HERMITAGE
MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES

MASTERPIECES FROM THE HERMITAGE
The Legacy of Catherine the Great

31 JUL – 8 NOV 2015
EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Masterpieces from the Hermitage:
The Legacy of Catherine the Great

31 July – 8 November 2015
NGV International
180 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne
Tickets on sale from ngv.vic.gov.au
Adult $26 | Concession $22.50 | Child $10 |
Family (2 adults, 3 children) $65
Open 10am–5pm daily

Alexander ROSLIN
Swedish 1718–93
Portrait of Catherine II 1776–77 (detail)
Oil on canvas
271.0 х 189.5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. ГЭ-1316)
Acquired from the artist, 1777
30 July 2015: Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great showcases one of the world’s greatest art collections. Featuring works by artists including Rembrandt, Rubens, Velázquez and Van Dyck, the exhibition offers more than 400 outstanding works including one of the finest groups of Dutch and Flemish art to come to Australia.

The Premier of Victoria, the Hon. Daniel Andrews MP said, ‘Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great showcases treasures from one of the largest, oldest and most visited museums in the world. Another major event for Melbourne, this exhibition provides visitors with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see first-hand the extraordinary personal collection of Catherine the Great, drawn from the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.’

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV, said, ‘This exhibition celebrates the tenacity and vision of a true innovator in the arts. Catherine the Great’s inexhaustible passion for the arts, education and culture heralded a renaissance, leading to the formation of one of the world’s great museums, the Hermitage.’

‘We are delighted that we have the good fortune of bringing one of the world’s most important collections to Australian audiences. Masterpieces from the Hermitage is a rare opportunity to be immersed in the world of Catherine the Great and her magnificent collection of art,’ Mr Ellwood said.

Catherine the Great’s reign from 1762 to 1796 was known as a golden age and is remembered for her exceptional patronage of the arts, literature and education.

Of German heritage, Catherine the Great was well connected in European art and literature circles. She saw herself as a reine-philosophe (Philosopher Queen), a new kind of ruler in the Age of Enlightenment. Guided by Europe’s leading intellectuals, such as the French philosophers Voltaire and Diderot, she sought to modernise Russia’s economy, industry and government, drawing inspiration both from classical antiquity and contemporary cultural and political developments in Western Europe.
A prolific acquirer of art of the period, Catherine the Great's collection reflects the finest contemporary art of the 18th century as well as the world's best old masters of the time, with great works by French, German, Chinese, British, Dutch and Flemish artists. Notable in this exhibition are entire groups of works acquired from renowned collections from France, Germany and England representing the best collections offered for sale at the time.

The exhibition features four Rembrandts, including the notable *Young woman trying on earrings*, known as one of most intimate images Rembrandt ever created. The exhibition also includes 80 particularly fine drawings by artists including Poussin, Rubens, Clouet and Greuze.

Exquisite decorative arts have come to Australia for the exhibition, including 60 items from the Cameo Service of striking enamel-painted porcelain made by the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory in Paris. Commissioned by Catherine the Great for her former lover and military commander, Prince Grigory Potemkin, the dinner service features carved and painted imitation cameos — miniature works of art — based on motifs from the French Royal collection.

Director of the Hermitage Museum, Mikhail Piotrovsky, said, 'These outstanding works from the personal collection of Catherine the Great represent the crown jewels of the Museum. It was through the collection of these works and Catherine the Great's exceptional vision that the Hermitage was founded. Today it is one of the most visited museums in the world. We are very pleased to be able to share these precious works with Australian audiences at the 250-year anniversary of this important institution.'

Visitors to the exhibition can immerse themselves in Catherine the Great's world evoking a sensory experience of a visit to the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. The exhibition design has rich treatments of architectural details, interior furnishings, wallpapers and a colour palette directly inspired by the Hermitage's gallery spaces. Enveloping multimedia elements give visitors a sense of being inside the Hermitage, evoking the lush and opulent interiors.

The foundations of the Hermitage Museum were laid in 1764 by Catherine the Great and the museum has been open to the general public since 1852. With 3 million items in its holdings, the Hermitage is often regarded as having the finest collection of paintings in the world today. In 2014, the Hermitage celebrated its 250-year anniversary and opened a new wing with 800 rooms dedicated to art from the 19th to 21st centuries.

Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great is organised by the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg in association with the National Gallery of Victoria and Art Exhibitions Australia.

The exhibition is supported by the Australian Government International Exhibitions Insurance (AGIEI) Program. This program provides funding for the purchase of insurance for significant cultural exhibitions. Without AGIEI, the high cost of insuring significant cultural items would prohibit this major exhibition from touring to Australia.

The NGV and AEA also acknowledge the support of Victorian Major Events Company and Mazda Australia for their assistance in realising this important exhibition.

Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great is at NGV International from 31 July – 8 November 2015 and will be presented alongside *David Bowie is* at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image as part of the 2015 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series.

Tickets on sale from ngv.vic.gov.au
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*Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn*  
Dutch 1606–69  
*Young woman trying on earrings* 1657 (detail)  
oil on wood panel  
39.5 х 32.5 cm  
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. ГЭ-784)  
Acquired from the collection of the Comte de Baudouin, Paris, 1781

*previous page*  
Hermitage Museum, the Winter Palace in Summer from Palace Square, St Petersburg  
Photo: Pavel Demidov
Catherine the Great of Russia was born Sophia Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg in 1729 in a small port town to a minor German noble family. In 1744, when Sophia was 14-years-old, she and her mother were summoned to the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, where Sophia was to marry young Peter Ulrich of Holstein. The reigning ruler, Empress Elizabeth, had no children so she needed to find successors for the Russian throne. She found an heir in her nephew Peter, who, like Sophia, had grown up in Germany. Now, she needed a wife for him and agreeable news of Sophia had reached Empress Elizabeth’s ears. Frederick II of Prussia had written:

The little Princess [Sophia] ... combines the gaiety and spontaneity natural to her age with intelligence and wit surprising in one so young.

In 1762 at the age of thirty-three, Catherine the Great became Empress and reigned for the next thirty-four years until her death in 1796. She saw herself as a Philosopher Queen, a new kind of ruler in the Age of Enlightenment. Guided by Europe’s leading intellectuals, such as the French philosophers Voltaire and Diderot, she modernised Russia’s economy, industry and government, drawing inspiration both from classical antiquity and contemporary cultural and political developments in Western Europe. A fluent speaker of Russian, French and German, she was a largely self-educated ruler of fierce intelligence and firm convictions. She was independent, idealistic and visionary.

Catherine achieved many outstanding social and cultural initiatives including the forming of Russia’s first quasi-parliament, the rewriting of legal codes incorporating laws relating to freedom of the press, freedom of religion and the outlawing of torture as well as establishing orphanages and schools for women. The moniker ‘Catherine the Great’ was given to her during her lifetime.

Indeed, Catherine II oversaw a period of cultural renaissance during the thirty-four years of her reign. The world of ideas in which she was deeply involved from an early age found tangible expression everywhere in the material world she later created around herself. The great complexes of imperial buildings that Catherine constructed reflected her informed interest in both Classical and Chinese culture. Her collecting of paintings stemmed from a belief in the civilising power of art, and in its potential role in international soft diplomacy. Catherine’s diverse collections of decorative arts were unquestionably aimed to dazzle and please, with their richness and technical perfection, but they also had the more practical purpose to raise standards of artistic production in Russia. It is an occasion for celebration that over four hundred exemplary works of art from her personal collection, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, porcelain, silver and precious gems, are to be seen in Australia for the first time in this exhibition.

Catherine the Great’s love of education, art and culture inspired a period of enlightenment and architectural renaissance that saw the construction of the Hermitage complex. This construction includes six historic buildings along the Palace Embankment as well as the spectacular Winter Palace, Catherine’s former residence.

In this complex you will find the Little Hermitage, a simple and austere building, built as a refuge for Catherine in 1766 and the first of her major architectural commissions. It was in the following years that architects Jean-Baptiste Vallin de la Mothe and Yuri Velten added several pavilions with a grand hall, living rooms and connecting galleries to house Catherine’s collection. An orangery where oranges were grown and a Hanging Garden that was raised to the level of the first floor connected the pavilions.

During Catherine the Great’s reign the Hermitage complex, a creation of Catherine’s that included the Winter Palace, Small Hermitage, Great Hermitage and Hermitage Theatre became home and workplace for over 1000 people as well as the venue for elaborate balls, operas and dinner parties hosting up to 1500 guests.

The Hermitage theatre today is one of the largest, oldest and most-visited museums in the world. First opened to the general public in 1852, the Museum now holds more than 3 million items in its holdings and in 2014, celebrated its 250th anniversary by opening a new wing with 800 rooms dedicated to 19th to 21st century art.

Catherine the Great likened her passion for architecture and building to ‘being addicted to alcohol’. She studied design and architecture from great folios of architectural drawings and would judge an architect by their drawing ability. She acquired more than 1000 watercolours from the French architect Charles-Louis Clerisseau alone, and wrote in 1776 that, ‘Clerisseau’s pictures have come in handy, for I use these drawings to decorate my boudoir in Petersburg.’

On view in the exhibition will be remarkable drawings by the Hermitage’s first architects Yuri Velten and Giacomo Quarenghi, complemented by excellent painted views of the new Hermitage by Benjamin Patersen.

In the words of Hermitage Museum Director Mikhail Dedinkin, ‘This exhibition is the story of how one person created the first fine art museum in Russian history.’

Catherine the Great

Jean-Antoine Houdon
Catherine II 1773
marble
00.0  x 50.0  x 32.0  cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
inv. no. 372
Transferred from the Stroganov Palace, Leningrad, 1928

Giacomo Quarenghi
Facade of the Hermitage Theatre (1796)
pencil and ink, watercolour
83.0  x 47.0  cm (sheet)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
inv. no. 610-1620
Acquired from Giulio Quarenghi in 1818

THE HERMITAGE
Catherine the Great accumulated an extraordinary range of exceptional art works during her 34-year reign, including Old Masters, contemporary art, and exquisite works of decorative arts from the East. Enriched by the inspired acquisition of pre-existing, renowned collections formed in France, Germany and England, Catherine become one of the greatest collectors and patrons of art in the history of Europe.

SEVRES CAMEO SERVICE

The exhibition will feature pieces from the most expensive work of decorative art produced in the 18th century: an opulent dinner service made by Sévres, the eminent French porcelain manufactory. Consisting of 797 individual pieces, the service was commissioned for Catherine’s lover, Prince Grigory Potemkin, in 1777. When sending her order, Catherine told the French company that the service was for herself to ensure they would make it to their highest standards. Masterpieces from the Hermitage presents 60 pieces from this extraordinary setting.

Production of the service was both time-consuming and labour-intensive, requiring weeks of modelling, firing, painting and gilding for each piece, many of which are adorned with exquisite imitation cameos. The costs were enormous and Catherine was shocked by the bill for 331,317 French livres (equating to more than US$3 million in today’s currency).

This sort of service was not for everyday use, but reserved for grand occasions and state banquets, which in Catherine’s day could easily comprise 300 separate main courses. The daily food regimen in Catherine the Great’s court included up to 60 dishes for every evening meal, served in four courses – cold plates, soups, hot dishes and desserts.

CAMEOS

Catherine’s passion for collecting was first excited by her love of cameos. She joked that she suffered from ‘cameo fever’ and amassed more than 10,000 original engraved gems as well as 34,000 copies. While undeniably beautiful, the great power of the gems for Catherine was their inspiration and educational value; in her words, they offered ‘an unending source of all knowledge’. She spent hours every afternoon pouring over them, using them as a kind of visual encyclopaedia to acquaint herself with history and mythology. They were stored in specially designed cabinets fitted with sliding drawers. Two of these cabinets, along with dozens of Catherine’s engraved gems, will be displayed in Masterpieces from the Hermitage.

THE WORKS

(Sévres Porcelain Factory, Sévres (manufacturer)
France est. 1756
Cameo Service 1778–79 (detail)
porcelain (soft-paste), gilt
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Commissioned by Catherine II as a gift for Prince Grigory Potemkin in 1777, Potemkin’s Taurida Palace, St Petersburg from 1779, transferred to the Hofmarshal’s Office of the Winter Palace after his death; 1922 transferred to the State Hermitage Museum

(James Tassie, London (workshop of)
England 1735–99
Head of Medusa (1780s)
coloured glass, gilded paper
7.6 x 9.2 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. 7-T, 3296 а)
Purchased from James Tassie; 1785–88

(Spoon)
REMBRANDT

By 1790, the Hermitage had acquired 59 Rembrandts and four of these are on display in this exhibition. The works highlight Rembrandt’s mastery of capturing fleeting and highly personal moments such as in Young woman trying on earrings 1657, one of most intimate images ever created by the artist.

ITALIAN MASTERS

The exhibition presents works from Italian masters such as Titian, Guido Reni and Luca Giordano. One of the earliest paintings in the exhibition, the Nude Giaconda from the school of Leonardo da Vinci, offers a provocative nude rereoothing of the famous Mona Lisa. The master of Venetian Renaissance painting, Titian, is represented through the superb Portrait of a young woman c.1536, with its tactile sense of physical qualities, her pearls, velvet and ostrich feathers.

DUTCH AND FLEMISH

Masterpieces from the Hermitage presents some of the finest Dutch and Flemish art to travel to Australia including four paintings and one drawing by the great portraitist Anthony Van Dyck, and six paintings and two drawings by Peter Paul Rubens, the undisputed master of Flemish art.

ENGLISH ELEGANCE

The exhibition highlights Catherine’s acquisition of the extraordinary collection of Sir Robert Walpole, first Prime Minister of Great Britain, which included sensational paintings by Murillo, Rubens, Van Dyck, Teniers and Snyders. It was the most celebrated collection in England and caused public outrage upon being sold to Catherine. A campaign to buy the paintings back was mounted but failed.

CHINESE WISDOM

During her reign, Catherine the Great drew political and philosophical inspiration from China. The closing gallery of the exhibition is dedicated to Catherine the Great’s oriental collections of Chinoiserie and Chinese decorative arts, including gold and silverware of incredible intricacy, which she used to furnish her many residences.

One remarkable object from the dozens that will be on display is an elaborate toilette-set that Catherine used at her Winter Palace. Each piece is made from thousands of fine silver filigree threads. One item, a crab-shaped box fashioned from silver and gold, was used to store Catherine’s rouge. The crab could be lifted from its leaf tray and opened to reveal the rouge within.

DRAWINGS

Masterpieces from the Hermitage includes a wealth of Old Master drawings, including pieces by Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin and Dürer. A highlight is Hendrick Goltzius’s Bacchus, Venus and Ceres, considered by the artist to be his masterpiece. In two and a half centuries it has left St Petersburg just three times, making its trip to Melbourne a very special one.

[opp. page]

CHINESE

Crab-shaped box on a leaf tray (1740s-50s)
silver, enamel, silver-gilt
(a) 4.0 x 14.0 x 13.0 cm (box)
(b) 3.0 x 22.0 x 17.0 cm (stand)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. ЛС-9 а,б, ВВс-186)

BELOW

Anthony van DYCK
Flemish 1599–1641
Portrait of Philadelphia and Elizabeth Wharton 1640
oil on canvas
162.0 x 130.0 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. ГЭ-533)
Acquired from the collection of Sir Robert Walpole, Houghton Hall, 1779
**Event and Program Highlights**

**Voluntary Guide Tours**
Daily, 11.30am & 2.30pm
Cost Exhibition admission
Meet Exhibition entrance

**Live Choral Music**
Sat 1, Sun 2, Sat 15, Sat 29 Aug, 12.30pm
The Consort of Melbourne performs harmonies of European choral music from the eighteenth century, including the work of composers Vivaldi, Boccherini and Bortniansky. Immerses yourself in the music of the period through these short drop-in performances.
Cost Exhibition admission
Venue Exhibition space

**Opening Weekend**
Forum: Art of a Nation – How Catherine's Art Collections and Commissions Shaped Russia
Sat 1 Aug, 2-5pm
Join visiting specialists and explore how great collections and the architectures in which they are housed contribute to nation building and cultural identity in the context of the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg and the era of Catherine the Great.
Speakers Tisiana Vuosovic, Ass Prov of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts, University of Western Australia, and Jennifer Milam, Prof of Art History and Museum Studies, The University of Melbourne.

**Curator's Perspective**
Sun 2 Aug
• 11am: The Original Cultural Diplomat
Learn about the legacy of Catherine the Great and one of the world’s greatest collections.
Speaker Laurie Benson, Curator, International Art
• 3.30pm: Catherine’s Objets d’art
Explore the rich world of decorative arts included in the exhibition.
Speaker Dr Matthew Martin, Curator, International Decorative Arts & Antiquities

**Floor Talk Series: From Russia with Love – Russian Art, Architecture and Culture**
• Sat 8 Aug, 1pm: The Hermitage Collection
Dr Christopher Marshall explores the exquisite collecting of visual art and decorative arts collected by Catherine the Great during her reign.
Speaker Dr Christopher Marshall, Senior Lecturer of Art History and Museum Studies, The University of Melbourne

**Sat 8 Aug, 1pm:**
Take a closer look at Greuze’s depiction of family morality by exploring the painting and its associated drawings.
Speaker Sophie Matthiesson, Curator, International Art
Venue Exhibition space

**Sat 9 Aug, 1pm:**
Join us for a reading of Tolstoy’s story of doomed love within the aristocracy of Russia. A classic novel that offers insight into a Russia shaped by Catherine the Great.
Speaker Jason Steger, Literary Editor, The Age and regular panelist on ABC’s The Book Club
Venue Exhibition space

**Sun 6, 20 Sep & 4, 18 Oct, 2pm:**
**Catherine the Great Lecture Series: Philosophy, Literature and International Context**
Explore the state of Catherine’s Russia as represented by three major Russian 18th century writers: Radishchev, Fonvizin and Karamzin, who developed a new language of critique and representation of Russian life under her autocratic rule.
Speaker Assoc Prof Millicent Vladiv-Glover, School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University
Venue Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, Ground level

**Wed 26 Aug**
• 1pm: Family and morality in Jean-Baptiste Greuze’s Filial piety
Take a closer look at Greuze’s depiction of family morality by exploring the painting and its associated drawings.
Speaker Sophie Matthiesson, Curator, International Art
Venue Exhibition space

**Lunchtime Literature: Anna Karenina (1877)**
Fri 7 & 14 Aug, 1pm
Join us for a reading of Tolstoy’s story of doomed love within the aristocracy of Russia. A classic novel that offers insight into a Russia shaped by Catherine the Great.
Speaker Jason Steger, Literary Editor, The Age and regular panelist on ABC’s The Book Club
Venue Exhibition space

**Friday Nights at NGV**
Friday 2 October – Friday 6 November 2015, 5.30pm–9.30pm
NGV's Friday Nights return in style during Catherine the Great. Meet with friends and enjoy the exhibition after-hours, along with DJs, pop-up talks, bars and dining.
Fri 2 Oct Paul Grabowsky Trio
Fri 9 Oct Jaakko Eino Kalevi [Finland]
Fri 16 Oct Glenn Richards
Fri 23 Oct Gareth Liddiard
Fri 30 Oct Laura Jean
Fri 6 Nov Underground Lovers
Cost $28 A / $23 M / $10 C (per lecture)
Venue Ground level, NGV International

**Bookings**
Book early to avoid disappointment, ngv.vic.gov.au

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Venue Ground level, NGV International

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Masterpieces from the Hermitage provides a treasure trove of subject matter for students and teachers across all stages of learning, including primary and secondary school level, tertiary and higher education and life-long learners.

**FOR STUDENTS:**

**Introductory Talks**
Discover the stories behind the art and artists in the outstanding collections of the Hermitage. Daily talks for all year levels and in languages other than English.

**Art Making Workshops**
Explore and experiment with a range of materials and techniques through short and intensive workshop options suitable for all year levels including: Contemporary Cameo, Digital Artist and Learn to Draw and Paint Like a Master.

**Online Learning Resources**
A Look and Find activity for young learners, Behind the Scenes VCE Studio Arts learning resource and Language Activities to enhance intercultural understanding for students of languages other than English.

**Student Night**
For VCE and tertiary students featuring pop up talks, artist led drawing sessions and exhibition viewing.

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**FOR TEACHERS:**

**Evening Viewing**
An exclusive event for educators and colleagues prior to school visits featuring curator talks, exhibition viewing and fine food and wine.

**Professional Learning**
Focused on curriculum links and learning and teaching strategies tailored to your school requirements or choose from programs available.

**ACCESS TOURS**
Saturday 12 September and 10 October
Free audio describing tour 10.30am
Free Auslan interpreted tours 1pm

For further information on education programs visit ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/education/

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**REMBRANDT Harmensz. van Rijn**
Dutch 1606–69

*Portrait of a scholar* 1631 (detail)
Oil on canvas
104.5 x 92.0 cm (inv. no. Е267-746)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Acquired from the collection of Count Heinrich von Brühl, Dresden, 1789
ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS

PUBLICATIONS

Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great
Mikhail Dedinkin, Deputy Head of the Western European Art Department, The State Hermitage Museum and contributing authors
Publisher: National Gallery of Victoria
305 x 255mm, 280 pages
fully illustrated in colour
hardback RRP $69.95 / Paperback RRP $39.95
Internationally renowned scholars and curators present their expertise in this significant and historic volume on one of the most majestic periods in European art history. Presenting high quality reproductions of works by esteemed Old Masters such as Rembrandt, Velázquez, Rubens, Titian and others, as well as a strong collection of decorative arts and Chinese art, these works represent the best artists of the time and epitomise Catherine the Great’s vision and passion for the arts.

Catherine the Great: An Art Book for Kids
Kate Ryan
Publisher: National Gallery of Victoria
210 x 297 mm, 76 pages, hardback
fully illustrated in colour
RRP $14.95
Catherine the Great: An Art Book for Kids is an activity book written and developed especially for children aged six and up. This exciting new activity book, beautifully illustrated by Kat Chadwick, introduces children to the life and times of Catherine the Great in eighteenth-century Russia. Join Zemira, Catherine’s pet Italian greyhound, and find out about her rise to power. Discover interesting facts and have fun drawing pictures inspired by works of art collected by Catherine, banquet scenes and life at the Russian Royal Court.

MERCHANDISE

The NGV design store will offer a selection of unique contemporary products in collaboration with leading local and international artists, designers and makers including Lucy Folk, Spacecraft, Cassandra Chilton, Ruby Pivlen and Wedgwood. The full range will feature ceramics, jewellery, cushions, scarves and t-shirts as well as exhibition-inspired postcards, greeting cards, magnets and notebooks.

DINING

Food and wine offerings, inspired by the themes and history of Masterpieces from the Hermitage, include a 3-course market lunch at Persimmon restaurant and an indulgent menu at The Tea Room. Visit ngv.vic.gov.au for further details.

MULTIMEDIA GUIDE

This unique multimedia experience takes visitors on a journey through Catherine’s extraordinary life, exploring the highlights of her art collection and conveying the opulence and splendour of the Hermitage Museum.
Cost $8 Adult / $7 Conc

Diego VELÁZQUEZ
Spanish 1599–1660
Luncheon (c. 1617–18)
Oil on canvas
108.5 х 102.0 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. ГЭ-389)
Acquired 1763–74
It is a great honour for the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and Art Exhibitions Australia (AEA) to present *Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great* alongside the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

The NGV is delighted to once again work with AEA in presenting this latest exhibition in the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series, and we are indebted to Hermitage curator Mikhail Dedinkin for his discerning selection of works.

An exhibition of this richness would not have been possible without the continuing and generous support of our private, corporate and government sponsors. We would like to thank the Honourable Mr Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria; the Honourable Martin Foley MP, Minister for Creative Industries; and the Honourable John Eren MP, Minister for Tourism and Major Events; and the Victorian Government, through Victoria Major Events Company, for their ongoing support of the NGV and the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series.

We acknowledge Senator the Honourable George Brandis QC, Attorney General and Minister for the Arts, and the Australian Government through the Australian Government International Exhibitions Insurance (AGIE) program. We also thank His Excellency Vladimir Morozov, Russian Ambassador to Australia, and His Excellency Paul Myler, Ambassador to the Russian Federation.

In particular we would also like to thank Principal Sponsor Mazda Australia for their significant ongoing support of this series. This year we are once again pleased to acknowledge our Melbourne Winter Masterpieces Learning Partner, the University of Melbourne.

We would like to thank Tourism and Media Partners: Tourism Victoria, News Corp Australia through the Herald Sun and The Australian, Seven Network, Southern Cross Austereo, Accor Hotels through Sofitel Melbourne On Collins and Ibis Melbourne Hotel and Apartments, Adelphi, Sensis, Palace Cinemas and Melbourne Airport. We are also grateful for the support of Official Supplier Dulux Australia.

AEA and the NGV acknowledge our long and successful history as partners. We are particularly grateful to Mahrukh Tarapor, International Consultant for AEA, who was integral to the organisation of this project. *Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great* is an important event in the history of cultural exchange between Russia and Australia.

The State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg is one of the great cultural institutions of the world and this year celebrates its 250th anniversary year.

This exhibition gives Australian audiences a unique opportunity to see one of the most important collections of paintings, sculptures, drawings and decorative arts ever to tour. The specially assembled collection, spanning the thirty-four year reign of Catherine the Great, from the vast Hermitage catalogue reflects the ambition and grandeur of this Golden Age.

I am delighted that the Government through its International Exhibitions Insurance Program has enabled Art Exhibitions Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria to bring this highly valued collection to our shores.

I send my best wishes to everyone attending.

**The Honourable Daniel Andrews MP**
Premier of Victoria

The immense scope of Catherine’s interests and enthusiasms, from classical objects and engraved gems to masterpieces of modern and historical art and Chinese decorative arts, reflects wider intellectual currents of the European Enlightenment.

This collaboration between the Hermitage Museum, NGV and Art Exhibitions Australia brings great paintings, sculptures, drawings and decorative arts to Melbourne, and Australia, for the first time. *Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great* is a remarkable achievement and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to come to terms with this towering figure of world history and her magnificent art collection.

**The Honourable Tony Abbott MP**
Prime Minister of Australia

The Victorian Government is proud to support *Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great*, the most recent Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria.

Initiated in 2004, the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series brings outstanding works of art from the world’s greatest collections to Melbourne in the winter months for all to enjoy. Now in its eleventh year, the series has attracted more than 2.6 million visitors and generated significant cultural and economic benefits for Victoria. *Masterpieces from the Hermitage* is another major exhibition exclusive to Melbourne. It includes more than 500 high quality works of art collected by Catherine the Great, one of history’s most visionary cultural patrons, on loan from one of the world’s most visited and extensive collections, the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

**The Honourable Tony Ellwood**
Director, National Gallery of Victoria

**Carol Henry**
Chief Executive, Art Exhibitions Australia

**The Honourable George Brandis QC, Attorney General and Minister for the Arts, and the Australian Government International Exhibitions Insurance (AGIE) program.**

**Tony Ellwood**, Director, National Gallery of Victoria
**Carol Henry**, Chief Executive, Art Exhibitions Australia

**MESSAGES**
The staging of Melbourne Winter Masterpieces creates a buzz that transcends the art world. People flock to this annual exhibition knowing it offers a once in a generation opportunity to witness something extraordinary.

This was certainly the case with the Monet’s Garden and Italian Masterpieces from Spain’s Royal Court exhibitions. Both were a huge success proving Australians have an insatiable appetite for history’s greatest artworks.

This year, Mazda Australia, in conjunction with Art Exhibitions Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria, is proud to present Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great. Like we saw with the recent launch of the first-ever Mazda CX-3, the arrival of something new or something not seen before creates excitement; so we expect that these stunning pieces from the Hermitage, like our cars, will captivate and impress.

Supporting Melbourne’s Winter Masterpieces is Mazda’s way of giving back to the community that continually supports us; we certainly hope that everyone that visits this exquisite exhibition has an experience to remember.

Martin Benders
Managing Director, Mazda Australia

The University of Melbourne is pleased again to be the NGV’s learning partner for the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series. As a University community, we are proud of a wide-ranging expertise across art, culture, history and politics that makes such a partnership a natural fit. It is exciting to assist in bringing some of the Hermitage Museum’s finest pieces to Victoria, so that the people of and visitors to Melbourne can share in not just their presentation, but the history and background as well.

Professor Glyn Davis AC
Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne

As the largest television Network and one of the most recognised brands in Australia, the Seven Network has a proud history of broadcasting across all genres – news, public affairs, drama, comedy, sport and entertainment.

Our television programming reaches nine out of ten Australians every week and we are committed to being a major presence in Australian life – an involvement that extends outside of television that encompasses major events and community projects.

Seven’s partnership with Art Exhibitions Australia, who are renowned for bringing some of the most significant art exhibitions often involving prized foreign cultural assets to Australia, is at the forefront of Seven’s commitment to deliver informative, educational and entertaining content to Australians.

To sponsor the exhibition of one of the world’s greatest art collections, Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great, on show at the oldest and most visited gallery in Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, is a great honour and we look forward to working with AEA for many years to come.

Lewis Martin
Managing Director, Seven Melbourne