



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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Buddha's Smile

NGV International | 2 June – 8 October 2017 | Free Entry



From the tranquil smile of an enlightened icon to the widely recognisable laughing Buddha, nine iterations and cultural interpretations of Buddha from throughout Asia will be presented in *Buddha's Smile*, opening soon in the Asian Art temporary exhibitions gallery at NGV International. The exhibition will focus on that silent yet powerful act of transmission of Buddhist philosophy.

Spanning more than 1000 years, the exhibition presents Buddhist principles and Zen philosophy in a fresh context through a display of contemporary art and antiquities, including textiles, paintings, prints, devotional objects, sculptures and scripts from the NGV Collection. *Buddha's smile* also features new and never-before-seen acquisitions, as well as select works from private collections.

'*Buddha's Smile* offers a renewed perspective on the symbolic and diverse incarnations of Buddhist art throughout Asian history. This exhibition elucidates the various historical narratives of Buddhist philosophies in a contemporary presentation,' said Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV.

On entry to the exhibition, visitors are greeted by a large-scale contemporary photographic portrait of the Laughing

Buddha by Chinese-Australian artist Liu Xiaoxian. Paired with a Qing dynasty miniature porcelain figurine of Budai the Laughing Buddha, this dramatic contrast in scale and era presents the popular Chinese Buddhist deity of wealth, happiness and good fortune in a new light.

The exhibition will also explore the founder of Zen Buddhism and travelling monk Bodhidharma's much fabled story, through a grouping of contemporary Korean ceramics, historical Qing dynasty porcelain, historical Japanese scrolls, and a recent acquisition of prominent Japanese artist Takashi Murakami's print *Daruma the Great*.

Buddha's Smile will explore other Buddhist incarnations including Jizo Bosatsu, who, akin to a modern day saint, was a spiritual incarnation of Buddha who looked after the souls of departed children; Amida Buddha, famous in Japan as Buddha of Limitless Life who presided over a heavenly paradise; and Guanyin, known as the one who hears sounds, who remains a popular image of worship in Chinese Buddhist temples.

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Image Caption:

Japanese

Amida Buddha (Amida Nyorai) 12th century (detail 2)
lacquer, gold and pigment on Cypress (Hinoki), crystals
118.5 x 36.1 cm diameter (overall)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

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