



Media Release

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Richard Lewer— I Only Talk to God When I Want Something

A Geelong Gallery exhibition
15 November 2025 to 1 March 2026



Richard Lewer, *Envy (after Edouard Manet)* 2023, synthetic polymer paint on brass and copper, Collection of Rick and Jan Frolich, Adelaide, Photographer: Andrew Curtis, © the artist



Richard Lewer, *Confessions* 2024 (detail), synthetic polymer paint on pegboard (106 panels), Geelong Gallery, Gift of the artist through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2025, Photographer: Andrew Curtis, © the artist

Geelong Gallery's major summer exhibition *Richard Lewer—I Only Talk to God When I Want Something* opens on Saturday 15 November 2025 and will include the premiere of new works by Richard Lewer commissioned by Geelong Gallery.

Richard Lewer is a critically acclaimed multi-disciplinary artist working across painting, drawing and animation to explore everyday experiences, infusing them with his distinctive wit and observant humour. Through his highly autobiographical practice, Lewer examines universal and often confronting subjects including crime, religion, health and grief. His candid and authentic reflections—often presented with humour and honesty—resonate deeply with audiences who find their own lives and experiences mirrored in his works.

I Only Talk to God When I Want Something reflects his longstanding and deeply personal exploration of Christianity. Religious narratives and historical imagery act as touchpoints as he navigates contemporary life. The new works are inspired by the Last Judgement—a day of reckoning in the Christian religion—and other key religious figures and stories, set within familiar Melbourne and Geelong locations that prompt reflection on the role of religion in today's fractured world.

Presented alongside key series including *Seven Deadly Sins* (2023), *Stations of the Cross* (2007–08) and *Confessions* (2024), the exhibition offers an expansive view of Lewer's practice. Recently gifted to Geelong Gallery, *Confessions* comprises 106 painted panels created during a participatory project at the National Gallery of Victoria, where visitors' personal confessions—ranging from 'I hate Collingwood' to 'I like telling new parents how much sleep I've had'—were recorded and painted by the artist.

The exhibition's title is Lewer's own personal confession and an acknowledgment that in the day-to-day busyness of contemporary life Lewer, like many others, only draws on his belief system at times of personal need.

Geelong Gallery audiences have previously encountered Lewer's work through exhibitions such as *True Crime—Murder and Misdemeanour in Australian Art* (2008), the *Geelong Contemporary Art Prize* (2010, 2012) and the *Archibald Prize* (2017, 2025). This forthcoming solo exhibition invites visitors to engage with Lewer's thought-provoking and humorous takes on everyday life.

Richard Lewer says: 'It's exciting to see these series come together for the first time and for people to spend time with them.'

Globally we're facing so many extremes from the politics of the far right and left, catastrophic climate events resulting in fires and floods, an increasing disparity between the rich and poor and all set against a barrage of noise and the idealisation of social media. At a time of great social upheaval, my focus on religion is a reflection on how its narratives and moral framework have provided comfort and inspiration for millennia. This exhibition is a reminder to moderate, to pause, and to empathise.'

Geelong Gallery Director & CEO Humphrey Clegg says 'Richard Lewer is one of Australia's most loved and significant contemporary artists, and we are excited to present Richard Lewer—I Only Talk to God When I Want Something. His ability to examine, reflect upon, and represent our shared experience of the contemporary world around us through his artwork makes him an artist that everybody should know. We are delighted to share Lewer's new work with audiences here in Geelong first.'

-ENDS-

Exhibition partners

Geelong Gallery 2025 Annual Appeal donors
Sir Wilfred & CH (Roger) Brookes Charitable Foundation



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