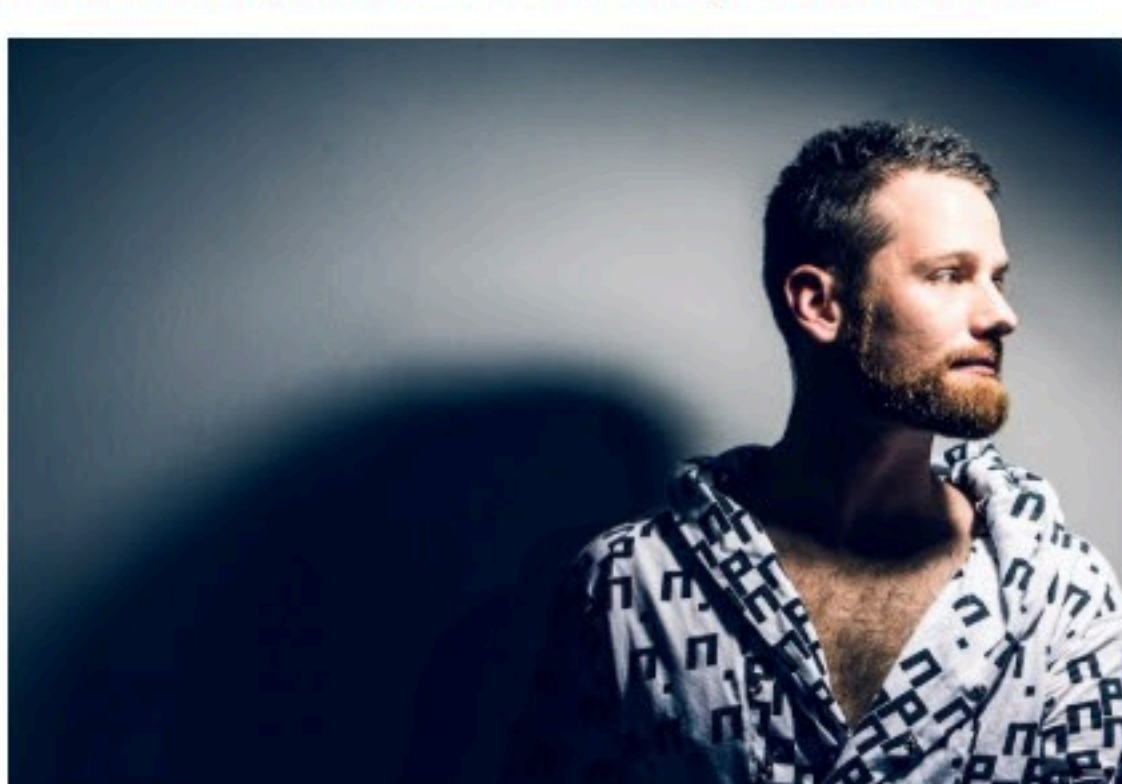
The radical concept is the brainchild of Australian Art Quartet artistic director and cellist with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, James Beck, who will present a series of convention-shattering events as part of a 3-year residency at the Yellow House. Batt-Rawden was immediately attracted to the idea of combining art, music and the human body. "The quartet that will be performed, 27, is part of a series of quartets I've been writing that capture a year in my life, in this instance my 27th year in 2012," Batt-Rawden shares. "It is, in essence, a self-portrait, and one in which I am very frank and exposed about this particular part of my life. So the synergy between laying myself bare in a metaphorical artistic sense and in a literal sense during the performance felt like an important opportunity."



The Yellow House, in Sydney's Potts Point

Batt-Rawden, who is also the Publishing Director of Arts Illuminated, the publishers of *Limelight Magazine*, has always felt a personal drive to support innovation and experimentation in the arts. As the founder and former-Artistic Director of Sydney-based new music producers, Chronology Arts, which champions new and emerging composers, and as publisher of *Limelight* magazine, which he saved from being discontinued when its former publisher, Haymarket, ceased trading in Australia, Batt-Rawden is no stranger to taking artistic risks. "It's absolutely vital for artists in any discipline to have the opportunity to think up crazy ideas and try out radical concepts. Sadly because of the current state of Federal arts funding those opportunities to push boundaries are becoming all too rare," he says.

Nudity in live performance may be risqué, but this is all part of the appeal for Batt-Rawden. "I value the chance to challenge myself and also notions of performance. Of course, it will be a bit intimidating to appear naked in front of an audience, but I expose myself in, I believe, an even more intimate way at every premiere. Plus, as an artist, I think it's essential to seek out new experiences that can inform your work - and what an experience this will be!"



Andrew Batt-Rawden

Batt-Rawden's recent works have explored other notions of engaging with the human body, using wearable technologies that track a performer's or a listener's pulse to control the tempo of the music. Wendy Sharpe is also known for her bold and subversive exploration of the human form and particularly gender, as with her award-winning portrait of actor and queer artist Ash Flanders.

The performance-cum-installation is intended to be evocative of a 19th-century bohemian salon, and so the Yellow House is also a fitting venue for such an event. Established by artist Martin Sharp in 1970, it became a focal point for Australia's neo-bohemians. Experimental and multi-media expression flourished here, including the Yellow House's 24-hour-a-day 'happening' in which the house became both a meeting place and canvas for artists. "It's a rush to be adding a new chapter to the story of this iconic building," Batt-Rawden says. "A thriving culture only exists when we capture and explore the stories of our existence. This is a way for me to tell my own story - a way of saying "this is me, take me as you find me." It may be brutally honest, but I'm nervously excited about the results of this experience."

***Butt Naked Salon* takes place at the Yellow House in Sydney on August 3. Full details of the Australian Art Quartet's 2016 season is available from their [website](#).**

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