

Gareth Sansom: Transformer

NGV Australia at Federation Square | 15 September 2017 – 28 January 2018 | FREE



Gareth Sansom: Transformer traces the career of one of Australia's most provocative artists. A pioneering figure of the Australian avant-garde for more than 60 years, the Melbourne-born artist is renowned for his luridly colourful and densely-layered paintings, collages and watercolours.

Drawing influence from Francis Bacon and British pop art, Sansom's works merge disparate visual references, imagery and his own mark-making, exploring the themes of popular culture, Australian vernacular, religion, sex and gender.

This is the largest survey of the artist's work to date, with more than 130 works spanning his entire career. Suites of works

on paper and photography complement more than 50 paintings, including many vital works from the past 15 years, and a number that have never been exhibited before.

Sexually-charged, satirical and philosophical, Sansom's daring canvases explore ideas of physical, psychological and material transformation, often beginning as one thing but swiftly morphing into another, as referential layers reveal themselves. Sansom is known to frequently situate self-portraits and photographs in his collages to provoke and challenge the audience's interpretation of the artwork.

'The National Gallery of Victoria has enjoyed a long association with Gareth Sansom, acquiring its first work of his in 1965. He is a thought-provoking artist who is constantly challenging himself to surprise his audience,' said Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV.

'This ambitious exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, is the most extensive ever undertaken by a major gallery and will surprise even those familiar with Sansom's ground-breaking artistic practice,' said Ellwood.

Born in Melbourne in 1939, Gareth Sansom studied art at RMIT between 1959 and 1964. Sansom held positions as Head of Painting, then Dean of the School of Art, at the Victorian College of the Arts between 1977 and 1991 before retiring to concentrate solely on his art practice.

Gareth Sansom: Transformer will be on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia from 15 September 2017 – 28 January 2018. Entry is free. Further information is available from the NGV website NGV.MELBOURNE.

The exhibition publication is extensively illustrated with essays by Pip Wallis, Curator, Contemporary Art, NGV, art critic Sebastian Smees and arts journalist Ashley Crawford and has been generously supported by Susan and John Wardle.



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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PROGRAMS

GARETH SANSOM IN CONVERSATION

Monday 18 September, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

A pre-eminent figure of the Australian avant-garde for over 60 years, Gareth Sansom merges pop culture references with intuitive and gestural mark-making. Hear the artist reflect on his career in conversation with art critic Sebastian Smee.

Speakers: Gareth Sansom, artist and Sebastian Smee, art critic

Cost: \$12 M / \$15 A / \$13.50 C

Venue: Exhibition space, NGV Australia

CURATOR'S PERSPECTIVES

Sunday 17 September, 11am

Speaker: Simon Maidment, Senior Curator, Contemporary Art

Cost: Free

Venue: Exhibition space, NGV Australia

Wednesday 25 October, 2pm

Speaker: Pip Wallis, Curator, Contemporary Art

Cost: Free

Venue: Exhibition space, NGV Australia

FILM SCREENING: PSYCHO

Sun 29 Oct, 2pm

(1960, M, 96 mins)

Gareth Sansom often takes breaks from working in his studio to watch films, with references found in his body of work. Alfred Hitchcock's iconic film *Psycho* had a profound effect on Sansom, with his painting *Bates Motel* referencing the movie.

Cost: Free, bookings recommended

Venue: Theatre, NGV Australia

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MEDIA CONTACTS

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Image Caption:

Gareth Sansom

Transformer 2016–17

oil, enamel paint, graphite pencil and vinyl record on canvas

183.0 x 244.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

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