



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

MEDIA CONTACTS: MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, NGV

MARION JOSEPH | 03 8620 2346 | 0427 147 999 | MARION.JOSEPH@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

MEG CARROLL | 03 8620 2347 | 0407 872 658 | MEG.CARROLL@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

Del Kathryn Barton: The Highway is a Disco

NGV Australia at Federation Square | 17 November 2017 – 12 March 2018 | FREE



Two-time Archibald prize-winner Del Kathryn Barton is being celebrated in the largest ever exhibition of her work to date at NGV Australia. *Del Kathryn Barton: The Highway is a Disco* will feature 150 new and recent works by Barton, including her famed kaleidoscopic portraits, a never-before-seen large-scale sculpture in homage to her mother and Barton's short film *RED*, starring Australian actress and Academy Award-winner Cate Blanchett.

'With a practice spanning art, fashion and film, Barton's psychedelic images reveal her personal responses to the human experience. She is one of Australia's most popular artists, renowned for her highly intricate and distinctive hybrid forms, that break down boundaries between humans and nature', said Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV.

This show is deeply personal for Barton with the debut of her new sculpture, *at the foot of your love*, which has been created in response to her mother's terminal illness. Completed in 2017 and comprised of printed silk and Huon pine, the sculpture is reflective of Barton's reoccurring themes of motherhood and nature. Featuring a wooden conch shell and an enormous silk 'handkerchief', the work is symbolic of Barton's grief for her own mother.

Comprised of five panels and over 10 metres in length, *sing blood-wings sing* is Barton's newest and largest painting to date. The painting features a female-focused reimagining of the 1963 Peter, Paul and Mary coming-of-age song, Puff the Magic Dragon. Barton often listens to the folk tune whilst working in her studio as a symbolic reminder to maintain her childlike curiosity through her artistic practice. Barton's interpretation of the song and its meaning is depicted by four breasted, rainbow coloured dragons. In her signature style, she blurs human, mythological and animal representations in art, encouraging her audience to see how imagination and desire can test traditional forms.

The exhibition will also feature Barton's acclaimed film *RED*, where Cate Blanchett plays a mother re-enacting the redback spider's deadly mating ritual, alongside actor Alex Russell, Sydney Dance Company's Charmene Yap and Barton's own daughter Arella. In *RED* Barton conveys the strength of women, the visceral power of female sexuality and encapsulates Barton's multiple interests in feminism, nature and the maternal figure.

Born in Sydney in 1972, Barton graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, in 1993. She won her first Archibald prize in 2008 for her self-portrait with her two children and then again in 2013 for her portrait of Australian actor Hugo Weaving.

Del Kathryn Barton: The Highway is a Disco is one of five solo exhibitions by leading Australian artists for NGV Australia's 2017-18 summer program. The exhibition will be on display at the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square, Melbourne from 17 November 2017 – 12 March 2018. Entry is free. Further information is available from NGV.MELBOURNE.

Deakin University is a proud Major Partner of *Del Kathryn Barton: The Highway is a Disco*.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Marion Joseph, Head of Media and Public Affairs, NGV

03 8620 2346 | 0427 147 999 | marion.joseph@ngv.vic.gov.au

Meg Carroll, Senior Coordinator, Media and Public Affairs, NGV

03 8620 2347 | 0407 872 658 | meg.carroll@ngv.vic.gov.au

Image Caption: Del Kathryn Barton, *of pink planets* 2014, Collection of Boris Tosic, Sydney, © Del Kathryn Barton