

RADIANCE

THE NEO-IMPRESSIONISTS

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15 November 2012

NGV International 16 Nov 2012 – 17 March 2013



This summer's must-see exhibition *Radiance: The Neo-Impressionists* will open at the National Gallery of Victoria on 16 November.

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV said, "The NGV is the first Australian public art gallery to stage a comprehensive exhibition dedicated to this significant European art movement."

"Visitors will be captivated by the vibrant and technically rich style of Neo-Impressionism, as they trace the movement's development through a magnificent selection of works by founding artist Georges Seurat and his contemporaries," said Mr Ellwood.

This fascinating exhibition presents 78 works spanning Neo-Impressionism's 20 year history and features spectacular paintings by Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, Maximilien Luce and Théo van Rysselberghe among others. *Radiance* has been co-curated by Marina Ferretti Bocquillon, Directeur scientifique, Musée des impressionnismes, Giverny, who is a world-renowned expert on Neo-Impressionism.

The story of Neo-Impressionism began in 1884 when artists Georges Seurat and Paul Signac first met at the inaugural group exhibition of the Artistes Indépendants in Paris. *Radiance* explores the stylistic changes in their respective works that led to the official birth of Neo-Impressionism in 1886.

A key highlight of the exhibition is Seurat's work *The Seine at Courbevoie* (1885). This work is recognised as the first Neo-Impressionist painting for its division of tones and placement of pure colour side by side on the canvas. Moving away from the earlier style of the French Impressionists, who favoured the capturing of natural light and the first impression brought by a particular scene, the Neo-Impressionists favoured a more ordered and 'scientific' method of painting. This new method saw Seurat place individual dabs of colour side by side on the canvas, rather than mixing colours together. When contrasting colours are placed side by side in this way, they oscillate against each other, creating an effect of shimmering light in the viewer's eye.

"*Radiance: The Neo-Impressionists* showcases the fundamental principles of this significant art style. Through the luminous landscapes, glittering Parisian cityscapes and stunning portraits visitors will be mesmerised," said Dr Ted Gott, NGV Senior Curator.

Dr Gott said that the Neo-Impressionists' systematic application of harmonious yet individual lozenges of colour seemed to align their art with the communal ideals of anarchist or 'libertarian' politics in the 1880s.

"Many Neo-Impressionist artists actively supported the anarchist movement in France, prior to its descent into violence in the 1890s," said Dr Gott.

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Radiance: The Neo-Impressionists is part of NGV Summer, an exciting program of exhibitions and events at the NGV encouraging visitors to engage with and participate in great art over the warmer months. Visit ngv.vic.gov.au for more information.

A comprehensive publication with essays by guest curator Marina Ferretti Bocquillon and NGV curators Ted Gott and Elizabeth Cross will accompany this stunning exhibition.

Radiance: The Neo-Impressionists will be on display from 16 November 2012 to 17 March 2013 at NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road. Open Wed–Mon, 10am–5pm.

Admission fees: Adult \$20, Concession \$16, Child (ages 5–15) \$10, Family (2 adults + 3 children) \$55.

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