

## [Life@death](#) 2019 – Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

A woman steps out of the crowd and wipes the face of a man about to be unjustly executed. In wiping the sweat, dirt and blood from his face this woman Veronica shows that human compassion can exist even in the face of overwhelming inhumanity and in this case, even touch the divine.

We have few opportunities to reflect on the great themes of life. Religions have offered us ways to engage themes of life, death and meaning, often through stories and images. In the Christian tradition the “Stations of the Cross” has been one such opportunity. These visual reflections, which focus on what it means to be human, are based around the last 24 hours of Jesus Christ’s life on earth as he endures the injustices of a mock trial, cruel torture and desperate suffering leading up to his public execution on a cross.

Through the [Life@death](#) 2019 exhibition, Gallery One and Mitcham Village Uniting Church is giving artists the opportunity to create or choose an artwork or object that speaks into one of the station of the cross - “Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus”.

Over the ages this theme has given artists the possibility of reflecting on systems of injustice, needless suffering, human endurance and the inevitability of death. Artists from Bosch to Ruth Halbert (contemporary Australian) have reflected on and created images of this woman’s lone act.

In our own time it may speak into our sense of powerlessness in the face of overwhelming and relentless need and injustice. Veronica challenges the modern ailment of compassion fatigue in her act. It’s heroic simplicity breaks the inertia of powerlessness in the face of overwhelming power structures. Hers is an act that literally images the worth of human life as she is left with a cloth that traces simultaneously the damage and dignity of this otherwise forgotten man.

[Life@death](#) 2019 - “Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus” looks forward to your participation.

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