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Significant Others

A National Gallery Touring Exhibition



IMAGE
Printmaker Kenneth Tyler and artist Jasper Johns use scotch stones on the lithography stone for '*Blue*' from the '*Fragments—according to what*' series at Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, 1971
National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
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Pierre Bonnard *Twilight, or The croquet game* 1892. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Gift of Daniel Wildenstein through the Society of Friends of the Musée d'Orsay, 1985

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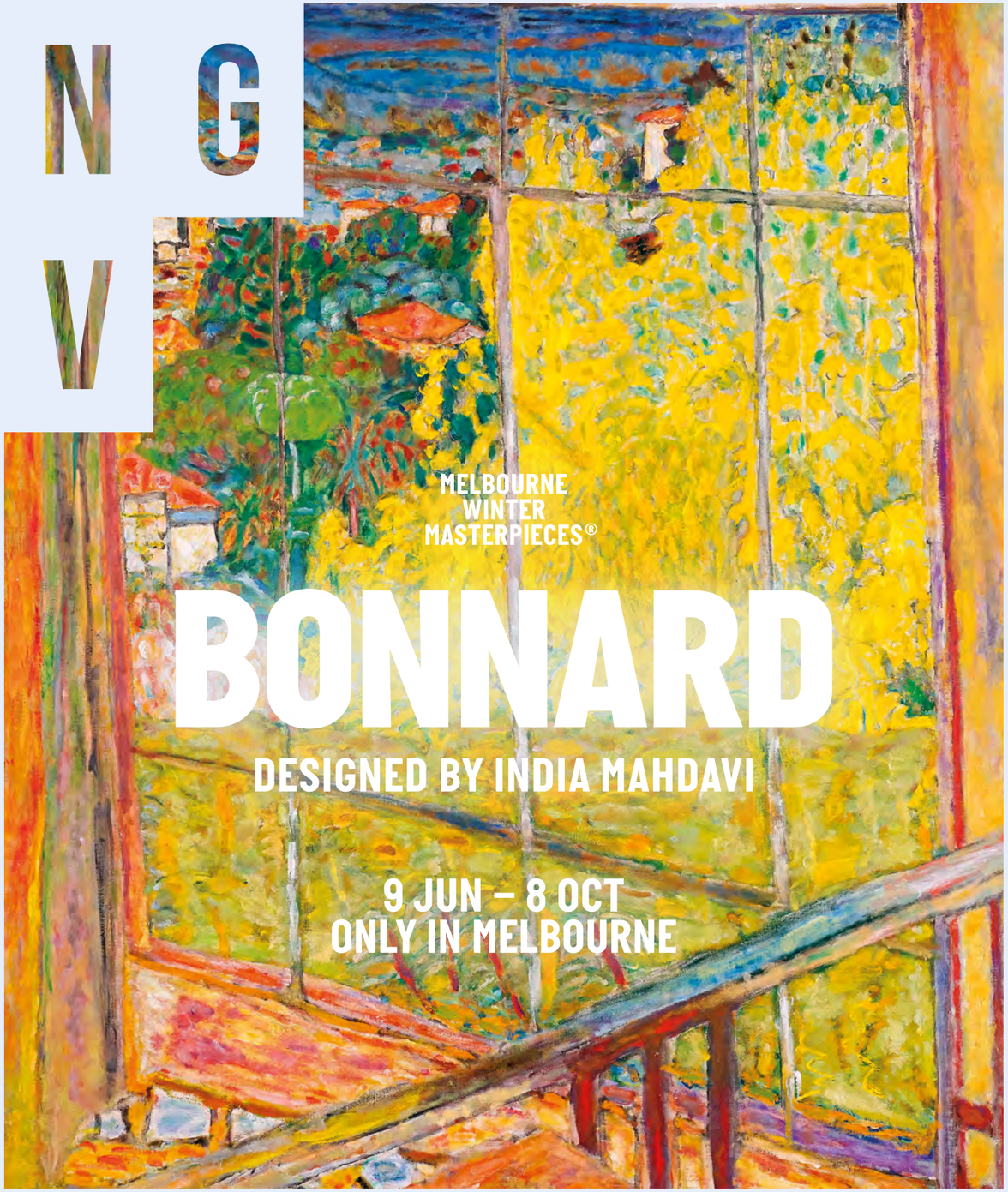
BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KEN WACH

Salvador Dalí *Mae West Lips Sofa* conceived in 1937–38, executed by Green & Abbott 1938. 2023 NGV Annual Appeal in memory of Robert J. Wylde, 2023 © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí. VEGAP/ Copyright Agency, 2023.

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Pierre Bonnard *The studio with mimosa* 1939–46 (detail). Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle. Purchased from Charles Terrasse, 1979 (AM 1978 732). Photo © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Bertrand Prévost.

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Jenna Lee and Kojima Shōten *Balarr* (*To become light*) 2022. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australia Artists, 2023 © KYOTO ART CENTER

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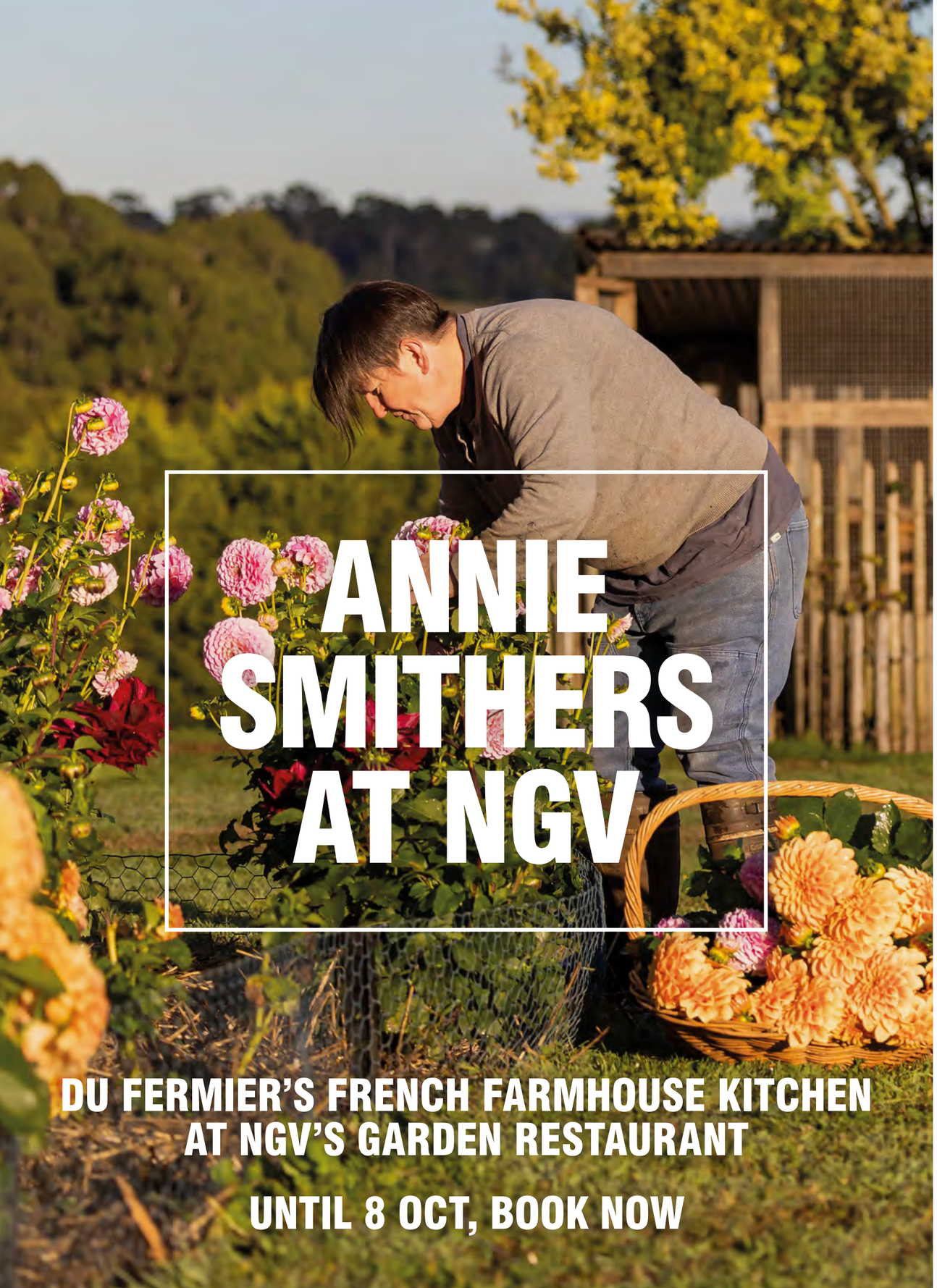
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Every effort has been made to obtain accurate information for this publication. The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the NGV. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain names of people who have passed away.

The National Gallery of Victoria acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the NGV is built.

Installation view of Pierre Bonnard's *The studio with mimosa* (*L'Atelier au mimosa*) 1939–46, (Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création Industrielle. Purchased from Charles Terrasse, 1979) and India Mahdavi's *Femme à la robe à pois blancs* 2023 (wallpaper design) on display in *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* at NGV International. Photo: Lillie Thompson



FROM THE NGV

Pierre Bonnard's contribution to modern art traverses rich terrain, from his early years in Paris, capturing everyday scenes to his engagement with the designed, decorative and domestic worlds. Throughout his career, Bonnard's work enabled introspection and connection to the world, as well as providing a radical new perspective on painting, which embraced decoration and joyful colour.

Colour would become a defining hallmark of Bonnard's work, and it is with pleasure that I introduce you to *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*, our Melbourne Winter Masterpieces 2023 exhibition that brings joyful light and colour to these winter days. In the previous edition of *NGV Magazine* we featured an interview with French architect and designer India Mahdavi, and in this edition we take a closer look at some of Pierre Bonnard's influences, from Japanese art, to his circle of friends and the rapidly changing socio-political landscape of the Paris and France of his lifetime. Especially for the exhibition, we also present Annie Smithers at NGV, an exclusive French farmhouse menu in the NGV Garden Restaurant inspired by Smithers's award-winning restaurant du Fermier. Read our interview with Smithers on page 50 before booking your table.

For their generous contributions to the exhibition, we thank co-exhibition organiser and Exhibition Partner the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Presenting Partner Visit Victoria, Premium Partner HSBC, and Major Partners EY, Telstra, Qantas, NET-A-PORTER, Sustainability Partner Acciona and Learning Partner, The University of Melbourne.

For the *Rembrandt: True to Life* exhibition, we also feature Dutch scholar Dr Bert van de Roemer on the exhibition's cabinet of curiosities and a preview of an upcoming *NGV Scholars Series* keynote presentation, *Recontexualising Rembrandt*, by preeminent curator and historian Dr Betsy Wieseman. Read more about Wieseman's research and book tickets on page 60. Thank you to major partner Macquarie Group, and generous lenders to the exhibition: the Rijksmuseum, the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Louvre Museum, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

Coinciding with *Rembrandt: True to Life* we are excited to further build the NGV collection of Rembrandt prints, as we work towards the acquisition of the important etching *Abraham Francen, Apothocary* c.1657. Read more about the Appeal in Making News on page 94 and we sincerely thank those who have made leadership gifts including Ken Harrison AM and Jill Harrison OAM, Barry Janes and Paul Cross and Neil Young KC.

Also further building the NGV Collection, the 2023 Annual Appeal centres on Salvador Dalí's iconic and rare *Mae West Lips Sofa* 1937–38. We would be grateful for your support for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we acknowledge leadership gifts from Mavourneen Cowen, the King Family Foundation, John and Jenny Fast and Ralph Ward-Ambler AM and Barbara Ward-Ambler.

Associate Professor Ken Wach from The University of Melbourne shares more on page 42.

We note the recent passing of two inspiring Australian art figures who have also contributed greatly to the NGV: John Olsen AO OBE and William Mora, and each leave a unique and wonderful legacy to Australian art and culture. We extend our heartfelt wishes to their families and friends.

I wish you a safe and happy winter season and look forward to welcoming you to the NGV soon.

Tony Ellwood AM
Director

In this issue of *NGV Magazine*, our coverage of the landmark free exhibition *Melbourne Now* comes to a close with an exploration of history, heritage and legacy through the words of three contemporary artists. On page 76, Bidjara/Chinese-Australian contemporary artist Dr Christian Thompson AO shares the story behind *Burdi Burdi* (*Fire Fire*), 2021 – a tender, personal case for the revitalisation of First Nations languages. Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and Karajarri Saltwater woman Jenna Lee speaks about her cross-cultural collaboration with Kojima Shōten that sees traditional Gulumerridjin dilly bags and Kyoto-style paper lanterns coalesce in a series of illuminated lanterns. Also for this issue, Dr Drew Pettifer sheds light on *Untitled (Roel)* and *Untitled (Bram)*, 2020, also displayed in the exhibition. I encourage you to see *Melbourne Now* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia before it closes on 20 August.

At NGV International, we celebrate the opening of a new display dedicated to British modernist artists. Read about artist Wyndham Lewis, Paul Nash and more on page 26 and see the works on Level 2.

New to the NGV Collection, we welcome an exquisite couture ensemble from the autumn–winter 1996–97 Chanel season, designed by Karl Lagerfeld. As fashion studies lecturer Dr Liliana Pomazan explains on page 90, *Evening jacket, jumpsuit, skirt*, 1996, were directly inspired by Coco Chanel's own cherished Coromandel screens in her Rue Cambon apartment in Paris. This incredibly detailed work joins the Collection through the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family. On page 88 Sunita Lewis shares the story behind three geographically and stylistically distinct saris that recently joined the NGV Collection through the generous support of Anindita Basu. All produced and purchased in India, these textiles form part of an intergenerational wedding trousseau passed down through the women in Basu's own family.

I am also pleased to announce this August will also see the return of the NGV *Observations* online seminar series. Following on from the successful *Women in Art and Design History* focus of the *Observations* series in 2022, this year *Observations* explores the history of design and decorative arts from the seventeenth through to the twentieth century – drawing from the NGV's leading collection and engaging the voices of global writers, scholars and commentators.

We hope you enjoy these stories and more in this issue of *NGV Magazine*, and discover the works on your next visit.

Donna McColm
Managing Editor, *NGV Magazine*
Assistant Director, Curatorial and Audience Engagement

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ngaratya Nici Cumpston, Zena Cumpston, David Doyle, Kent Morris, Adrianne Semmens and Raymond Zada *(together, us group, all in it together)*

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Nici Cumpston, Barkandji people, *Old Mutawintji Gorge I* (detail), from the series *mirrimpilyi, happy and contented* 2023, Adelaide, Kaurna Country. Courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Gallery.

ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together) is a Bunjil Place Gallery exhibition toured by NETS Victoria. Curated by Nici Cumpston and Zena Cumpston. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program, as well as receiving assistance from NETS Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund, supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.



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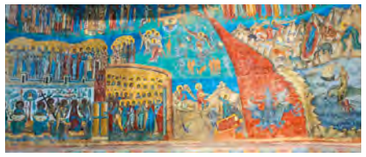
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BONNARD

DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI

Pierre Bonnard is one of the most beloved painters of the 20th century, celebrated for his use of colour to convey an exquisite sense of emotion. Until 8 October the blockbuster Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2023 presents the iridescent paintings of Bonnard within immersive scenography by Paris-based designer India Mahdavi. Here, *NGV Magazine* shares stories from the new exhibition.

PIERRE BONNARD と 日本 AND JAPAN

Nicknamed ‘Le Nabi très japonard’,[1] Pierre Bonnard was fascinated by the new possibilities for expression he found in Japanese art. His approach to colour, pattern and figures in motion owe much to *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, illustrated scrolls and folding screens. We take a journey through the NGV Collection to discover Bonnard’s influences.

BY CORAL GUAN

Pinned above a crowded sideboard is an assortment of postcards, nude studies and unassuming art prints. Water stains bloom across the cracked wall, partially covered by pictures of palm tree-encircled vistas in the south of France. A postcard of Seurat’s *Bathers at Asnières* jostles against a print of Picasso’s *Woman sitting in a chair*. Nearby hangs a tattered map of Cannes. Amid the deluge of visual excess is a single Japanese print of a bustling outdoor scene.[2] Bisected diagonally by a tree, the scene unfolds from an elevated viewpoint, figures in repose on a bench or disappearing under the eaves as they hurry about their daily lives. This collection of prints and postcards belonged to Pierre Bonnard, a French painter renowned for his gloriously effervescent approach to colour. Based in Paris in the last decade of the nineteenth century, he later adopted a more peripatetic lifestyle in the first half of the twentieth century, travelling between Vernon in Normandy and Le Cannet on the French Riviera.

Like many artists of his time, Bonnard was influenced by Japanese art and decoration, particularly engravings, hanging scrolls, illustrated books and folding screens. He collected, among other works, *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints by Katsushika Hokusai, Utagawa Hiroshige I, Utagawa Kunisada, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Utagawa Toyokuni I and Yoshimura.[3] Bonnard’s approach to colour, perspective, figures in motion, and the humorous characters in his early work, owe much to nineteenth-century Japanese prints. The 2023 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* presents a unique opportunity to closely examine the Japanese influences in the artist’s work. The NGV Collection is rich with examples of *ukiyo-e* prints and other works of Japanese art like those that shaped Bonnard’s creations.

In 1858, Japan opened to Europe. For more than 200 years the island nation had effectively been isolated from the rest of the world under the *sakoku* (national seclusion or ‘locked country’) policy of its Tokugawa shogunate rulers. Trade was limited to highly regulated exchanges with China, Korea and the Netherlands, and foreign books were banned. During this time known as the Edo period (1603–1867), the nation’s arts and literature flourished, with the country no longer as besieged by conflict as it had been in the preceding centuries of civil war. Across Japan, *ukiyo-e* (‘pictures of the floating world’) prints could be acquired for the price of a bowl of noodles.[4] Popular subjects for these prints included women and children, everyday life, kabuki actors, mythical tales of ghosts and warriors, landscapes and depictions of life in the pleasure districts (closely tied to the concept of the ‘floating world’).

From the mid nineteenth century, *ukiyo-e* prints, lacquered items, fans, folding screens and other Japanese decorative objects travelled great distances to Europe, influencing artists, including Vincent Van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Paul Gauguin, Mary Cassatt and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The realms of music and literature were not left untouched, with Claude Debussy and Rainer Maria Rilke finding inspiration in sublime Japanese depictions of the forces of nature. Although denigrated by European and American collectors for their decadence compared to the eighteenth century practitioners of *ukiyo-e*, the works of nineteenth century artists Hokusai, Kunisada, Kuniyoshi and Hiroshige enchanted European artists of the same period. Weary of Western illusionism and academic painting, these artists saw in Japanese art the possibility for a new form of expression, which captured the essence of life and things, beyond the observed world. From 1888 to 1891, Siegfried Bing published thirty-six issues of the periodical *Le Japon artistique*, to which Bonnard subscribed. In 1890, Bonnard saw an exhibition of more than a thousand Japanese woodblock prints, illustrated books and scrolls at the École des Beaux-Arts,[5] organised by Bing and amassed from private collections in Paris.[6] Bonnard had already been buying prints from Goupil Gallery and a shop on Avenue de l’Opera, and perhaps also Bing Gallery in Montmartre.[7] In a letter to his friend Gaston Diehl, Bonnard wrote:

> For just one or two *sous*, I found crépons and crumpled rice papers in astonishing colours. I covered the walls of my room with these naïve and gaudy pictures … It seemed to me then that it was possible to translate light, form, and character with nothing more than colour.[8]

Influenced by the steep aerial perspective of *ukiyo-e* prints, Bonnard often depicted street scenes from above in his early works, notably in *Paris, Rue de Parme on Bastille Day*, 1890 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.); *Paris boulevard at night*, 1900 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); *Street scene*, 1899 (Musée d’Orsay, Paris), and several lithographs from his *Some Scenes of Parisian life* portfolio, printed from 1895–98 (NGV, Melbourne). In these, and informed by his examination of elevated viewpoints

in medieval art,[9] Bonnard arranges compositional space in a diagonal and vertical manner, with techniques of extreme close-up and cropping borrowed from Japanese art. In stark departure from the classicising tenets of academicism, Bonnard used this extreme perspective to lend dynamism to his works, which at this point were concerned with movement and happenstance in everyday urban life. Currently on display in the Pauline Gandel Gallery of Japanese Art at NGV is Hokusai's *Mariko rest house*, 1835, an excellent example of aerial perspective that highlights a thatched roof and the unforgiving harshness of the elements, suggested by the travellers' straw hats seen prominently from above.

From Japanese art, Bonnard also absorbed the lessons of spatial flattening. For him this was a useful departure from the Western single-point perspective he had studied during his time at the Académie Julian in 1887 and later at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1889. Kunisada's illustrations for chapter 27: *Cressets (Kagaribi)* and chapter 21: *Maidens (Otome)* in his *Tale of Genji* series, c.1845, are sublime achievements in spatial flattening. In *Cressets (Kagaribi)*, the roof of the structure in the print has been removed entirely, offering a view into the scene of two figures inside, one playing a musical instrument while the other watches. From inside, our gaze carries us through an open door into the garden outside, where a figure kneels before a tree.

The blurring of inside and outside, for which Bonnard's later works are known, may very well have begun with his early experimentation with spatial flattening and multiple perspectives, perhaps influenced by prints such as these. Bonnard's 'compound landscapes', where domestic interior blends into landscape and still life,[10] unite multiple perspectives and include such paintings as *The dining room in the country*, 1913 (Minneapolis Institute of Art), and *White interior*, 1932 (Musée de Grenoble).

Returning to the resonance of format, however, art historian David E. Gliem notes that Bonnard's encounter with folding screens in particular sent reverberations through his art. The artist attempted to create nine screens between 1889 and 1919, and the four-panel format may have formed the basis of many multi-panel paintings.[11] The vertical format of *kakemono* (hanging scrolls) and folding screens indelibly impacted the way Bonnard constructed space. The diagrammatic separation of a painting into four vertical, rectangular panels reveals much about the way Bonnard viewed the surface of the canvas and its relationship to the three-dimensional world before him. To him, a screen's ability to fold sections of a scene towards and away from each other may have offered new possibilities to approach temporality and spatiality in painting. The NGV's screen *Nannies promenade, frieze of carriages*, 1895, is included in the exhibition, alongside Bonnard's two studies for fans – another enduring absorption of Japanese decorative influence. In another example of spatial experimentation, a dividing screen is a central feature in the painting *Man and woman*, 1900 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).



With exposure to Japanese art came a new way of human figuration for European artists. Bonnard and his friends studied Hokusai's *Manga* with great fervour.[12] The fifteen volumes, examples of all of which are held in the NGV Collection, contain thousands of studies of human and animal figures engaged in movement and everyday life, as well drawings of patterns and arabesques. From these, Bonnard also absorbed lessons on silhouetting – the simplification of human figures into their most basic contours. Again, we see strong examples in his early work, a particularly lovely example being his women holding parasols. These women appear in several of Bonnard's early works, including *Square at evening* from the *Some scenes of Parisian life* portfolio and *Woman with an umbrella*, 1895 (Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane). Swiss art historian Ursula Perucchi-Petri notes that Bonnard's idiosyncratic figures seem to draw on Kunisada and Kuniyoshi's women, whose upper and lower bodies face in different directions with a bend of the knee and hip.[13]

Finally, Bonnard's celebrated predilection for pattern found kinship in Japanese prints. From the NGV Collection, Hiroshige's *bijin* (beautiful woman) print *Hibiscus – Flowers of the four seasons*, undated, shrouds a woman in a striking blue pattern, flattened such that the pattern neither recedes nor advances towards the viewer, but remains suspended on the picture plane. In *Twilight*, 1892 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), consider the way Bonnard has created suits and dresses out of pure flat pattern in a similar manner to Hiroshige. In this painting, Bonnard's father, sister, and brother-in-law – and possibly Bonnard's cousin – play croquet in a verdant garden, while smaller figures frolic further in the background.

Echoing his friend Maurice Denis, Bonnard described paintings as 'a series of blotches which are joined together and finally form the object, the finished piece, over which the eye may wander completely unhindered'.[14] From perspective and subject matter, to exaggerated colour and pattern, Japanese art offered Bonnard new ways to bring together his so-called painter's blotches, resulting in a diaphanous world of movement, colour and the essence of things beyond the observable world.

SEE *PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI* ON GROUND LEVEL, NGV INTERNATIONAL, UNTIL 8 OCTOBER. NGV MEMBERS ENJOY DISCOUNTED ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION AND NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS RECEIVE UNLIMITED COMPLIMENTARY ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION.

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(pp. 16–7) **Pierre Bonnard** *The dining room in the country* 1913 (detail). Minneapolis Institute of Art. The John R. Van Derlip Fund

(p. 20) **Pierre Bonnard** *Twilight, or The croquet game* 1892. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Gift of Daniel Wildenstein through the Society of Friends of the Musée d'Orsay, 1985

(above) **Utagawa Hiroshige** *Hibiscus – Flowers of the four seasons*. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1910



Salute to the flâneur

Rather than painting from a window looking down over the street, as Camille Pissarro had done in Paris and Rouen since the mid 1890s, Pierre Bonnard – an inveterate early-morning walker – was the quintessential Parisian *flâneur*, a connoisseur of the boulevard and active participant in the bustle of the modern metropolis, as Dr Ted Gott explains.

BY DR TED GOTT

The poet Charles Baudelaire wrote in his treatise *The Painter of Modern Life* in 1863 that modernity is 'the ephemeral, the transient, the contingent'. The best way to experience this modernity was to be what the French term a *flâneur*, a stroller, ambling around a city's streets and taking in its sights, sounds and smells at leisure, with the intention and pleasure of doing nothing other than precisely that. For the *flâneur*, Baudelaire wrote, 'the crowd is his element ... For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite'.

Pierre Bonnard was born in Fontenay-aux-Roses in the south-western suburbs of Paris in 1867. His father was an office manager in the Ministry of War and the Bonnard family were comfortably well-off. In 1888, having obtained a law degree and while beginning to follow his true passion, art, Bonnard moved in with his grandmother at 8 rue de Parme in the ninth arrondissement, one block from the bustling hub of the Place de Clichy and a short walk from the action and excitement of Montmartre. For the next decade, Bonnard was to become a dedicated *flâneur* himself, taking delight in immersing himself in the sights, sounds and smells of urban Paris, capturing the rhythm and tumult of the city's street life. During these years he was to change his domicile and studio premises several times, but always stayed within a stone's throw of the vibrant and somewhat louche Place de Clichy (also known as Place Clichy).

Bonnard's daily walks around Montmartre brought him into close contact with a plethora of models and subjects for his art. Nothing escaped his sharp eyes in the small works of urban narrative that he now painted, in which the city of Paris itself becomes a living character against which the action is set. At once *flâneur*, voyeur and documenter, Bonnard makes Parisian street life his own, creating vivid and immersive images of it of a type never seen before, the swiftness of his technique capturing the relentless change of the scene observed. *Place Clichy* c. 1894 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) encapsulates the impact of a never-ending procession of characters moving past the artist's gaze; while *Soldier and blonde woman*, 1892 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) zeroes in on a single detail, a nocturnal encounter between a military man and a flirtatious coquette with a lively eye and an eye-catchingly upturned nose.

In 1896 Bonnard held a solo exhibition at Durand-Ruel, the dealer gallery that had championed the work of the Impressionists. Included were dozens of his small paintings, as well as lithographs and works of decorative art. The audaciousness of these paintings was not immediately appreciated by the Impressionist artists of the previous generation, Camille Pissarro calling them 'hideous' and 'a complete fiasco', and claiming, in a letter to his son Lucien, that Degas, Renoir and Monet felt the same way. Bonnard was later to develop into a great colour master, but Pissarro was perhaps understandably perplexed by the dark little works he was painting in his *flâneur* years. Yet what an intensity of observation, what an articulation of atmosphere and sound there is in Bonnard's depictions of night life in Montmartre, whether it be the smoky interior of a cabaret in *The banjo player*, 1895 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), or his recording of street performers entertaining the crowds in *Strolling singers*, 1897 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

Writing in the journal *La Revue blanche* in 1896, Bonnard's friend and patron Thadée Natanson praised the artist's 'quiet melodies or vibrant rhythms, [which] all come from the same gift, whether singing by themselves or uniting in a lush symphony'; and he congratulated Bonnard on having moved up a notch in the world in obtaining this showing in the lucrative bastion of the Impressionists:



> Bonnard is now showing, I can say, alongside his elders and his masters in the gallery which saw their own beginnings and their triumph. He presents here the result of his first efforts at a time when the Impressionists are gloriously entering the past ... At least Mr. Durand-Ruel will have the satisfaction of having introduced a new artist, of having opened his doors to the *new*.[2]

Bonnard's Durand-Ruel exhibition also caught the eye of the art critic for *Le Journal*, Gustave Geffroy, who informed readers that

> You have before you an artist who knows how to extract particular meaning from every sight, be it unexpected or familiar. No one can more accurately note the appearance of the street, the silhouettes passing by, spots of colour seen through the fine Parisian haze ... A curious drawing in motion, of simian flexibility, captures the fleeting gestures of the street, quick expressions that come to life and then vanish within a moment.[3]

In 1896 the critic André Mellerio wrote in his *Le Mouvement idéaliste en peinture* (*The Idealist Movement in Painting*) of how Bonnard so often magically found 'the unexpected on a street corner, the raised gesture of a Parisian woman crossing the street, the thousand frivolous details of her appearance', creating 'spectacles of fleeting grace, which must be grasped, so to speak, on the fly'. Look at the marvellous silhouette of an elegant woman caught forever, like an insect trapped in amber, in a frozen moment in Bonnard's *The cab horse*, c. 1895 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). It is no surprise, perhaps, that Bonnard was a friend of the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière, who pioneered cinema in France, showing the first motion pictures in Paris in December 1895.

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SCAN TO WATCH THE RECORDED BROADCAST FROM THE OPENING WEEKEND TALKS.



(p. 22) **Pierre Bonnard** *Paris, Rue de Parme on Bastille Day* 1890. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

(p. 24) **Pierre Bonnard** *The cab horse* c. 1895. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection

Pierre Bonnard *Paris boulevard at night* 1900. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of John T. Spaulding

ALSO ON DISPLAY

Make way for the Modernists

The early twentieth century was a time of profound transformation in British art, as artists grappled with the devastating effects of the First World War and the profound changes it wrought on the social, cultural and economic make-up of society. Modernism emerged, in part, as a response to these war-torn and turbulent decades. Works from the NGV's collection of British modernism recently went on display at NGV International. Dr Maria Quirk shares some of the stories behind the new display.

BY DR MARIA QUIRK

Departing from traditional modes of representation, modernist artists embraced experimentation with form, technique and subject as a way to make sense of and process the changing world around them. Progressive, experimental and frequently uncompromising, the work of many modernist artists was often misunderstood during their lifetimes. With hindsight the many disruptive and unsettling strategies used by modernists artists can be more clearly appreciated as means of forcing new modes of thought and feeling in step with a changing world.

British artist Paul Nash worked as an official war artist from 1917 to 1918, motivated by his own experience as a soldier on the Western Front. Although the purpose of the work he produced was ostensibly propaganda, Nash's real





(pp. 26–7) **Merlyn Evans** *The jail* 1950. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1953 © The estate of the artist

(above) **William Roberts** *Playground* c. 1934. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1956 © Estate of William Roberts. By permission of the William Roberts Society

(p. 29) **Dod Procter** *In a strange land* 1919. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Mrs E. M. Gerard Shaw, 1946 © the Artist's Estate. All Rights Reserved / Bridgeman Images

intention was to depict the dissolution and destruction caused by war. He wrote in November 1917, 'I am a messenger who will bring back word from the men who are fighting to those who want the war to go on for ever. Feeble, inarticulate will be my message, but it will have a bitter truth, and may it burn their lousy souls'.[1] His use of distorted perspective and dreamlike imagery imbued his barren, war-torn landscapes with a sense of psychological dead. The war also had a profound impact on Nash's later practice. He became increasingly interested in abstraction and symbolism, exploring themes of memory, loss and the fragility of human existence, characterised in works, such as the NGV's *Landscape of the summer solstice*, 1943 acquired by the Felton Bequest.

Inferno, 1937, currently on display in the twentieth century galleries at NGV International, also acquired by the Felton Bequest, belongs to a group of melancholic paintings undertaken by Wyndham Lewis in the 1930s, in which he was reflecting on the seemingly inevitable cycle of war in Europe. Lewis was the founder of the 1914 Vorticist movement, an avant-garde style inspired by Cubism. Serving in the Royal Garrison Artillery during the First World War and acting as an official war artist for both Canada and Britain, changed Lewis's relationship with the movement he pioneered. Although still markedly modernist, his wartime paintings are marked by a greater sense of narrative and stylised figuration, merging modernism with the tradition of history painting.

Violence and war were the enduring subjects of Lewis's work throughout the 1920s and 1930s. His paintings evoked a sense of foreboding that anticipated the conflicts of the 1940s. During this time, Lewis was also reading and examining classical and Christian literary concepts of life after death. *Inferno* is a vision of impending doom. Lewis renders men and women as generalised, doll-like figures with round-shaped heads and, with only one exception, their forms are indistinguishable. Thoughts of mortality were perhaps frequently on Lewis's mind in the 1930s, when he underwent four operations for serious and debilitating health problems.

Dod Proctor's *In a strange land*, 1919, gifted by Mrs E. M. Gerard Shaw, is a different evocation of the condition of postwar Britain. Trained in Paris, Proctor developed a unique approach to modern painting influenced by classical imagery and composition. From the late 1910s she produced a series of monumental, enigmatic portraits of young women. Although modelled after Proctor's real friends and relatives, these works are closer to metaphorical studies of mood and emotion than portraits of individual people. The central figure depicted *In a strange land* has Proctor's signature sculptural quality – and is what the *Sunday Times* referred to in 1927 as a 'monumental plasticity of form'.[2] The work is at once vividly immediate in its use of vibrant colour and tantalisingly ambiguous. It evokes a sense of unease, sadness and emptiness that reflected the state of Britain at the close of the 1910s – a country suspended in time between the close of one cataclysm and the start of another.

DR MARIA QUIRK IS NGV CURATOR, COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH.

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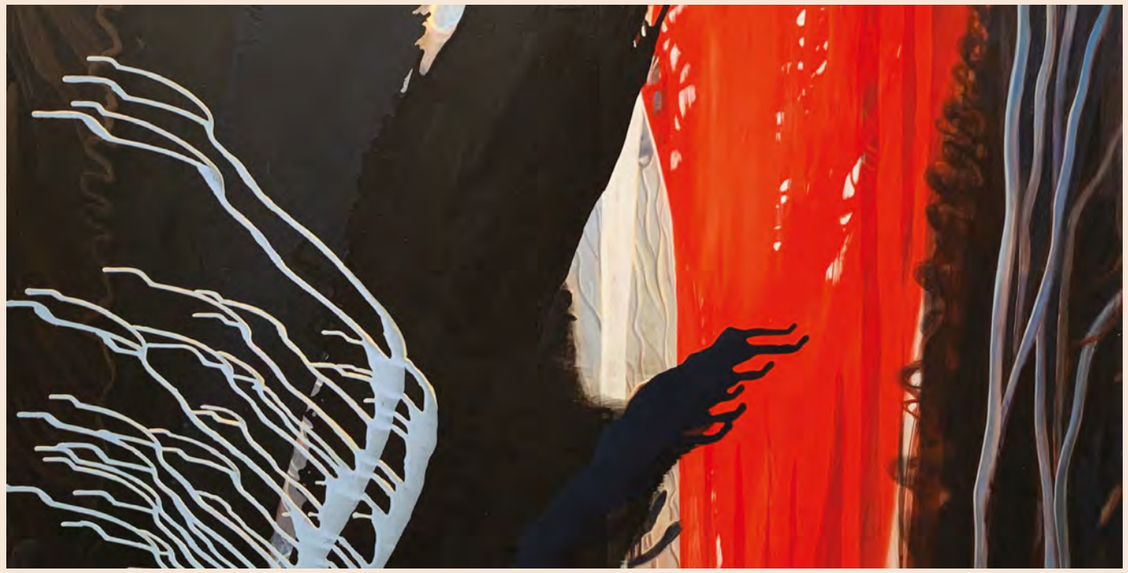
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DEEP READ

Embracing Uncertainty in Fin-de-siècle France

While studying at the Académie Julian in Paris in the late 1880s, Pierre Bonnard joined a group of young men who called themselves 'Les Nabis'. Together, the Nabi artists sought to produce art with a universal resonance. In seminal retellings of modernism, the group has often been minimised and misunderstood. NGV Curator Meg Slater explores how these young artists, particularly Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard and Félix Vallotton, defied artistic convention, and in doing so, made vital contributions to the development of modernism.

BY MEG SLATER

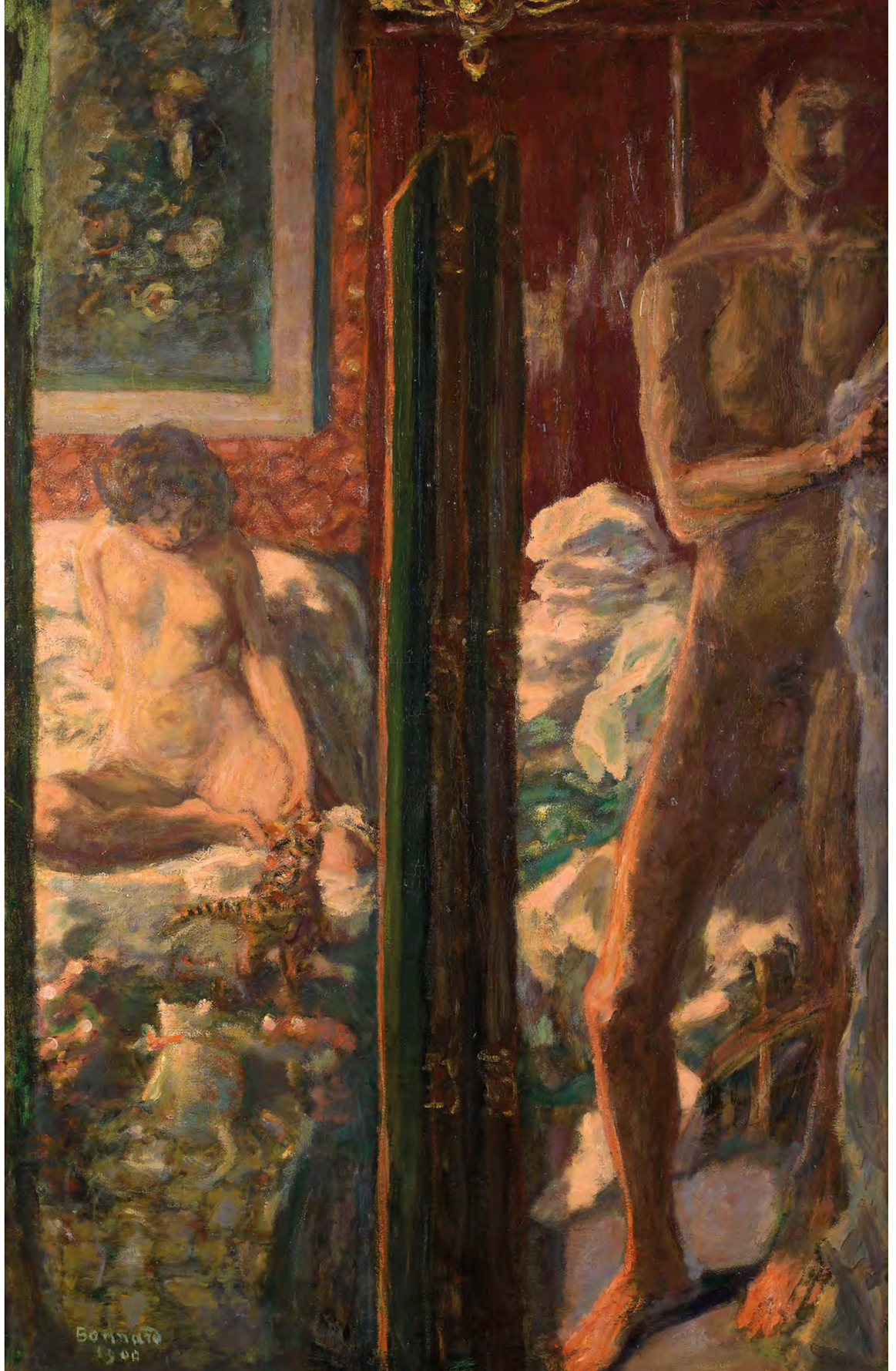
France in the 1890s was characterised by significant sociopolitical upheaval and transformation. Major cultural developments, from the emergence of the 'New Woman' to the divisive Dreyfus Affair of 1894, marked the beginning of an anxious, unsettled era. This widespread instability also opened the floodgates for possibility and change. The period witnessed the development of several radical artistic movements, including 'Les Nabis'.

In 1897, a group of young men joined forces in pursuit of creating art with a universal resonance. While the group's membership fluctuated, its central members remained the same: Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Félix Vallotton, Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis. Drawing inspiration from *navi*, the Hebrew word for prophet, the Nabi artists considered themselves the prophets of a new design-based art that would encompass every sphere of modern life. They sought to create art for every context – interior design, furniture, fans and textiles, stained glass, and commercial illustration and advertising. Much of their art was highly decorative, rendering domestic and modern subjects using flat colours, fluid forms and intricate linework.

Despite their grand plans and broad output, the Nabis were placed at the margins of modernism for much of the twentieth century. Prominent art historians overlooked their intellectual rigour and artistic ambition, reducing their diverse and complex artistic production to decorative depictions of domesticity for 'easy' viewing.[1] This art historical forgetting of the Nabis was in part due to their embrace of subjects, techniques and materials that were at odds with artistic convention. In the hopes of adding to the growing chorus of voices[2] advocating for their vital contribution to the development of modernism, this essay considers examples of how the Nabis resisted tradition and embraced uncertainty in fin-de-siècle France.

Fin-de-siècle France

It is important to acknowledge the extremely productive period in art history of which the Nabi artists were a part. Fin-de-siècle France was a time of great turbulence and transformation. Amid rapid industrialisation and social-political unrest, gender roles were





blurred and reimagined as never before. Major developments in art, politics, science and society undermined the conventional gender binary, from the widespread circulation of Charles Darwin's theories on evolution to the gains of the emergent women's movement. Feelings of anxiety and crisis were pervasive. However, with this collective unease came 'a vertigo of possibilities'[3]. There was a growing appetite to experiment and explore new creative realms. This desire was realised in the many creative movements that reached their peak in the 1890s, including Symbolism, Art Nouveau, and the art of the Nabis.

It is with this context in mind that the 'easy' works of the Nabis are complicated, and their radical nature is revealed. These young artists, particularly Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton, embraced highly unconventional subject matter and modes of production in pursuit of a universal art, thereby rejecting artistic tradition and pushing modernism forward.

Decorative and domestic

> *The following binaries have structured seminal accounts of modernism: pictorial/decorative, active/passive, masculine/feminine, public/private, heroism/housework.*[4]

The designation of the home as a 'female' space structured gender roles in nineteenth-century France. The division between private and public space was representative of the differences between 'masculine' and 'feminine' modes of behaviour.[5] Implicit in these categorisations is that domestic spaces, traditionally associated with the cultivation of family and the performance of homely duties, were well-suited to the so-called lesser mental and physical capabilities of women. This is reflected in the writings of August Strindberg, particularly his text, *On the inferiority of women*, published in *La Revue blanche* in 1895, in which he mounts the pseudo-scientific argument that women are weak based on their physical inferiority, and therefore incapable and undeserving of achieving equal social standing to men.[6] Strindberg's argument represents one side of broader debates around women's equality that began to arise at the close of the century, and exposes the 'anxious misogyny'[7] that the rise of the women's movement caused in the fin-de-siècle.

From the group's outset, the Nabi artists were interested in domestic spaces and subjects. They firmly believed that true knowledge and meaning in art could only be achieved through introspection, which led them to ground much of their practice in private, enclosed spaces. Paired with this ambition was the Nabis' aesthetic aim to produce decorative, symbolic works, rather than imitating the world around them. These aims are reflected in such works as Bonnard's *Twilight, or The croquet game*, 1892, (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) and Vallotton's *The ball*, 1899 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Combining flat areas of colour, careful linework and domestic subjects, each painting is highly stylised, without, to borrow the words of critic André Mellerio, 'any hint of imitation'.[8]

The modern domestic space of the apartment features often in depictions of interiors by the Nabi artists, particularly Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton. It was an important site of connection and collaboration for these artists. Vuillard was particularly fond of producing intimate interior studies, including his 1899 canvas *Family lunch* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). A highly decorative floral wallpaper encircles a family sharing a meal around the dining table. The intimacy of this kind of everyday exchange between family and friends was often enhanced by the addition of a central light source. Bonnard's *Under the lamp*, 1899 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) and Vallaton's *Dinner by lamplight*, 1899 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) each show family and friends seated at a table, united by the lamplight.

Beyond their depictions of domestic spaces, the Nabis often made works for the homes of private patrons. These commissions were significant for the young artists, as they helped to establish their critical and financial success. Bonnard's luminous 1912 painting, *La Place Clichy* (Centre Pompidou, Paris), which records the bustling commuters from the vantage point of a brasserie, was commissioned by art critic George Besson, to decorate his apartment on the Quai de Grenelle, not far from the Eiffel Tower. Bonnard and his fellow Nabis also received commissions from brothers Alexandre and Thadée Natanson, prominent collectors who founded the literary and art journal *La Revue blanche*. Vuillard's monumental nine-panel *Public gardens* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) was painted in 1894 for Alexandre's mansion in the Avenue du Bois.

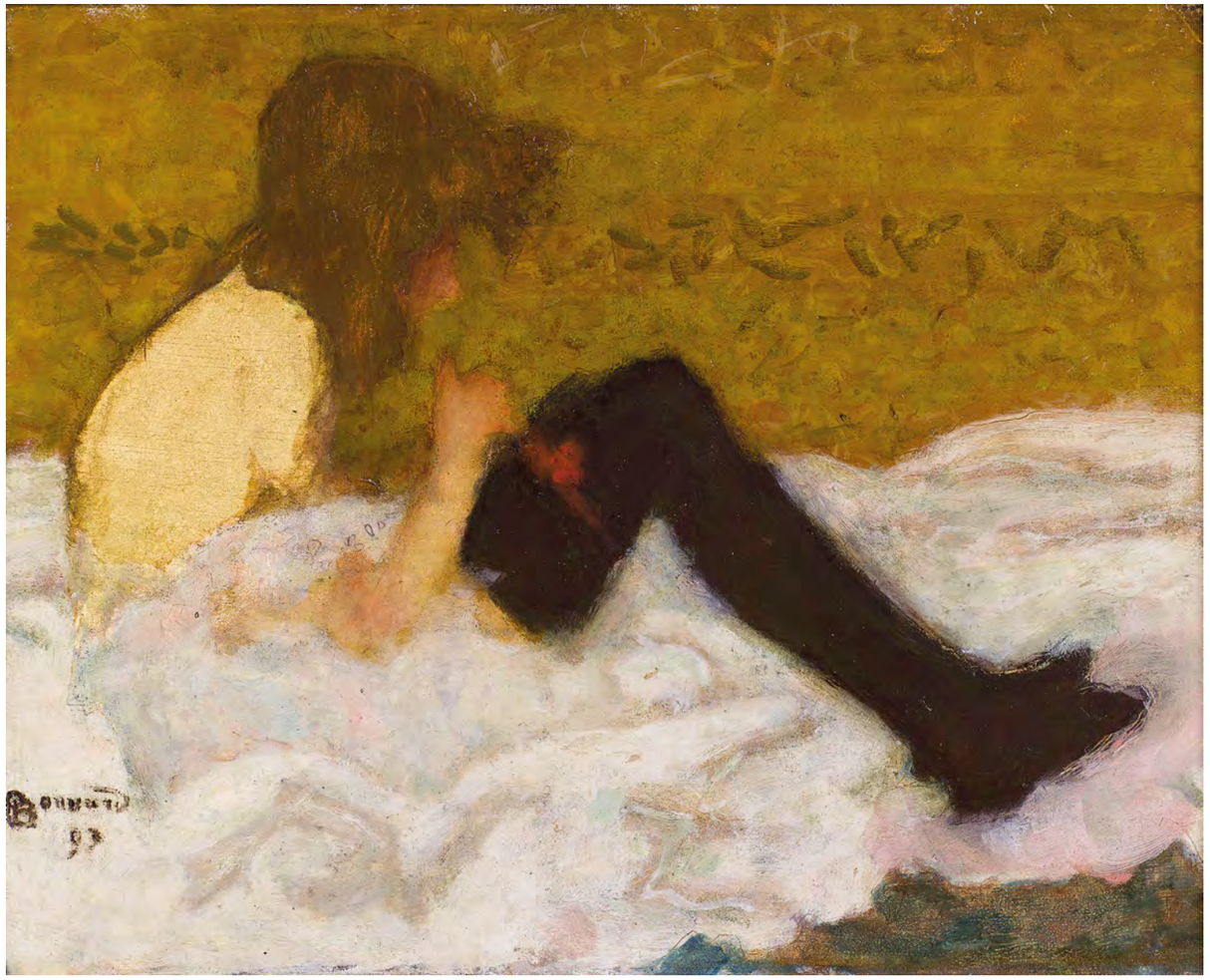
In recent decades, the importance of the Nabis' engagement with domestic spaces has been recognised by several prominent feminist art historians, including Sharon Marcus and Debora Silverman. Marcus describes the apartment as an intimate realm in which the traditional binaries of city versus home, public versus private, and masculine behaviour versus feminine behaviour were increasingly obscured in fin-de-siècle France.[9] Silverman argues that this blurring of boundaries caused great panic and confusion among conservative public figures, who sought to reinforce the divide between public and private space and re-entrench the notion that the domestic interior was strictly the province of women.[10]

By extending the function of an artwork beyond its traditional function, the Nabis defied artistic convention. Instead of adhering to the principles they had been taught at art school – namely, to create imitations of nature for display in a public context – they championed art for every context, including the home. Transgressing gender and spatial conventions, they captured the broader social and cultural changes taking shape in fin-de-siècle France.

Changing approaches to gender

> *It is important to keep in mind that masculinity is no more natural, transparent, and unproblematic than 'femininity'. It too is a socially constructed role, defined within particular cultural and historical circumstances, and the fin-de-siècle also marked a crisis of identity for men.*[11]

In fin-de-siècle France, gender roles were blurred as never before. The formerly fixed constructs of masculinity and femininity became fluid, and traditional notions of womanhood were turned on their head. The reasons for this crisis of identity are many and range from rapid automation to the rise of the radical left. A reason closely linked to the Nabi artists is the emergence of the 'New Women', a group of urban, independent, primarily middle-class French women who were uninterested in marriage, children and other traditionally 'feminine' duties. The 'New Woman' represented a significant



‘In fin-de-siècle France, gender roles were blurred as never before. The formerly fixed constructs of masculinity and femininity became fluid, and traditional notions of womanhood were turned on their head.’

——— MEG SLATER



(p. 35) **Pierre Bonnard** *Man and woman* 1900. Musée d’Orsay, Paris. Acquired, 1948

(pp. 36–7) **Édouard Vuillard** *Family lunch* 1899. Musée d’Orsay, Paris. Bequest of Mme Lucie Grandjean-Hessel, 2016

(p. 38) **Pierre Bonnard** *Young girl with black stockings* 1893. Musée d’Orsay, Paris. Gift of Zeïneb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011

(p. 39) **Édouard Vuillard** *Conversation at the Natansons’ at Valvins* 1896. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

threat to the established, patriarchal order, and became the object of intense public scrutiny. Her independence contributed to the broader realisation that gender identity is not fixed.

The gender anxiety that plagued Paris during this period is present in the work of the Nabi artists. However, the group was not united in its views on women and gender. The opposing social and political views of different members meant that the Nabis varied greatly in their representation of women. Maurice Denis and Paul Sérusier maintained a simplified view of femininity, casting the women in their paintings as either mythological figures removed from modern society and the threat of the 'New Woman', or as mothers, wives and homemakers. At the other end of the spectrum, depictions of women by Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton tapped into the shifting and emergent liberal views on gender and sexuality in fin-de-siècle France. This is reflected in their representation of their respective muses, and themselves, in their work.

The concept of the 'muse' has developed over time, often in response to changes in social and cultural context. Like the 'nude', the 'muse' has historically been assumed to be a position occupied by a woman. What academic Karen Stock describes as the 'passive beauty' and 'ready submission to the will of the artist' are characteristics of the 'muse' that have persisted across centuries.[12] However, by the nineteenth century and amid the emergent women's movement, the characteristics expected of the 'muse' became increasingly unattainable. 'The once willing muse had now become self-willing and, they feared, selfwilled', literary scholars Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert explain.[13] The professional ambition and independence of the 'New Woman' found anxious expression in the 'modern muse'.

Depictions of the muses of Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton reflect what Stock describes as 'the crisis of the wilful muse'.[14] For example, Bonnard's early depictions of his life partner Marthe de Méligny eschew conventional depictions



Installation view of *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* at NGV International. Photo: Lillie Thompson

of the muse. Bonnard almost always painted de Méligny from memory, so she never appeared passive or posed. Instead, she was often caught in transition, moving from one place to another. This is demonstrated in one of Bonnard's earliest nude depictions of de Méligny, *Girl with black stockings,* 1893 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) in which she is pulling on her stockings amid a mess of bed sheets. Rather than focusing her attention on the 'master' painter, de Méligny is seemingly unaware of Bonnard's presence. Her head is bowed, obscured by her hair and the artist's rough, dappled brushwork.

Beyond the women who appear in their art, Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton are united in their creation of self-portraits and other depictions of the self that reflect the broader questioning of masculinity that arose at the turn of the century. An important example to consider here is Bonnard's 1900 painting, *Man and woman* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Unique to this erotic scene is the artist's physical presence: Bonnard stands naked and in shadow, facing the viewer, while de Méligny casually reclines on the nearby bed playing with two cats. *Man and woman* defies the historical artistic genre of the nude in several ways. First, de Méligny is not posed or presented as a passive, beautiful object. Second, Bonnard has included himself in the scene. Instead of producing a work for the eyes and pleasure of men, he has exposed and objectified himself, confusing the painting's intended audience.

Bonnard's ambivalent presence in *Man and woman* highlights another way in which the Nabis became implicated in the gender crisis of fin-de-siècle France. Much like the 'New Woman', artists were considered a threat to traditional gender roles within society. Theorist Elaine Showalter has explained that by the 1890s, 'the system of patriarchy was under attack not only by women, but also by an avant-garde of male artists [...] who challenged its class structures and roles, its system of inheritance and primogeniture, compulsory heterosexuality and marriage, and its cultural authority'.[15] In *Man and woman*, Bonnard inserts himself into what had previously been designated a 'female' space. Adding fuel to the fire, he has not represented himself as a heroic, masculine figure. Instead, Bonnard's shadowy appearance is tentative and vulnerable. The ambiguity in this early portrait is similarly recorded in self-portraits by Vuillard from this period, including his intimate and pensive *Self portrait with a bamboo mirror*, c. 1890 (Private collection).

The works of the Nabi artists, most notably those of Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton, did not shy away from the mounting identity crisis in fin-de-siècle France. Their complex depictions of women and themselves reflect the broader questioning of gender roles at the turn of the century. While several members of the group avoided the reality of the 'New Woman', the modern muse and the precariousness of masculinity, Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton seemed to lean into the uncertainty of these modern ideas and developments.

> 'Like the 'nude', the 'muse' has historically been assumed to be a position occupied by a woman.'
>
> MEG SLATER

The shared goal of creating art with a universal resonance was not strong enough to keep the Nabis together. A combination of differing artistic goals and divergent sociopolitical views resulted in the group's dissolution in 1900. Even as a collective, the Nabis never shared a single style or ideology. In fact, one of the group's defining features was its heterogeneity. The difficulty in easily pinning down the Nabis, paired with their embrace of unconventional ideas and methods of production resulted in their contribution to modernism being overlooked for much of the twentieth century. This exploration of the Nabis' engagement with unconventional subjects, ranging from the decorative and domestic to gender slippage and the modern muse, has sought to highlight some of their crucial contributions to the development of modernism.

SEE *PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI* ON GROUND LEVEL, NGV INTERNATIONAL, UNTIL 8 OCTOBER. NGV MEMBERS ENJOY DISCOUNTED ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION AND NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS RECEIVE UNLIMITED COMPLIMENTARY ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION.

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MEG SLATER IS NGV CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION PROJECTS.

‘A chair may serve many uses, though not necessarily that of sitting down.’

—Salvador Dalí



ANNUAL APPEAL 2023

Through the 2023 NGV Annual Appeal and with the help of the community, the NGV seeks to acquire the last of Dalí’s five iconic sculptures, *Mae West Lips Sofa*, manufactured in 1937–38. The NGV warmly acknowledges leadership gifts from Mavourneen Cowen, the King Family Foundation, John and Jenny Fast and Ralph Ward-Ambler AM and Barbara Ward-Ambler. Here, Associate Professor Ken Wach explores the origins of the series.

BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KEN WACH

HOW LONG IS IT SINCE WE STRETCHED OUT ON A GRASSY PATCH TO GAZE AT CLOUDS?
Remember Shakespeare’s Hamlet and his question to Polonius, ‘Is that not a camel, I see in yonder cloud’? He goes on: ‘Methinks, it is a weasel’ and later adds ‘or like a whale’. In this passage Hamlet not only teases the sycophantic Polonius, but also conjures up three unrelated images in as many minutes. Ever since, writers, philosophers and psychologists have found this bamboozling exchange to be altogether fascinating – so did Salvador Dalí.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Leonardo da Vinci when he advised that looking at the stains on walls was for inspiration (‘therein you find marvels’). The German artist Max Ernst did the same when inventing the technique of ‘decalcomania’; Chinese artists and scholars also practised such visionary processes when looking at mountain rocks or the markings on polished jade tablets. They all aimed to free the mind – to seek and see connections and conceive afresh; that is, to peer and perceive.

Salvador Dalí’s head-turning creation *Mae West Lips Sofa* of 1937–38 is a direct descendent of such related procedures. This seemingly odd and distant connection begs for elaboration.

The original idea for the creation of the *Mae West Lips Sofa* arose at Edward James’s lavish mansion Monkton Hall set on an over 3000-hectare property at West Dean in Sussex, England, where the Eton/Oxford-educated James asked Dalí to conceive, rather than design, an item of furniture for his private dining room. James, the illegitimate grandson of King Edward VII and once married to the ballet dancer and actress Tilly Losch, who through remarriage became the Countess of Carnarvon, was a wealthy supporter of British and European Surrealists and a close friend of artists Sir Roland Penrose and René Magritte. During the Second World War, James sheltered Dalí and his wife Gala at the famous Villa Cimbrone on the Amalfi Coast in Italy and, after returning to England, he moved to Mexico to build Las Pozas, a jungle garden retreat near Xilitla, where various notables (including actress Anita Ekberg of Federico Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* fame) found sanctuary. He died at Italy’s San Remo in 1984 of ‘the sound of green’, as he called it.

Edward James’s life may be instructively viewed as being emblematic of a nowadays unattainable and unfathomable prewar age – one where fey elegance was leavened by artistic daring – in many ways, Dalí was its fêted darling.

Dalí’s *Mae West Lips Sofa* rightly belongs in an elevated niche in cultural history. There are only seven Surrealist objects that sit in the upper stalls of Surrealism. Namely: Alberto Giacometti’s

Suspended Ball of 1931 (Guggenheim, Bilbao); Man Ray's *Indestructible Object* of 1923 (Tate Modern, London); Man Ray's *The Gift* of 1921 (Tate Modern, London); Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* of 1913 (The Israel Museum, Jerusalem); Meret Oppenheim's fur teacup titled *Object* of 1936 (Museum of Modern Art, New York); Salvador Dalí's *Lobster Telephone* of 1936 (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh) and, of course, the *Mae West Lips Sofa* of 1937–38, which sits very comfortably in such first-rate company.

'Dalí's *Mae West Lips Sofa* rightly belongs in an elevated niche in cultural history.'

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KEN WACH

This lofty artistic alliance was not based upon style (Surrealism was never a 'style') but upon a strong conviction in the imaginative power of special kinds of connections. That is, connections that 'spark' – or, as the Surrealists put it, are 'marvellous'. André Breton, the 'voice' of Surrealism asserted it dazzlingly in Paris in 1924: 'Let us not mince words: the marvellous is always beautiful, anything marvellous is beautiful, in fact only the marvellous is beautiful'. [2]

The driving force of this fervent impulse originated from two obscure sources. Firstly, the Dadaist Pierre Reverdy writing in the French literary journal *Nord-Sud* in 1918: 'The image is a pure creation of the mind. It cannot be born from a comparison, but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities. The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be – the greater its emotional power and poetic reality'. [3] Secondly, the obscure nineteenth- century French writer Comte de Lautréamont in his immensely spirited and derisive novel *The Chant of Maldoror* of 1868, whose phrase 'electrified' the Surrealists: 'as beautiful as the fortuitous encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine upon an operating table'.[4]

It is to the credit of the Surrealists that they were able to grasp the significance of this contrapuntal artistic device – one most probably first detected in Pablo Picasso's magisterial painting *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), where material and paint seemed to optically 'collide' in pictorial space – the visual lesson was memorable; the effect – its 'poetic reality', to use Reverdy's phrase – was bracing.

This seemingly arcane observation is made clearer by using an analogy: imagine a live electrical wire with a current of 6 volts, being made to almost touch a wire carrying 12 volts – the resultant spark is small, and the distance is short. Imagine now a wire with 12 volts being brought close to a wire with a current of 240 volts – the spark is larger, and the distance is longer; the 'impact' of the connection is correspondingly stronger – recalling Reverdy's words, 'The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image'. The impactful marvel of the 'spark' is proportional to the difference in potential and distance. So it is with images and objects – our imaginations and perceptive responses are 'jump-started' by such discordant connections. At its core, this is the 'secret' behind Duchamp's precociously early *Bicycle Wheel* assemblage sculpture. It both forms and informs the ideational armature of all the above-mentioned Surrealist objects, including Dalí's *Mae West Lips Sofa*.

Dalí often attributes his creativity to his 'Paranoia-Critical Method', which was first translated into English by the famous Irish writer Samuel Beckett in England in 1932, and was therefore much celebrated there, and later in other English-speaking countries. Despite this, Dalí did not ever explain his method and it has not been academically analysed – save for one publication by Chaim Finkelstein in America. For our purposes it is instructive to consider Dalí's Paranoia-Critical Method as a lateral offshoot of Breton's 'Pure Psychic Automatism' and his concept of 'Objective Chance'. In other words, Dalí's method is based upon a highly personalised use of subjective associationism and happenstance – a distant conceptual cousin of the free-wheeling visualisations we once conjured up in the shapes of clouds. As noted above, the procedure was undertaken to free the mind and to engender new associations that shift perception beyond the retinal and towards the mental.

All things considered, what we have in *Mae West Lips Sofa* is a strikingly original, dashingly free and spontaneously generated double-image visualisation – a blushing transmutation with a glamour buzz. Not only does it embody the insouciant flash and marvellous chicness of its period, but also it outwits and outperforms the creativity of Nature herself – it creates rather than recreates – and thereby twins two of the most precious of human attributes: imagination and visualisation.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KEN WACH IS FORMER PRINCIPAL RESEARCH FELLOW AND HEAD OF THE SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

THE NGV WARMLY INVITES YOU TO MAKE A DONATION TOWARDS THE 2023 NGV ANNUAL APPEAL AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT. TO DONATE VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/DONATE OR SCAN THE CODE.

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(pp. 42–3) **Salvador Dalí** *Mae West Lips Sofa* conceived in 1937–38, executed by Green & Abbott 1938. 2023 NGV Annual Appeal in memory of Robert J. Wylde, 2023 © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí. VEGAP/ Copyright Agency, 2023.

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Installation view of *Rembrandt: True to Life* on display from 2 June – 10 September at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Tom Ross

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MUSIC AND FILMS OF

Pierre Bonnard

In 1891 Bonnard moved into a studio at 28 rue Pigalle in the ninth arrondissement, Paris, which he shared with Maurice Denis, Édouard Vuillard and the young actor Aurélien Lugné-Poe. Through Lugné-Poe's connections, he became involved in the contemporary experimental theatre scene in Paris. Lugné-Poe's friend Paul Fort founded the Théâtre d'Art in 1890, which he conceived in opposition to the prevailing taste for naturalistic representation in French theatre. Bonnard was to design stage sets and playbills for Fort's Théâtre d'Art productions, and, later, worked for Lugné-Poe's own theatrical company, the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre.

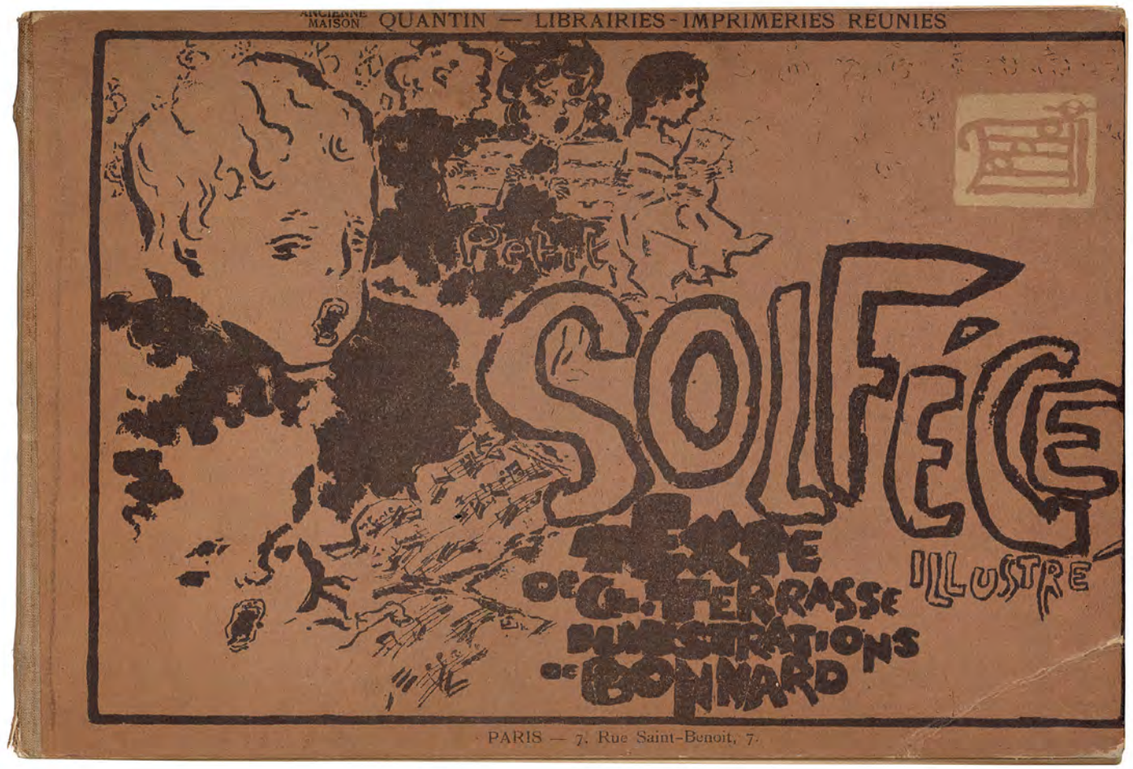
Le Petit Solfège

In 1890, Bonnard's sister Andrée married Claude Terrasse, a composer and music teacher. The couple had five children. You'll see various Terrasse family members – big and small – appear in *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*.

Bonnard and his brother-in-law, Claude, were lifelong friends and frequent collaborators. In 1891–93 they worked on illustrating *Petit Solfège illustré (Small Musical Primer)*, creating thirty delightful designs that enlivened Terrasse's less-than-inspired text. Bonnard made dozens of preparatory drawings for this project, which he clearly at times struggled with. The finished product, however, is a concise collection of humorous illustrations guaranteed to hold the attention of young children grappling with music lessons. There are parallels as well, in a number of the *Solfège* images, between Bonnard's designs to illustrate measure and beat in music and his concurrent engagement with designing folding screens and other interior decorations.

Petites Scènes familières

Bonnard and Claude Terrasse collaborated again in 1895 on an album of piano music, titled *Petites Scènes familières (Familiar Little Scenes)*. Terrasse and his wife, Andrée, were living in Arcachon in south-western France at this time, and this seaside resort provided the setting for a number of Bonnard's whimsical observations of daily life in the town's streets and public squares. Bonnard created a cover design and nineteen illustrations for Terrasse's musical scores, most of which Terrasse dedicated to individual family members and friends. In turn, Terrasse, Andrée and their infant children, and Bonnard's cousin Berthe Schaedlin, featured as his models.





Pierre Bonnard (illustrator) **Claude Terrasse** (composer) **Librairies-Imprimeries Réunies (Ancienne Maison Quantin)**, **Paris** (publishers) **F. Allier Père et fils** (printer) Cover and pages from *Petit Solfège illustré* (*Small Musical Primer*) 1893 Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by John and Cecily Adams, Dr Peter Chu, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2022









(top to bottom) **Auguste Lumière, Louis Lumière** *Mealtime for baby* (*Le Repas de Bébé*) 1895 (stills) Courtesy Institut Lumière

Auguste Lumière, Louis Lumière *Place des Cordeliers in Lyon* (*Place des Cordeliers à Lyon*) 1895 (stills) Courtesy Institut Lumière

The Lumière brothers

The moving image was one of the great developments of the late 1800s and the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière are credited with the invention of cinema in France in 1895. The Lumière brothers were from Lyon and Bonnard knew them personally; they are known to have stayed at the Bonnards' country property Le Grand Lemps on several occasions.

Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi features three short, silent Lumière films: *Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon (La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon)*, 1895; *Place des Cordeliers in Lyon (Place des Cordeliers à Lyon)*, 1895; and *Mealtime for Baby (Le Repas de Bébé)*, 1895.

The brothers unveiled their Cinématographe motion picture device in Paris on 28 December 1895 in the Grand Café, a fashionable venue located at 14 boulevard des Capucines in the Opéra district. A small group of spectators, for the modest price of one franc, were astounded to see ten recordings of animated images shown life-size on a screen, each lasting between forty and fifty seconds. This experiment was immediately a tremendous success, so much so that 2,000 people bought tickets to subsequent screenings on 1 and 2 January 1896.

The Théâtre des Pantins

Claude Terrasse's Théâtre des Pantins, which opened in December 1897, was set up in a large studio in the garden behind Terrasse's house that provided seating for an audience of around 100 arranged before a puppet theatre constructed by Alfred Jarry. The studio was painted by Bonnard with silhouette decorations depicting the little theatre's puppets, some 300 of which Bonnard himself designed and carved during the theatre's short lifespan (December 1897 to March 1898). Jarry and the librettist Franc-Nohain were the puppet masters at the Théâtre des Pantins, while Claude Terrasse and wife Andrée provided piano accompaniment. While it is a shame that not a great deal of physical nor photographic evidence exists of this enormous amount of theatrical work by Bonnard, six music sheets have survived. They are for suggestive songs by Franc-Nohain, scored by Claude Terrasse and illustrated with lithographs by Bonnard.

The Scandalous King Ubu

In 1891, after his success selling the France-Champagne illustration, Bonnard rented his first studio in the Batignolles quarter. Maurice Denis and Vuillard joined him and so did the young experimental actor Aurélien Lugné-Poe. It was through their relationship with Lugné-Poe that Bonnard and his friends became involved in Paris's experimental theatre scene. Opposed to the prevailing bourgeois taste for naturalistic theatre, avant-garde theatre-makers like Lugné-Poe aimed to devise a new radical Symbolist theatre. In 1896, Lugné-Poe's experimental theatre company Théâtre de l'Oeuvre presented *King Ubu* – a play by French writer Alfred Jarry. Bonnard helped create the sets and masks for the production in collaboration with Paul Sérusier, Édouard Vuillard, Paul Ranson and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

In a grotesque parody of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Ubu, a dimwitted bourgeois based loosely on Jarry's high school physics teacher, is convinced by his wife (a 'hag') to declare himself king of Poland. Father Ubu repeats the word 'merde' over and over, and slaughters 300 nobles and 500 magistrates by shoving them down a trap door. At the end of opening night in 1896, a riot broke out, and the play closed the same day. Two decades later, *King Ubu* would be championed by the Surrealists and Dadaists who recognised in the play the first Absurdist drama, while Jarry would go on to write several sequels, including *Ubu enchaîné* (1900; 'Ubu Bound') and *Ubu cocu* (1944; 'Ubu Cuckolded'), which were translated and published with *Ubu Roi* as *The Ubu Plays* (1968).

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EXHIBITION

Your visit to *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*

Warm up this winter and celebrate Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2023 with unique dining experiences, workshops, family fun and Friday Nights at NGV International.

BY ELISA SCARTON

At the table with Bonnard

Annie Smithers, one of Australia's most highly regarded chefs, has teamed up with the NGV Garden Restaurant this winter. Inspired by Smithers's award-winning Trentham restaurant, the exclusive, Annie Smithers at NGV is open until 8 October.

NGV: You've designed a bespoke menu especially for Annie Smithers at NGV. What was your inspiration?
Annie Smithers: Pierre Bonnard is one of my favourite artists. His representation of the idyllic French life and the importance of the table reminds all of us that food is to be enjoyed and that conviviality around a table is just as important as what it being served. With that in mind, my menu captures that French farmhouse style, but also the bistros Bonnard would have frequented in the Belle Époque era in Paris.

NGV: Were there any local flavours or ingredients you just had to include?
AS: I've cooked from my own garden in Trentham for so long that it's really exciting to have a slightly broader canvas. Victoria has a rich bounty of amazing fruit and vegetable growers, as well as meat and poultry producers. I'm looking forward to cooking some beautiful Victorian duck and great Victorian beef and lamb! This menu is a celebration of food that is inherently Victorian, but with wonderful French overtones for an experience that is ultimately comforting and nurturing.

NGV: Favourite dish at Annie Smithers at NGV?
AS: It's been a long time since I've written an a la carte menu, so this experience is like opening a toy box for Annie Smithers. I feel like all of my favourite dishes from the last thirty to forty years are coming out over the period of the exhibition. So, whether it be a simple duck confit or a rich beef bourguignon, I feel like diners will experience a true homage to those beautiful French farmhouse style dishes that we all know and love.

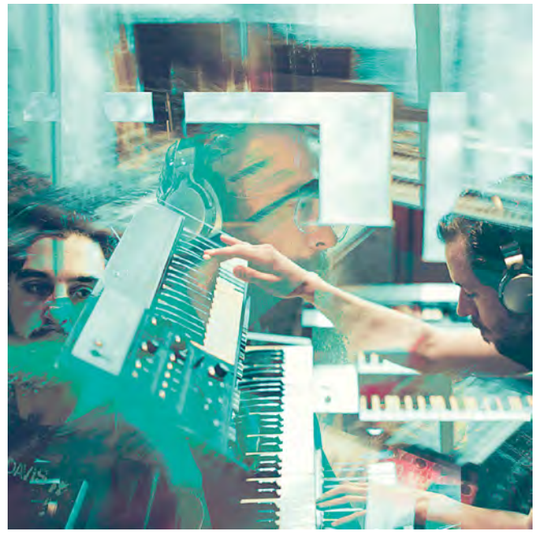
NGV: And for dessert?
AS: A beautiful Calvados crème caramel, cooked with love, passion and incredible ingredients.

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ANNIE SMITHERS AT NGV WILL ALSO BE HOSTING TWO EXCLUSIVE NGV MEMBERS DINING EVENTS ON 23 AUG AND 20 SEPT. FIND OUT MORE AND BOOK AT NGV.MELBOURNE

(above) Annie Smithers in her garden at Trentham © Simon James Photography





NGV FRIDAY NIGHTS

Live music returns to the Gallery this winter with NGV Friday Nights. See some of Australia's best established and emerging bands and performers play live in the Great Hall and enjoy after-hours access to the *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* exhibition. While at NGV Friday Nights, don't forget to drop by the Yering Station Wine Bar for a unique wine flight tasting experience or the Pommery Champagne Bar for a menu of share plates and substantial meals.

EXHIBITION TALKS

Gather for a series of informal talks focusing on different viewpoints and select works in the exhibition with a keynote from India Mahdavi, along with appearances by NGV curators, local artists and University of Melbourne academics. Topics include designing the exhibition, the Nabis, Bonnard's still-lifes and painting from memory.

MSO AT NGV

With a repertoire curated in response to *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* musicians from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra perform a concert under the iconic stained-glass ceiling of the Great Hall on 24 August.

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Up, Down and All Around: Daniel Emma for Kids invites budding designers to learn about the role of design in the world we live in. Inspiring young imaginations and engaging children's problem-solving skills, design duo Daniel Emma, comprising Daniel To and Emma Aiston, invite young visitors to look again at everyday objects and express their creativity through design challenges and hands-on activities.

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(above left) Thndo. Image supplied by artist

(above right) Swooping (Hiatus Kaiyote). Image supplied by artist.



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Pierre Bonnard
The studio with mimosa 1939–46
oil on canvas 127.5 × 127.5 cm
Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle
Purchased from Charles Terrasse, 1979
Photo © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Bertrand Prévost

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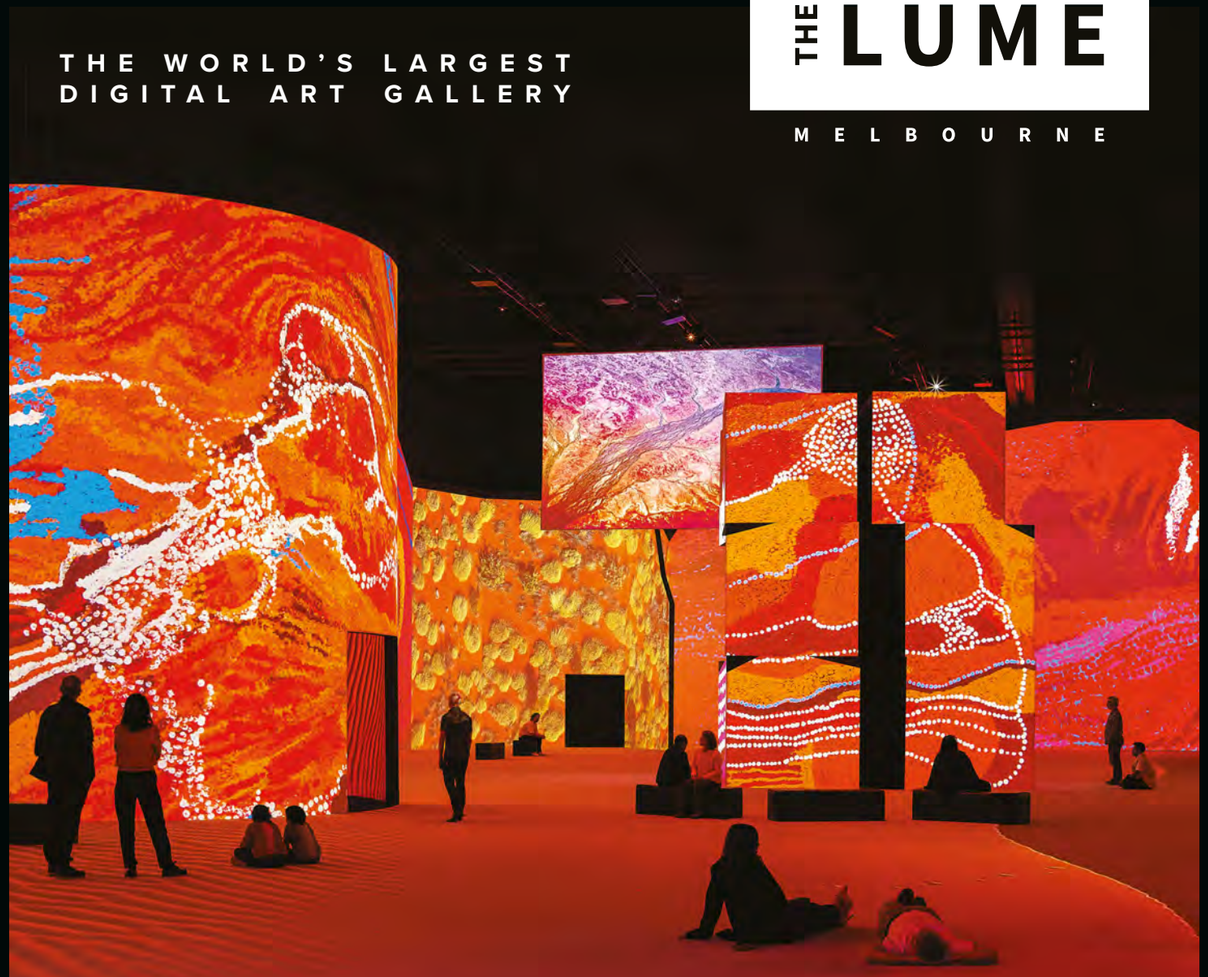
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The Australian Women's Weekly November 23, 1960 cover image. Photograph by Adelie Hurley.

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EXHIBITION

A COLLECTION OF CURIOSITIES

On display at NGV International until 10 September, *Rembrandt: True to Life* features a small re-creation of Rembrandt's *Kunstcaemer* (Cabinet of Curiosities) based on a 1656 inventory of his possessions. As Rembrandt never travelled outside the Netherlands, he brought the world into his home, collecting artefacts and natural objects from various parts of the world. The collection was a product of the artist's intellectual curiosity, but it was also a status symbol that presented him as a gentleman-collector. Here, University of Amsterdam lecturer Dr Bert van de Roemer sheds light on the significance of the *Kunstcaemer* and how it influenced Rembrandt's work.

BY DR BERT VAN DE ROEMER

Many visitors to Rembrandt's home in Amsterdam might not be aware when they enter the illustrious room with the artist's collection that they are witnessing a reconstruction of only twenty-five years old. The visitor's eyes will drift over an erratic array of objects displayed in four tiers on one side of the room. Larger items, including marine plants, cuirasses, antlers and colossal font shells are scattered throughout the floor. Long, narrow tables against the wall provide a glimpse on sea stars, shells, baskets, two Indonesian daggers and drawers with butterflies and fossils. Plaster busts of the twelve Roman emperors and other historical figures are displayed on two shelves above the table, among other things such as coral, armour and a Japanese helmet. In the middle of the wall stands a cabinet with medals decorated with coral and a feather headdress. In the opposite corner, we see several art books with prints, more plaster anatomical models, spears and animal skins.

The room gives an impression of what the collection might have looked like in the seventeenth century, but the mounted glass screens that are placed between the beholder's eye and the objects also create a certain kind of remoteness, as if you are looking through a shop window at a department store. The screen seems almost to materialise the distance of four centuries between the time these cabinets of curiosities were extremely popular and our understanding of them, which often still alludes incorrectly to the bizarre and peculiar. In Rembrandt's time, maintaining a collection was quite common and a serious business. Throughout Europe, it was a popular pastime among nobility, princes, scholars and clergy, but in the Dutch Republic, collecting was more the domain of citizens. It is estimated that Amsterdam counted about seventy of these collections at the end of the seventeenth century.

Our knowledge about these collections is still relatively limited, but in the case of Rembrandt, we are reasonably well informed thanks to his bankruptcy in the mid 1650s. It is known that after finishing *The Night Watch* in 1642 (The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), the artist witnessed a period of crisis, which might well have been a period of artistic contemplation. In this period, he painted fewer portraits on commission, and in the late 1640s and 1650s, he certainly spent more than he gained, which finally led to a financial crisis. Without doubt, a lot of that money had gone into buying valuable curiosities for his collection. In those days, it was common to register a case of bankruptcy with the city government, which harboured a special Insolvency Office (*Desolate Boedelskamer*). Subsequently, a clerk or official would visit your home to register all your belongings, after which the possessions were auctioned and outstanding debts met. This inventory of Rembrandt's house was written down on 25 and 26 July 1656, and

the document gives a detailed overview of the holdings in his *Kunstcaemer*.

In elegant and steady handwriting, a multitude of items is listed. However, the document does not tell us how the objects were placed and ordered in the room. It only gives a scant indication, 'on the hindmost ledge', which is not enough to get a full impression. There are not many illustrations of mid-seventeenth century cabinets that can inform us as to what collections like Rembrandt's looked like. A big inspiration for the reconstruction in the Rembrandt House in Amsterdam was the famous print from the collection of Ole Worm in Denmark, one of the few contemporary depictions of a cabinet from north of the alps. When we compare the print with the actual situation, the resemblances become clear. But we might still wonder how applicable this is to the situation in Rembrandt's room.

Why did Rembrandt collect? In the past, different explanations have been given. In a seminal study from 1969, art historian Rob Scheller stressed the social ambitions Rembrandt had and placed his passion in this context. The collection functioned as a tool to fulfill the ideal of a *virtuoso* – a virtuous, well-informed and overall skilled person. With his collection, Rembrandt tried to become a member of the higher social strata of Amsterdam society. Scheller also enlightened on the more theoretical backgrounds of these collections and coined the term 'encyclopedic art chamber'. With this term, he expressed the aim of collectors: to construct inside their house an overview of what the world had to offer. In general, a division was made between products of nature, the *naturalia*, and objects wrought by human hands, the *artificialia*. Standing in the middle of a room crammed with a diverse array of objects, one would get an impression of God's creation and human ingenuity to produce objects that often competed with nature. These rooms were aimed at diversity, abundance and profusion, and this is exactly the feeling that is now lacking in the reconstructed *Kunstcaemer*. As the objects are placed on one side, one misses the feeling of being surrounded by them. Some collections were ordered according to all-encompassing schemes, like the four elements, the five senses, or the seven planets. Thus, a collection would give an overview, and in this way, the term 'encyclopedic' collection is applicable, even though 99.9 percent of what the world had to offer was absent. Oddly enough, the first two objects mentioned in the inventory of Rembrandt's art chamber are not present in the Amsterdam reconstruction: two globes of the earth and the sky. These were almost mandatory in these collections and alluded to their universal aims.

However, the arrangement and content of Rembrandt's collection as we know it from the inventory show no further traces of these stilted universal assertions. This is probably the reason why Scheller's view of the status-enhancing effect was revised in 1999, when the reconstruction was made. The historians Jaap van der Veen and Roelof van Gelder came up with a new, more practical vision of the collection: Rembrandt would have used the objects mainly as working materials and props for his paintings. It is striking with how much attention to detail objects are rendered in his paintings. The other rooms in his house, such as his own painting studio and the attic where Rembrandt taught his pupils, also held some curiosities. The presence of these objects here suggests that they served an exemplary function in the everyday practice of the painter. Renowned Rembrandt specialist Ernst van de Wetering pointed out in 2006 that Rembrandt might have also used the objects for trade in his capacity as an art dealer. Additionally he states that Rembrandt's vast collection of prints must have served as sources of examples. Finally, he wonders whether collecting was not just an addiction of Rembrandt's, but of many others, too. The painter started to collect again right after his bankruptcy.

Rembrandt's *Kunstcaemer* still raises questions, as the practice of early modern collecting in general is still a valuable research field. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the profusion of these collections was largely ignored by scholars, as they did not fit into the modern divisions of scientific and scholarly disciplines, such as art history, biology and ethnography. However, these collections in their totality harbour valuable information about how people saw the world and all the things in it. That's why they have attracted more and more attention over the last fifty years. A visitor to the Rembrandt House who enters the *Kunstcaemer* can still faintly experience this, in spite of the glass screens and the somewhat overly ordered displays.

SEE A SMALL RE-CREATION OF REMBRANDT'S *KUNSTCAEMER* IN *REMBRANDT: TRUE TO LIFE* ON GROUND LEVEL, NGV INTERNATIONAL UNTIL 10 SEPTEMBER. NGV MEMBERS ENJOY DISCOUNTED ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION AND NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS HAVE UNLIMITED COMPLIMENTARY ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION. TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE VIA NGV.MELBOURNE

REMBRANDT: TRUE TO LIFE IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS INSURANCE PROGRAM AND MAJOR PARTNER MACQUARIE GROUP.

DR BERT (G. M.) VAN DE ROEMER IS A LECTURER AT THE CULTURAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.



(pp. 56–7 and right) Installation view of *Rembrandt: True to Life* on display from 2 June until 10 September at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Tom Ross

NGV SCHOLARS SERIES

RECONTEXTUALISING Rembrandt

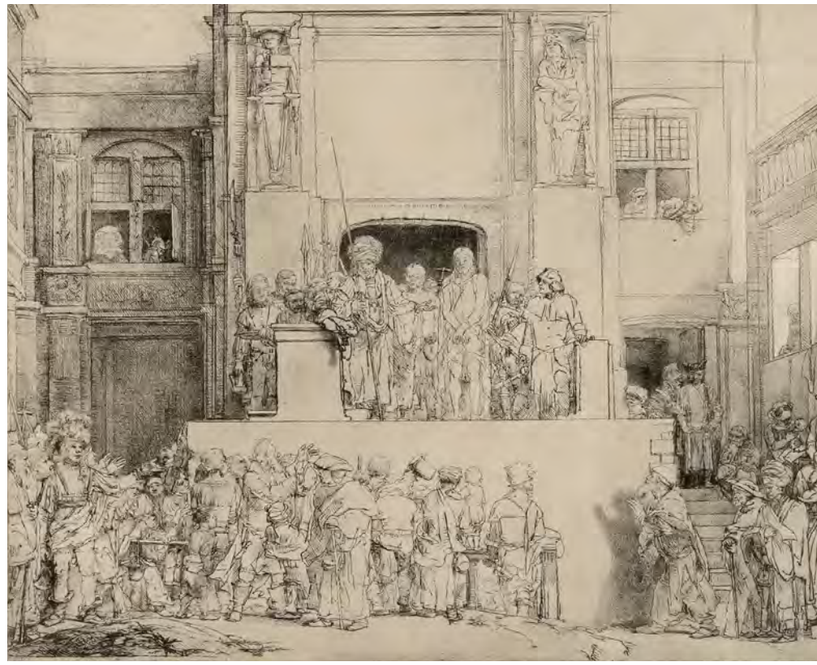
On 31 July, world-leading international Rembrandt scholar Dr Betsy Wieseman provides an in-depth look at Rembrandt's creative innovation as part of the NGV Scholars Series. Ahead of her visit to Melbourne, Dr Wieseman shares a preview of her presentation.

BY DR BETSY WIESEMAN

The NGV's renowned collection of etchings by Rembrandt van Rijn is truly a hidden treasure. These light-sensitive works are rarely on view, as limiting their exposure is the best way of preserving them for future generations. Yet an artist's drawings and etchings – informal, experimental and spontaneous – can provide a glimpse into their creative process. *Rembrandt: True to Life* offers a rare opportunity to view some of this Dutch artist's most intimate and intriguing works, demonstrating the full range of his talent and creativity across three media: paintings, drawings and prints.

A key difference between paintings and works on paper (drawings and prints) is that in paintings we generally see only the finished product. With rare exception, the visible paint surface reveals little about the process of crafting the image, or the decisions an artist might have taken as they brought the work to fruition. Drawings, on the other hand, especially quick sketches like *Old man in a turban (Study for an Elder),* c. 1638, can give insight into the small incidents of everyday life that captured Rembrandt's attention and subsequently inspired details in his more formal painted compositions.

Many of Rembrandt's etchings are known in multiple states that allow us to follow the development of an image. As he scratched the image into the copper etching plate, he would pause in the process to print off one or more examples and assess whether the image could be considered finished or needed further working. Sometimes a new state involved just minor changes, but other times Rembrandt drastically reworked the composition. For example, the fifth state of his masterful *Christ presented to the people*, 1655, acquired for the NGV by the Felton Bequest, shows a crowd of people in the foreground, but by the seventh state (on display in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), Rembrandt had replaced the figures with cavernous arched portals, deeply shadowed, which enhance the scene's ominous mood.



Over the course of his career Rembrandt created more than eighty self-portraits, and several examples are included in this exhibition. The painted self-portrait on loan from the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. shows us how the artist viewed himself at the age of fifty-three: with sober acceptance, highlighting – not hiding – the rough terrain of his middle-aged face by using a range of textured brushstrokes. But how did he arrive at this moment? Like a series of snapshots, etched self-portraits show how Rembrandt's image of himself evolved over time: from a young man trying out exaggerated facial expressions, in *Self-portrait in a cap, wide-eyed and open-mouthed* (1630, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); to a confident and sophisticated artist at the height of his career, in *Self-portrait leaning on a stone sill*, 1639; or as a humble artisan recording the mundane aspects of his craft, in *Self-portrait etching at a window*, 1648. Juxtaposing paintings, drawings and prints, *Rembrandt: True to Life* bring us closer to the artist as he crafted his unique vision of the world and of himself.

THE NGV SCHOLARS SERIES EVENING EVENTS INVITE EMINENT GUEST SCHOLARS, RESEARCHERS AND EXPERTS TO UNCOVER THE STORIES BEHIND ARTISTS AND WORKS FROM THE NGV COLLECTION. DR BETSY WIESEMAN PRESENTS *RECONTEXTUALISING REMBRANDT* ON 31 JULY. MEMBERS TICKETS ARE $22. FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/PROGRAM/SCHOLARS-SERIES

DR MARJORIE E. (BETSY) WIESEMAN IS CURATOR AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN EUROPEAN PAINTINGS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C. SHE HAS PUBLISHED WIDELY ON ARTISTS INCLUDING REMBRANDT, PETER PAUL RUBENS AND JOHANNES VERMEER.

NGV Scholars Series

NGV Scholars Series is a new program of in-depth presentations by world-leading experts that uncover the stories behind, and provide insights into, treasured works from the Collection.

On 31 July, world-leading Rembrandt scholar Dr Betsy Wieseman provides an in-depth look at the scope of Rembrandt's creative innovation.

Using examples from the NGV's extensive holdings of Rembrandt works, the most important Rembrandt collection in the Southern Hemisphere, Dr Wieseman will contextualise these works within the most recent scholarship on the seventeenth-century Dutch master. Her talk will focus on Rembrandt's creative process and the extraordinary inventiveness of his technique across three media: painting, drawing, and printmaking.

On 18 October, Shakespeare scholar Dr David McInnis turns to the NGV's rich Shakespeare holdings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to explore the ways in which artists, not actors, have sought to animate Shakespeare's play texts. Celebrating the recent NGV acquisition of two works by German-born painter Philippe Mercier, generously donated by Wendy King through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023, the session will explore how artists breathe new life into Shakespeare's words through paint and ink, imagining scenes and characters that had once enthralled early modern playgoers during Shakespeare's own lifetime.

The 2023 NGV Scholars Series program is presented in person and livestreamed. When registering, you can choose to book an in-person ticket or a virtual ticket to access the livestream. NGV Members enjoy discounted tickets to all sessions.

FOR INFORMATION AND TO BOOK, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE OR SCAN THE CODE.

THE NGV WARMLY ACKNOWLEDGES A DONOR WHO WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

(p. 60) **Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn** *Self-portrait etching at a window* 1648 (detail), etching and drypoint, 6th state. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1958

(p. 61) **Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn** *Christ Presented to the People: oblong plate* 1655, drypoint and plate-tone, 5th of 8 states. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1940

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JOURNEY ALONG THE TŌKAIDŌ



IN THE COLLECTION

When first produced in 1834–36, Utagawa Hiroshige's series of travel scenes along Japan's Tōkaidō Road was an immediate success among the adventure-seeking population of the Edo period. Within sixty years of their production, these vividly coloured woodblock prints were being collected and inspiring artists such as Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh. Their universal popularity continues to nurture our longing for free-spirited travel and a human oneness with nature. Through the recent support of the late Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, four of these magnificent woodblocks are the first 1830s *Tōkaidō* editions to enter the NGV Collection.

BY WAYNE CROTHERS

The Tōkaidō Road ('Eastern Sea Road') and the less frequented Nakasendō Road ('Central Mountain Road') were the two thoroughfares along which official processions, pilgrims, merchants and licenced travellers would journey between the shogunate capital of Edo (modern-day Tokyo) and the imperial capital, Kyoto. During the late nineteenth century it was noted that the young emerging artist Utagawa Hiroshige made his first journey along the Tōkaidō in 1832 with an official procession sent by the Shogun to present horses to the Emperor in Kyoto. On this return to Edo, Hiroshige transformed his sketches from the journey into a series of images depicting the bridges of departure and arrival to Edo and Kyoto, and the fifty-three government designated station towns that were travelled through along the way. Jointly printed by Hōeidō and Senkakudō publishing houses in 1834–36, the series instantaneously turned Hiroshige into a star of the Japanese art world with his new landscape works surpassing the popularity of Katsushika Hokusai's iconic *Thirty-Six Views of Mt Fuji* series, 1830–34, published just a few years earlier.

Hiroshige went onto produce numerous other travel series and views of cities and countrysides, but it is his first series of the Tōkaidō that remains his most celebrated achievement. Memorialising everyday life in the late Edo period, in which travel, and entertainment became more widely available to the middle-class, the prints presented a vision of the country in which the changing seasons, and associated activities, were central to people's lives. Featuring lush colours, radiating washes of Prussian blue and a unique approach to composition, the artist's new style of sweeping landscapes, focused studies of the natural elements and emotive caricatures created images of majestic landscape and light-hearted storytelling that brought Edo period Japan to life.

With the construction of railways during the early twentieth century and more recently the Tōkaidō bullet train, towns and landmarks along the route modernised and, with very few exceptions, have now become unrecognisable to that of Hiroshige's time. Some areas on the more remote Nakasendō Road are less developed and the section through the picturesque Kiso Valley retains some of the features and ambience of Hiroshige's works.





‘Hiroshige’s masterpiece Shōnō, a sudden shower evokes the sound of rustling bamboo leaves and the dampness of the rain.’
——Wayne Crothers

(p. 64 top)
Utagawa Hiroshige *Totsuka, Motomachi fork* c. 1834–36 from the The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido series. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022

(p. 64 bottom) **Utagawa Hiroshige** *Hodogaya, Shinmachi Bridge* c. 1834–36 from the The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido series. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022

(above) **Utagawa Hiroshige** *A sudden shower, Shōno* c. 1834–36 from the Fifty-three stations of the Tokaido Road series 1833–34. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022

(p. 67) **Utagawa Hiroshige** *Numazu* c. 1834–36 from the The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido series. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022. 2022.665

SHŌNO, A SUDDEN SHOWER

Like the famed *The great wave off Kanagawa*, c. 1830, by Hokusai, Hiroshige’s depiction of the small hamlet of Shōno is regarded as his most masterful composition and one of the greatest depictions of rain in Japanese art. On the journey between Edo and Kyoto, Shōno is a place of few distinguishing features or historical significance, which perhaps gave Hiroshige the freedom to solely focus on the forces of nature. The hamlet is set among bamboo groves receding into the distance using two silhouettes of lessening tones of grey. A sudden shower of rain sends travellers and locals scurrying up and down an incline of the road. A farmer wearing a straw raincoat and hoe over his shoulder clings to his hat and a traveller struggles with an umbrella against the driving rain. Two palanquin bearers dash for cover creating the subtle detail of the palanquin’s rain cover blowing to one side, revealing the rider’s hand tightly clenching their seat. The flurry of action and drama of the scene poetically evokes the sound of rustling bamboo leaves and the dampness of the rain. As with many of Hiroshige’s works the artist included written messages for the viewer to decipher. On the umbrella, one of the publisher’s names: Takenouchi (竹のうち) and part of the series title ‘fifty-three stations’ (五三次) can be found. This inscription as well as the flat tones of the bamboo groves only appear in rare surviving examples of the first edition of this print. In later editions the umbrella inscriptions disappear, and the bamboo groves are printed with gradations of grey.

HODOGAYA, SHINMACHI BRIDGE

After departing Edo and walking for a day, Tōkaidō Road travellers would arrive at Hodogaya, the fourth station town, or Totsuka, the fifth station town, to spend the evening. The image of Hodogaya shows several unique characters crossing the bridge. A wandering komusō monk and a merchant travelling in a palanquin is accompanied by a personal assistant and valet carrying boxes of luggage. Komusō were members of an esoteric set of Zen Buddhism known as the Fuke School and characterised by wearing a straw basket on their head to remain anonymous and playing the *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute) as a form of meditation. On the far side of the bridge the main street of Hodogaya is bustling with people. A soba (buckwheat noodle) restaurant has two waitresses beckoning travellers in for a meal and a sign displays the price of noodles as sixteen mon, not coincidentally, also the price of one of Hiroshige’s prints at the time of first printing.

TOTSUKA, MOTOMACHI FORK

Totuska was one on the many places for rest and refreshment that were found along the Tōkaidō Road. Stepping onto a bench, a traveller dismounts from his horse while a woman in the centre of the image unties the chin strap of her sun hat. A servant with headscarf holds the reins of the horse while a maid of the resthouse comes out to greet the weary travellers. A large sign notes the name of the resthouse as ‘Komeya’, indicating its speciality as rice cakes, and an array of smaller signs indicate the travel groups that are due to arrive, “Oyama Kōchu”, “Tsukishima Kōchu”, “Hyakumi Kou”, “Kanda Kōchu” and “Kiyobashi Kōchu”. In the centre of the composition near the bridge a stone maker indicates a fork in the road, ‘Left for the road to Kamakura’. In the distance there are rice fields with several triangular stacks of cut rice drying to a yellow colour. The darkening sky, orange vignette and shadows appearing in the foreground indicate the approaching evening.

NUMAZU

Namazu is the only scene of the fifty-five works in the *Tōkaidō Road* series in which Hiroshige created a poetically evocative night scene illuminated by the moon. In the hour after sunset a full moon rises into a deep blue vignetted sky. A father and child hurry along the riverside road to seek accommodation in the post town of Numazu. The couple is followed by a man in white pilgrim’s attire notably carrying a long-nosed goblin (Sarutahiko or Tengu) mask on his back. Although known as mischievous and aggressive creatures, Tengu are also associated with Shinto worship and are protectors of those on a spiritual journey. This unusual piece of luggage designates the pilgrim’s journey to Konpira Shrine in the distant Sanuki Province on the island of Shikoku.

WAYNE CROTHERS IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, ASIAN ART.

THESE FOUR RECENTLY ACQUIRED WORKS ARE THE FIRST 1830S *TŌKAIDŌ* EDITIONS OF HIROSHIGE’S *FIFTY-THREE STATIONS OF THE TŌKAIDŌ ROAD* SERIES TO ENTER THE NGV COLLECTION. THIS SIGNIFICANT ACQUISITION WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH FUNDS DONATED BY THE LATE BAILLIEU MYER AC AND SARAH MYER. FIND OUT MORE ABOUT UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE AT NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/3328

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image: Yhonnie Scarce, *Only a mother could love them,* 2016, hand blown glass, 25.0 x 15.0 cm diameter each (variable sizes - approx). Monash University Collection. Purchased by the Monash Business School 2017. Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art. Courtesy of the artist and THIS IS NO FANTASY, Melbourne.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program, is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, as well as receiving development assistance from NETS Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund 2019, supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and by Creative Partnerships Australia through the Australian Cultural Fund.

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BURDI BURDI (FIRE FIRE)



Underpinned by the idea that to sing even one word of his Bidjara language means it cannot be described as extinct, *Burdi Burdi (Fire Fire)* by Dr Christian Thompson AO uses the art context as a site to archive and present the practice of spoken language within the broader culture. The work is on display as part of *Melbourne Now*.

BY DR CHRISTIAN THOMPSON AO



My 2021 sound work *Burdi Burdi (Fire Fire)* was part of my series *New Gold Mountain*. Many people are aware of my Bidjara heritage, but few people are aware that I am also of Southern Chinese heritage and that my Grandmother Harriet Woods and my Great-Grandfather George Woods ('Woods' being the anglicisation of 林 Lin/Lam, meaning 'The Woods') were first-generation Chinese-Australians, descendants of the Gold Rush generation, who in the mid-1950s migrated for the gold mining boom in Victoria and New South Wales from Southern China, Guangdong, in the Pearl River district.

I was raised by my Grandmother and my Great-Uncles Frederick and Charles and, of course, my Bidjara grandfather William's family in Barcaldine, Central Queensland. My very earliest childhood memories were going home to visit Nan and being told to go and say hello to Uncle Charlie, who through the eyes of a child was my Uncle who liked to live in bed, when in reality he was bedbound because of the serious injuries he had incurred from the war. I would sit in the doorway and just chatter away and tell Uncle Charlie all the things I'd been doing at school and with the family in the dry heat and glaring sun of the Queensland semi-desert.

He was the first person whom I was very close to that I lost as a child when I was about ten years old and I promised him I would never ever forget him. Every Anzac Day I think of my Great Uncle Charles, a Chinese-Australian who served and fought for this country – more people ought to remember that yes, Chinese people fought for your rights as well.

My Grandmother taught me to be proud of our Chinese heritage and she'd say things like 'never let anyone take your Chinese heritage away from you.' I never really knew what she meant, but as I became older those words rang true that Australia is still a deeply racist country with a lot of reconciling to do. It has its own whitewashed version of recent history, which is factually wrong in so many ways – even in the way that Chinese-Australians have been excluded from this narrative.

Nan would also say 'You're Chinese as well and don't forget it!' through the kitchen window and I'd reply 'I won't, Nan!'. Every Chinese New Year, Nan would let me have a little shandy, a mixture of beer and lemonade; I thought I was so grown up as we'd cheers our glasses into the air.

New Gold Mountain honours my Grandmother and my Great Uncles and Great Grandfather and their contributions to my life and this country. They had to persevere through the impacts of the vile racism of the White Australia Policy, just like my Grandfather's family. In this they found each other and here I am today as a manifestation of these threads of Australian history – with an Irish background of the Kennedys, Brennans and Dwyers, all from Tipperary, also thrown in for good measure.

I am proud of all of the intersections of my heritage and, in many ways, this is a big part of my practice of following my lineage and allowing it to open up new understandings, histories and meanings of what it is to be 'Australian'. I hope that others can come into that conversation and reflect upon their own family's journeys and paths and take a moment of pause to meditate on this culmination of cultures.

This led me to create my sound work *Burdi Burdi (Fire Fire)*, in which I lit the room with the vibrant opulence of red – an auspicious colour in Chinese culture that's associated with life-generating energy (the sun, blood, and fire). It is also the colour of celebrations and prosperity. A synth soundtrack plays over the top while I sing in Bidjara, my language, which is considered extinct and is underpinned by this idea that even if I only sing one word of Bidjara, the language lives on and lives on in contemporary and cutting-edge ways. Art allows me to practice my culture and language for today's audiences.

Fire has become significant for me in recent years. It has been so challenging for all of us in many ways, with lockdowns and personal loss. *Burdi* (fire) is about the fire within, about galvanising that energy and aligning everything in order to move forward in the world, body, mind and soul. I wanted to create a space where people could reflect upon their own inner fire, the things that move them forward in their own journey, to generate their own energy.

I've been working in sound since the mid nineties, originally making videos of myself singing over rippling water, but no-one seemed interested. Sound was kind of a neglected and misunderstood medium in Australia, but in these last years the culture has shifted and the language has become such a pervasive, important part of the modern Australian experience that my sound – more than twenty years of work – is experiencing something of a renaissance. I'm so thrilled that these works are resonating with audiences so profoundly. What I personally love about sound is the immateriality of it, the humanity of it and the generosity of it. It usurps the other senses and embeds. It's something the audiences can embody and take with them; something that we've had from the very beginning of humans reflecting ourselves back at ourselves through sound, image and movement. *Burdi Burdi* – find your fire.

DR CHRISTIAN THOMPSON AO IS A BIDJARA/CHINESE–AUSTRALIAN CONTEMPORARY ARTIST, WHOSE WORK EXPLORES IDENTITY AND HISTORY. SEE *BURDI BURDI* ON LEVEL 2 WITHIN MELBOURNE NOW AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 20 AUGUST.

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(p. 72) Installation view of Christian Thompson's *Burdi Burdi (Fire Fire)* on display as part of the Melbourne Now exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne to 20 August 2023. Image: Sean Fennessy

(above) **Christian Thompson** *Portrait* 2021; digital photo. Courtesy of the artist © Christian Thompson

SPEAKING ON SORROW

Drew Pettifer's work deftly intertwines queer histories with installation, video and photography, exploring themes of gender and sexuality, while also utilising historical archives as a platform for understanding who we are in contemporary society.

Pettifer's work in *Melbourne Now* is part of an ongoing research project that began when he first encountered the story of two boys from the Dutch VOC Ship *Zeewijk*, who were left to perish on separate islands in the Houtman Abrolhos archipelago, off the Western Australian coast in 1727, after being convicted of sodomy. This little known, early maritime event marked a crucial moment of recontextualising Australian history. *NGV Magazine* sits down with Pettifer to find out more.

BY MYLES RUSSELL-COOK

'I THINK ART IS UNIQUELY PLACED TO USE CREATIVE METHODOLOGIES TO REWRITE HISTORIES, REINSERTING THESE STORIES INTO THE ARCHIVE, CREATING DIFFERENT ALLIANCES OF REPRESENTATION AND WRITING NEW HISTORIES.'

——— DREW PETTIFER

Myles Russell-Cook: Drew, I have to start by saying how deeply moved I was when I first encountered your work, and learnt of this story – a story that predates Captain Philip's imposition of death for sodomy in New South Wales by sixty years. Can you tell me about your process in first learning about the Zeewijk, and what was it about this story that motivated you to undertake such an extensive body of work in response to it?

Drew Pettifer: I first came across this story during a residency at the Australian Tapestry Workshop in late 2017. I was researching hidden queer histories and came across a documentary SBS produced called *A Hidden History of Homosexual Australia* and in that documentary there was a thirty-second segment about this event on the Dutch ship *Zeewijk* back in 1727. I was so taken by the poignant narrative and the evocative image of these two young men marooned so close to each other, yet so far away. It was too far to swim, but so close that I imagine on a clear day they could almost see each other. The fact that this upended my understanding of queer European history in Australia was also astonishing. I immediately wanted to know more about this story and set about finding ways to uncover it further, starting with a residency at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts in 2018 and building from there.

MRC: One of the things I love about your work, is your ability to reframe the historical archive as something living, when there is a tendency for people to look at history as something cold and impenetrable. By casting people in the videos, and recreating the journey of the long boat, you are able to bring history to life. What is the importance of history in your work, and what do you see as the legacy of work like this?

DP: I think that history is always something that happens in the present; we record history in the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, based on how we understand historical materials or evidence at a particular point in time. We can never fully understand how people featured in historical archives might have experienced the world or thought about their lives, but we can certainly imagine shared experiences from our contemporary perspective. Often queer history is recorded through institutional records, like criminal cases and medical records, so we don't see affirming historical representations of queer lives. That always requires filling the gaps and ruptures and fissures in the archive with material that can bring these stories to life. For this project, I found two young men who had the same surnames and lived in the same towns as the young men that were executed in 1727. They traced back their histories and thought they could potentially be related to the men at the centre of this project.

But in some ways it doesn't really matter; they stand in as effigies for the bodies against which real violence was carried out. It reminds us that history isn't just some abstract thing that we read in dusty books – these were real people with real lives. It hopefully also reminds us that histories of violence against queer bodies stretch through history from the past to the present. I'm thinking about current debates around trans bodies and queer inclusion. Including the video of the journey was really important for me too since it created not just an affective exchange as you stand before the two subjects, but also carves out space for the viewer to have an immersive experience of their final journey too.



(above) Installation view of Drew Pettifer's *Untitled (Roel)* and *Untitled (Bram)* 2020 on display as part of the Melbourne Now exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne from 24 March – 20 August 2023. Image: Sean Fennessy

MRC: I am fascinated to know more about the particular details of the journey you took to the Netherlands to connect with the models in the work. Can you tell us how it felt retracing the footsteps of these figures with the knowledge of everything that happened to them?

DP: It was really moving to walk the streets of Ghent (which is now in Belgium, but was previously in the Netherlands) and Sint-Maartensdijk where these two young men came from. I went to all the places I knew these young men had been, the likely site of their houses, the churches where they were christened, the site where the *Zeewijk* set sail, and so on. I made audio recordings of my footsteps and wrote down my reflections and took many photographs and notes, and in the end these were developed into the works in the project. I found the two young men using social media. I imagine they must have found my first message quite strange, with this random Australian artist wanting to film them, but it was lovely getting to know them. I filmed them in their own homes with their families also in the house – it felt very connected and supportive. It made me acutely aware of the fact that the original young men no doubt expected to return to these streets and their homes.

'I WAS SO TAKEN BY THE POIGNANT NARRATIVE AND THE EVOCATIVE IMAGE OF THESE TWO YOUNG MEN MAROONED SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, YET SO FAR AWAY. IT WAS TOO FAR TO SWIM, BUT SO CLOSE THAT I IMAGINE ON A CLEAR DAY THEY COULD ALMOST SEE EACH OTHER.'

——— DREW PETTIFER

MRC: You talk about the tragedy of their deaths, which serves as a poignant reminder of the need to reclaim and acknowledge this chapter. I am interested in this idea of reclamation and acknowledgment. When we work in colonial histories, we often are limited by the stories that a collection can tell. What do you think is the role of a contemporary artist in addressing the gaps in collections? If the antidote to absence is presence, how do you see work like yours as helping to rewrite history?

DP: Collecting institutions invariably reflect the dominant values at the time their archives or collections are created. This often leads to queer and minority histories being erased, suppressed or absent within the archive. That definitely requires radical forms of reclamation to make these alternative narratives visible. I think art is uniquely placed to use creative methodologies to rewrite these histories, reinserting these stories into the archive, creating different alliances of representation and writing new histories. By bringing attention to these gaps, absences, ruptures and slippages in the archive, these kinds of artworks open up a modest space to make visible new histories and new ways of seeing.

MRC: Do you often think about them as individuals? And what they might think knowing their story has been brought to life in this way so long after their passing? Or what their families might think knowing that their legacy has lived on, despite dying in such horrendously cruel ways?

DP: It's interesting how these identities shift for me. On the one hand there is Bram and Roel, the models, who I connected with on a personal level and fondly remember our interactions. Then there is Adriaan and Pieter at the centre of the project, Bram and Roel's uncles around twelve generations removed, who are like apparitions. I know their stories as well as anyone living does, but because they were from the lower classes and lived 300 years ago, the records around their existences are limited. I have spent plenty of time speculating about them and their lives. I hope that they would be happy to know that their story is remembered so long after their passing. We have no way of knowing how they identified or how affectionately they felt for each other, but I do hope that they found solace in each other's company on that final journey.

SEE *UNTITLED (ROEL)* AND *UNTITLED (BRAM)* ON LEVEL 2 WITHIN *MELBOURNE NOW* AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 20 AUGUST. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/MELBOURNE-NOW-2023

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MYLES RUSSELL-COOK IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN AND FIRST NATIONS ART.

A LIGHT IN THE DARK

Made in collaboration with Kyoto-based lantern studio Kojima Shōten, Larrakia/Wardaman/Karajarri artist Jenna Lee illuminates *Melbourne Now* with a series of hand-painted paper lanterns in the shape of Gulumerridjin dilly bags, a traditional woven bag designed and used by First Nations women. As she explains to *NGV Magazine, Balarr (To become light)* explores the relationship between light and dark and draws on her research into ancestral objects and her own heritage.

BY ELISA SCARTON

MELBOURNE NOW



(pp. 78–9) **Jenna Lee** and **Kojima Shōten** *Balarr (To become light)* 2022. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australia Artists, 2023 © KYOTO ART CENTER

(above) Installation view of Jenna Lee and Kojima Shouten's *Balarr (To become light)* 2023 on display as part of the Melbourne Now exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne until 20 August 2023. Image: Sean Fennessy

(p. 81) Jenna Lee. Photograph: Jade Florence

In a quiet corner at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia thirteen paper lanterns sway overhead in a darkened room. The light they emit is soft, mesmeric. You step closer, craning your neck to get a better look. Up close they're extraterrestrial, alien-like or maybe like jellyfish.

The work is called *Balarr (To become light)*, 2023, and the shapes aren't reminiscent of creatures, real or imagined. They're dilly bags woven by artist and graphic designer Jenna Lee – a Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and Karajarri Saltwater woman with Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Anglo-Australian ancestry. She's afraid of the dark, she tells me. A fact not altogether irrelevant given her choice of medium.

'I genuinely have a phobia of the dark and so light for me has always been important,' she insists.

The lanterns, on display as part of *Melbourne Now* until 20 August, are Lee's response to this phobia. She seeks to literally banish the darkness from an otherwise windowless Gallery space. Of course, there's more to it, and this fear, expressed in a moment of earnest, is not included as part of the work's defining narrative. Instead, Lee speaks of her career-long fascination with the Gulumerridjin word *balarr.*

To make light, to become light, and to dawn. Three seemingly disparate definitions captured in one word. Lee has *balarr* tattooed on her body. It means so much to her as an artist and as a First Nations Australian.

'When I first started making art, my mum would very sweetly say, 'I love looking at your art because it doesn't look like Aboriginal art,' she explains.

'And I remember thinking, "That's because I don't look like [a First Nations person] either". My dad's generation, my aunties and uncles, all fought so hard to be Aboriginal, and growing up, I was confused about the concept of authentic Aboriginal art. I felt like I was an imposter – not Aboriginal enough to make 'Aboriginal art'.

'That's why I think it's really important for mixed First Nations people to be proud of their Aboriginality alongside their other family histories. They can sit aside one another and bolster each other because Australia has such a rich history of intermarrying and love.'

Balarr is in many ways a marriage of Lee's own heritage. Her mum is an Anglo-Australian (Scottish Irish) teacher who taught Lee how to turn paper into the string she would use to make dilly bags. Her father is First Nations, Japanese, Chinese and Filipino and made sure to always incorporate all four cultures into her childhood.

'I've given talks at the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne, and often people are surprised to hear about my family history, but it's fairly common. There are a lot of Asian Aboriginal families, especially in Victoria with the Gold Rush, and it's nice for audiences to realise this through artworks like *balarr* and through my own family, and perhaps consider their connections to Aboriginal Australia.'

Shinya Takeda, Coordinator of International Business at Kojima Shōten, was fascinated by Lee's story as well. The two were chatting as part of an online lantern-making workshop that came about after COVID-19 delayed Lee's two-month Kyoto residency in 2020. Kojima Shōten has been making traditional paper lanterns in Kyoto, Japan, since the Edo period (1603–1868) with brothers Syun and Ryo Kojima, and their father Mamoru now leading the studio.

Beaming into the Kojima Shōten workshop from her Melbourne home, Lee incidentally and serendipitously held up one of the dilly bags she was making. Takeda returned in kind with a Kyoto-style lantern, and both were taken aback by their structural similarities. A few online conversations later and *Balarr* was fully formed as a cross-cultural collaborative work – a combination of washi paper weaving and traditional lantern making, emblazoned with Gulumerridijin, English and Japanese words for light and darkness, day and night, dawn and dusk.

Stand close enough to the thirteen lanterns at NGV Australia and you'll see these words painted in confident brushstrokes of yellow, red and white ochre, all of which was collected by Lee and her family on Country in Darwin.

The trip coincided with a drone light show the artist designed with support from Elders from the Larrakia community and in collaboration with music producer Kuya James and composer Lena Kellie for the Darwin Festival and Fremantle Biennale in 2022 and 2021 respectively.

'My mum, dad and siblings live in Canberra, but we all went up to Darwin to watch the light show, and I got them to collect ochre for *Balarr* on the beach. It was a bit of a family effort to get enough.'

Lee mixed the clay earth pigments with nikawa – a traditional binder she learnt about in Japan. The artist did eventually make it to Kyoto for her residency, arriving just as the COVID-19 restrictions were lifting, the still eerily empty streets illuminated after sunset by Kojima Shōten lanterns.

Back in Melbourne, she is once again thinking about *balaar.*

'The Larrakia people are weirdly fortunate to have a well-compiled dictionary, but it's just a word list; there's no context. The nuance is lost,' says Lee.

'And I remember thinking, "If I dedicated my practice to working with just one word? Could I over the course of twenty, thirty, forty years build that context back?"

'I'm reading a lot of speculative First Nations fiction at the moment and it's amazing. I'm imagining what if there had been no European colonisation in Europe? What would the written language look like? What would commerce look like? What would trade look like? The lanterns in *Balaar* are one example of what could have been. Lantern making came down into Japan and China and maybe these trade routes could have continued on to Australia.

'A friend once said to me, "Darwin could have been the Singapore of Australia". We're so physically close to all our important international partners, so why not? It's such an interesting premise and one that I can't resist imaging through my future practice.'



SEE JENNA LEE'S *BALARR (TO BECOME LIGHT)* WITHIN *MELBOURNE NOW* ON LEVEL 3 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 20 AUGUST. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/MELBOURNE-NOW-2023

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ELISA SCARTON IS NGV SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR.

ON STAGE WITH THE WHEELER CENTRE



The Wheeler Centre will take over *Community Hall* on 29 July. Here Program Coordinators Diem Nguyen and Jamila Khodja tell *NGV Magazine* more.

Installation view of Mia Boe's *For the angels in paradise* 2023 on display as part of the Melbourne Now exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne. Image: Sean Fennessey

NGV: Can you tell us a little about your Community Hall event? What can visitors expect?
Diem Nguyen and Jamila Khodja: The NGV and the Wheeler Centre have brought together our collective backgrounds in visual art, literature and ideas to present a cross-artform event. Three local writers will each respond to a work in the exhibition with a creative reading, followed by a panel conversation with the artists themselves – Mia Boe, Deanna Hitti and Kelly Koumalatsos. Hosted by Myles Russell-Cook, the NGV's Senior Curator of Australian and First Nations Art, this event will be a wonderful celebration of art and storytelling, the influences of heritage and legacy on the creative process, as well as the links between the written word and visual art.

NGV: What role do you think the written form can play in enriching our understanding and appreciation of visual art and why do the two mediums work so well together?
DM and JK: We hope that the writers' creative responses will encourage audiences to engage in *Melbourne Now* in a more personal way – perhaps bringing their own cultural knowledge to their understanding of the artworks and installations. Visual art can be hard to put into words, to express how it makes you feel.

NGV: Some of our readers might not be familiar with the Wheeler Centre. Can you tell us a little bit about the organisation?
DN and JK: The Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas is a cultural organisation dedicated to readers, writers and conversation. Throughout the year, we offer a range of different events with a myriad of voices, both from Australia and around the world, including panels, conversations, readings, performances, literary lunches and storytelling galas.

NGV: Do you have a favourite artist or work in the NGV Collection to which you often return?
DN: I always love visiting the *NGV Triennial.* I remember being quite struck by Diamond Stingily's installation *In the middle but in the corner of 176th place*, 2019. It reminded me of all the second-place trophies I was awarded throughout my childhood, which prompted a deep reflection on my relationship with failure and triumph. I am looking forward to the next *NGV Triennial* and am excited to see what will surprise and delight me next.

JK: Personally, I am a religious attendee of NGV's fashion exhibitions, but I also regularly bring my young daughter to the Gallery. She has become *very* attached to an enormous gorilla sculpture that has sat in the outdoor space for a long time. I was delighted to learn recently that this piece – titled *Noble ape*, 2013, and created by Louise Paramor – was actually a part of the 2013 *Melbourne Now* exhibition. Sadly, the last time we visited our gorilla was nowhere to be found, and my daughter now believes that the 'monkey [is] on holiday'.

MELBOURNE NOW IS ON DISPLAY AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 20 AUGUST. YOU CAN FIND *COMMUNITY HALL* ON THE GROUND FLOOR. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/MELBOURNE-NOW-2023

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DOWN A DIFFERENT LANE WITH VISION AUSTRALIA



On 11 August, Vision Australia presents *Dark Memory Lane* at *Community Hall*. Vision Australia CEO Ron Hooton tells *NGV Magazine* more.

Dark Memory Lane with Vision Australia as part of *Melbourne Now* 2023.

NGV: Can you tell us a little about *Dark Memory Lane*? What can visitors expect?
Ron Hooton: In *Dark Memory Lane*, people will be able to walk in the shoes of three clients with varying levels of vision loss. You will be given simulation glasses that mirror each person's eye condition so you can experience what it is like to walk in their shoes and interact with the world. We want to illustrate how support, care, expert advice and technology can help clients come to terms with their vision loss, then journey towards understanding – not just how they can live but thrive with low vision.

NGV: Some of our readers might not be familiar with Vision Australia. Can you tell us a little bit about the organisation?
RH: Vision Australia is a leading national not-for-profit organisation that helps more than 30,000 Australians with low vision and blindness every year. We're the people you come to when vision loss, big or small, starts to impact daily life. We help people achieve independence, stay safe and increase their ability to participate in daily life. We offer everything from professional advice, emotional support and moments to connect with peers and retraining to adjust to life with vision loss.

NGV: In *Dark Memory Lane*, gallery-goers are invited to see what it's like to live with blindness or low vision. Why did you decide to share this experience with *Melbourne Now*?
RH: It's important to understand how others perceive and view the world. We hope by walking in the shoes of someone with vision loss, it will normalise the experience and show that with a few adjustments and a bit of help, life is not that different.

We also want people to come away from the experience with a new perspective on the implications of a vision loss diagnosis. There are so many ways people can continue doing the things they love with just a few life hacks, tech and expert advice.

We also think it's an opportunity to build empathy, understanding and check negative bias towards people with low vision and blindness. Biases hold people with a disability back. A lot of our clients have said prospective employers have made them feel like they are 'not of value to society' and that the employment process is both 'demeaning' and 'disheartening'. That should be enough to make us all look at ourselves closely.

NGV: Do you have a favourite artist or work in the NGV Collection to which you often return?
RH: I'm a bit of a technology aficionado, so any art that uses new and inventive ways of using technology or the digital realm is something I love. The popularity of artificial intelligence is also making for some interesting discussions on art and style, so I'm excited to see what the next *NGV Triennial* showcases.

I know for our clients, art is a very important part of their lives, even when their vision starts to deteriorate. Accessible exhibitions where people can touch the art, hear pieces vividly audio described or view art that makes use of contrasting colours is something I hope more galleries consider in the future.



Honouring Margaret Olley AC

Margaret Olley AC was born in Lismore in 1923 before moving to Brisbane where her love for painting was nurtured by school teacher and Melbourne National Gallery School trained artist Caroline Barker. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Olley's birth, writer, curator and longtime friend Christine France offers her personal reflections on the artist's life, work and her generous spirit.

As the Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre sets about celebrating the 100th anniversary of Margaret Olley's birth with the exhibition *Margaret Olley: Far from a Still Life.* it is interesting to look back at some of the works and times of this artist in the pre-digital era.

Olley always said she had an obsession: an obsession to paint. This obsession began early, as a boarder at the girls' school Somerville House in Brisbane. She once told the headmistress that she had just received a letter from her mother suggesting she should drop French and take an extra lesson in art.

ART ANNIVERSARIES

What the headmistress did not know was there was no such letter. Later she ceaselessly begged her mother, who wanted her to become a nurse, to let her go to Sydney and attend the East Sydney Technical College to receive a proper art school education. As she often said 'That was where my life began' and the obsession became a reality. When the whole of Sydney was on the streets celebrating the end of the war, Olley was in her room painting. The night she died she had just finished the last painting for an exhibition at Philip Bacon Galleries.

The NGV is fortunate to have three of Olley's early works. *Hill End ruins*, 1948, was purchased from her first exhibition at the Macquarie Galleries in Sydney. It was painted in the old gold mining town of Hill End outside Bathurst. She had been invited to stay there by fellow artist Donald Friend who, sick of Sydney social life, had purchased a small cottage where he could get on with his work. Both compulsive workers, they would rise early and work until the light faded.

Despite the freezing cold, which Olley would combat with a hot water bottle strapped to her stomach, they would go in different directions and paint all day. Most of Olley's attention was drawn to the stark eroded diggings and the blocky nature of the old buildings that revealed her interest in form, which was unlike the more decorative approach of many Sydney painters at that time. It may surprise some that in these early years of her career it was landscape not still life that was her main subject matter and her painting *New England landscape,* 1947 (Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney) was judged by artist Lloyd Rees to be the winner of the first Mosman Art Prize.

Drawing buildings has been a continuing interest in Olley's career and the NGV's *Kilmorey Terrace*, 1948, was among her earliest. Situated in Victoria Street, McMahons Point, it was not far from East Crescent Street where Olley shared a flat with fellow art student Margaret Cilento.

While travelling in Europe the following year, drawing became a way of life for Olley and continued throughout her many travels.

In 1948 William Dobell's portrait of Olley won the Archibald Prize and stirred up an enormous amount of publicity as it followed the court case over Dobell's previous controversial win with his portrait *Mr Joshua Smith*, 1943 (Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney). Olley was hounded by the press and suffered a great deal of embarrassment and criticism, so she was most relieved when her friend Anne Wienholt sent her the money to travel to Europe.

Travel restrictions following the war had been lifted and it was a time of great exodus for Australian artists, and after a month in London she travelled to Paris where she met up with fellow artists Moya Dyring and David Strachan. Dyring introduced Olley to Sir Francis Rose, a great favourite of American novelist Gertrude Stein. Like Olley, Rose was a compulsive worker and the two went on many sketching trips, including a trip to Venice. It was Rose who taught her the technique of monotype and there is a good example of this technique in the monotype *Nazare,* 1952, in the NGV Collection.

At the time Nazaré was a small Portuguese village, where fishing boats were pulled out of the water by bullocks and everyone wore tartan; women's full skirts were worn over layers of petticoats. They mended nets and sorted sardines on the beach. Despite being desperately poor, their lifestyle was fascinating to Olley.

In 1952 Olley's father died and she returned to Australia to be with her mother. During her time in Brisbane she painted several murals, one for the *French Art Today* exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery; one for Brisbane's Grosvenor Hotel; and another for Lennon's Hotel, before setting off on a trip with Donald Friend to Magnetic Island followed by the first of her many trips to Papua New Guinea.

The 1960s was a prize-winning period for Olley and she was awarded the Helen Rubenstein and the Redcliff Art Prize, among several others. It was also a time when she made a body of work featuring Indigenous girls, which was highly acclaimed, not as exotica but in a traditional artist and model study of light and Form.

Olley, who had always enjoyed painting landscapes and drawing boats, began increasingly to paint still life at home. She did not drive and was tired of people who kindly drove her to some destination then saying 'will you be much longer'? It was much easier for her to arrange flowers and objects at home, as she did for the NGV's *Dahlias and pears*, 1990.

Otherwise, if she could paint a harbour scene or a view from someone's house where she could be left alone untroubled by weather or transport, her subject matter knew no limitations.

Of course, Olley's contribution to art in Australia was not limited to her own work. She had been one of the greatest supporters of other artists and public galleries in our time. In 1990 she said 'painting and looking at art has given me the greatest pleasure in life and it is something I would like others to share'. Rather than give a sum of money to one gallery she decided she would support artists by buying their work and giving it to public galleries. She believed in art without epoch and when the Art Gallery of New South Wales purchased the 1888 Paul Cezanne painting *Banks of the Marne (Bords de la Marne)* in 2008 she gave a million-dollar donation for the purchase. She was also a great supporter of regional galleries, believing that an active gallery was the sign of a healthy community, and that art and music were a way of bringing people together to discuss ideas and thoughts. As she often said 'giving is like receiving [and] I would like to make it contagious'.

MARGARET OLLEY: FAR FROM A STILL LIFE IS ON DISPLAY AT THE TWEED REGIONAL GALLERY AND MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE IN SOUTH MURWILLUMBAH, NSW, UNTIL 8 OCTOBER. FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MARGARET OLLEY AC IN THE NGV COLLECTION AT NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/1685

CURATOR, HISTORIAN AND WRITER CHRISTINE FRANCE WAS MARGARET OLLEY AC'S LONGTIME FRIEND AND CO-TRUSTEE OF HER ESTATE. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF *MARGARET OLLEY*, PUBLISHED BY CRAFTSMAN HOUSE, SYDNEY IN 1990 WITH THE UPDATED EDITION PUBLISHED IN 2002.

(p. 84) **Margaret Olley AC** *Dahlias and pears* 1990. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Mrs E. M. Borrow, Fellow, 1990 © The Estate of Margaret Olley AC. Courtesy of Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane

VALE

John Olsen AO OBE (1928 – 2023)



John Olsen photographed at the Dinosaur Designs studio, August 2016. Photo: Hugh Stewart

Esteemed artist John Olsen AO OBE passed away on 24 May, leaving behind an enduring mark on the Australian art world. Throughout his remarkable career, Olsen built a significant connection with the NGV.

Born in Newcastle in 1928, Olsen left school when he was sixteen years old. He initially worked as a clerk, before embarking on his artistic career. Olsen enrolled in classes at the Dattilo Rubbo School of Art in Sydney in 1947 and, three years later, he commenced full-time studies at the Julian Ashton School in Sydney.

Olsen held his first exhibition at Sydney's Macquarie Galleries in 1955, establishing himself as a rising star in the local art scene. In 1961 the NGV acquired several works from his acclaimed *You Beaut Country* series. Olsen had commenced the series the year prior in 1960, following his return to Australia after three years travelling in England, France and Spain.

His unique style – which embraced abstraction, landscape and figuration – resulted in vibrant and evocative paintings. Olsen had an extraordinary ability to capture the essence of the Australian landscape, immersing audiences in the beauty of the country he so passionately depicted. His work serves as a visual testament to Olsen's connection with the landscape around him.

Olsen's works have become cornerstones of the NGV Collection and captivate audiences with their vibrant energy. In 2016, Olsen was celebrated at the NGV with the retrospective *You Beaut Country.* Over the course of his illustrious career, Olsen received widespread recognition and numerous accolades. In 2001, he was awarded an Order of Australia (AO) in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the visual arts. Additionally, he received the Australia Council Visual Arts Award in 2005.

Olsen was a prominent and influential figure in the Australian art scene, and beyond his individual artistic achievements, he was a highly regarded teacher and mentor. Olsen nurtured emerging talent and generously shared his knowledge and passion.

William Mora (1953 – 2023)



Robert Rooney *William Mora*, 1980 1980; 2014 {printed} from the *Portrait Photographs* 1978–87 series 1978–87. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Bequest of Robert Rooney, 2019 © Robert Rooney

Widely known and respected gallerist William Mora passed away peacefully at the age of 69 on 28 April, while surrounded by his family in his cherished home in Richmond.

The eldest son of renowned French-born Australian artist Mirka Mora, and restaurateur, art dealer and former Heide Museum of Modern Art board member Georges Mora, Mora was raised amid an innovative and bustling Melbourne arts scene. Mirka and Georges established Mirka Café in Melbourne's CBD in 1954 and went on to open Café Balzac in East Melbourne in 1956. Both venues attracted artists, poets and art patrons-alike, becoming hubs for creative company and sharing ideas. Mora and his brothers Philippe and Tiriel grew up in the company of renowned Modern Australian artists such as Charles Blackman, Albert Tucker and John Perceval, who would visit their family home or holiday house in Aspendale, which also neighboured the Mora's close friends and the founders of Heide, John and Sunday Reed.

In 1965 Georges Mora went on to establish a restaurant, hotel and gallery at the Tolarno Hotel in St Kilda. Working at the gallery, Mora learned the skill of running a commercial art gallery. In 1985 he opened his own space, William Mora Galleries, in Melbourne's CBD and in early 2000 reestablished the gallery on Tanner Street, Richmond. Over time the Richmond gallery also became his family residence and a studio where his mother lived and worked up until her death in 2018. William Mora Galleries represented Mirka Mora from 1987 and continues to represent The Estate of Mirka Mora today.

Over the years Mora consistently supported and represented early to established artists, showing a particular interest in modern art. He was also among an early wave of Australian gallerists to present solo exhibitions by First Nations artists and went on to work with many renowned practitioners, such as Ginger Riley Munduwalawala, Queenie McKenzie and Paddy Bedford. He sat on numerous committees and was an accredited valuer of Australian art after 1945, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art after 1970 and European and American prints after 1960.



NEW TO THE COLLECTION

Stories of saris

Three geographically and stylistically distinct saris linked by family lineage have recently joined the NGV Collection. All produced and purchased in India, these textiles form part of an intergenerational wedding trousseau (belongings collected by a bride before her marriage) passed down through the women members of the same family. Donor Anindita Basu, is the youngest of three generations of West Bengali women who sourced, wore and cared for these three saris for over a century. They became gifts handed down for keepsake and worn as formal attire for special occasions, demonstrating a valued hereditary cultural tradition.

BY SUNITA LEWIS



(top to bottom) **INDIAN** *Kanchipuram sari* c. late 19th century. Gift of Anindita Basu in memory of Mrs Jyoti Bose, 2023

INDIAN *Baluchari sari* c. 1930s. Gift of Anindita Basu in memory of Mrs Jyoti Bose, 2023

INDIAN *Sambalpuri sari* c. 1970s. Gift of Anindita Basu in memory of Mrs Jyoti Bose, 2023

The oldest of the three newly acquired saris, the *Kanchipurum sari,* was produced in the late nineteenth century in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and purchased by relatives of Anindita Basu's grandmother. Named after the city where they were originally produced, *Kanchipuram* saris are woven from pure mulberry silk thread and renowned for their quality and weight. According to Hindu mythology, Kanchi silk weavers are the descendants of Sage Mrikanda, a folk hero who wove cloth from lotus fibres for the gods. This temple sari, more than a century old, is a vibrant red shade with gold *zaree* (gilt-thread) detailing. *Kanchipuram* saris featuring zaree embroidery are often reserved for important ceremonial occasions, particularly weddings. In 2006, the Government of India recognised *Kanchipuram* saris as an official geographical indication for the region of Tamil Nadu. In India, geographical indication is given to products corresponding to a specific geographic location or origin, which are identified as a part of collective and intellectual heritage that needs to be protected and promoted.

Purchased by the donor's grandmother in West Bengal in the 1930s, the second sari, *Baluchari sari* was produced in the historic city of Murshidabad. Now predominantly woven in the city of Bishnupur and surrounding areas, *Baluchari* saris are known for depictions of folk tales, mythological scenes and *Nawabs* (noblemen) on the *pallu* (the loose end of a sari, worn over the shoulder or head). Over the centuries, motifs have evolved to reflect societal changes. Images of daily life, industrialisation and colonisation began appearing more frequently during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including East India Company officials and Europeans smoking or drinking. This particular sari features depictions of steam engines alongside a more traditional paisley pattern. *Baluchari* saris were granted the status of geographical indication for West Bengal in 2011.

Finally, the *Sambalpuri sari* was purchased by Basu's mother, Mrs Jyoti Bose, in the eastern Indian state of Odisha in the early 1970s. *Sambalpuri* saris are garments made in the Sambalpur, Balangir, Bargarth, Boudh and Sonepur districts of the eastern Indian state of Odisha. Granted geographical indication in 2010, these traditionally handwoven *bandha (ikat)* saris are tie-dyed before weaving with native Odisha colours, such as red, yellow, white and black. These same colours make up the face of Lord Jagannath, a popular Hindu deity worshipped in the region, and can be seen in this example that comprises rows of geometric pattern. A unique feature of *Sambalpuri* saris is their use of the double *ikat* technique, where both the warp and weft threads are dyed before weaving, resulting in intricate designs reflected almost identically on both sides of the fabric.

These three saris are superb additions to the Gallery's growing holdings of South Asian textiles. Aesthetically informed by the geography of production, this unique grouping of works illustrates the diversity of colour and pattern utilised in India. Each sari is a vibrant example of a distinct regional style and time period, connected through maternal legacy.

ALL THREE SARIS ARE ON DISPLAY ON LEVEL 1 NGV INTERNATIONAL.

SUNITA LEWIS IS NGV CURATORIAL PROJECT OFFICER, ASIAN ART.

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS ANINDITA BASU FOR HER GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE NGV COLLECTION



NEW TO THE COLLECTION

Karl Lagerfeld's autumn–winter 1996–97 collection

for Chanel was first showcased at the Ritz Hotel in Paris. A highlight of the collection was a red silk organza ensemble with exquisite embroidery by the renowned French embroiderers at Maison Lesage. The work recently joined the NGV Collection through the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family.

BY DR LILIANA POMAZAN

After Gabrielle *Coco* Chanel's death in 1971, her couture house remained open for business, but did not do well. In 1983, Karl Lagerfeld (1933–2019) created his last collection for Chloé for that year, and then took on the directional design responsibilities at the House of Chanel. His work flourished with creative ferment that revived the languishing fashion house from its long slumber. The haute couture and ready-to-wear collections changed dramatically after Lagerfeld's acceptance of this new role. While always paying homage to Chanel's legacy, Lagerfeld created hybrid versions of her collections, especially the ubiquitous Chanel suit and its accessories, giving her signature designs an increasingly contemporaneous aesthetic.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, Lagerfeld drew from many sources, from Surrealism to postmodernism, which influenced the shape and character of his subsequent fashion designs. The iconic designer's intuitive approach saw him adopting iconic Chanel motifs – bouclé tweed, interlocking Cs, gold chains, pearls, camellias, and dual-toned footwear.

First and foremost, Chanel was Lagerfeld's muse and inspiration. He personally organised an extensive archive of the founder's complete body of work, including personal images and other ephemera. In addition to Chanel, other muses were the exceptional modern women with whom he associated. In the early years, he had an important connection with Inès de La Fressange, but also later with supermodels Christy Turlington, Linda Evangelista, Kristen McMenamy, Claudia Schiffer and Kate Moss.

The NGV acquisition of Lagerfeld's autumn–winter 1996–97 exquisite haute couture ensemble, *Evening jacket, jumpsuit, skirt*, 1996, comes from the collection nicknamed 'The Stiletto Body' by the couturier. For him, 'the silhouette is elongated to death, because it makes a woman look endless, slim, slender, weightless, ageless – everything'.[1] The embodiment of this 'pin-thin' aesthetic was one of Lagerfeld's favourite models – Kate Moss, who wore the *Evening jacket, jumpsuit, skirt* ensemble on the runway. Four luxuriously embroidered jackets of various lengths were realised for the catwalk showcased at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in the prestigious Duchess of Windsor and Imperial Suites.

Always with a nod of respect to Chanel's legacy, Lagerfeld's design for the evening coat is created in red silk organza. Pocket placements are positioned under the bustline, as in many of Chanel's original tweed jackets. Her signature braid is applied to all the edges of the garment and cuffs are resplendent with ornate buttons channelling the design process of the grand couturière. Typical of postmodernist appropriation, Lagerfeld has emulated the traditional Nehru jacket style (a hip-length tailored coat) with the added emphasis of the vertical collar, giving the impression of lengthening the neck.

The renowned Maison Lesage designed and realised the sublime embroidery of the jacket. The extraordinary pattern is directly inspired by Chanel's cherished Coromandel screens from her Rue Cambon apartment in Paris. Chanel was not only photographed with her screens multiple times throughout her life, but used them in various ways to enhance her catwalk shows and photography shoots. For this opulent embroidered jacket, Maison Lesage reimagined the fantastical flora and fauna depicted in the screens of the late Ming period. The artisans used sequins, beads and tubes, forming the exquisite decoration finished in gold leaf over the entire jacket. Up close, the embellishment is magnificent in its virtuosity.

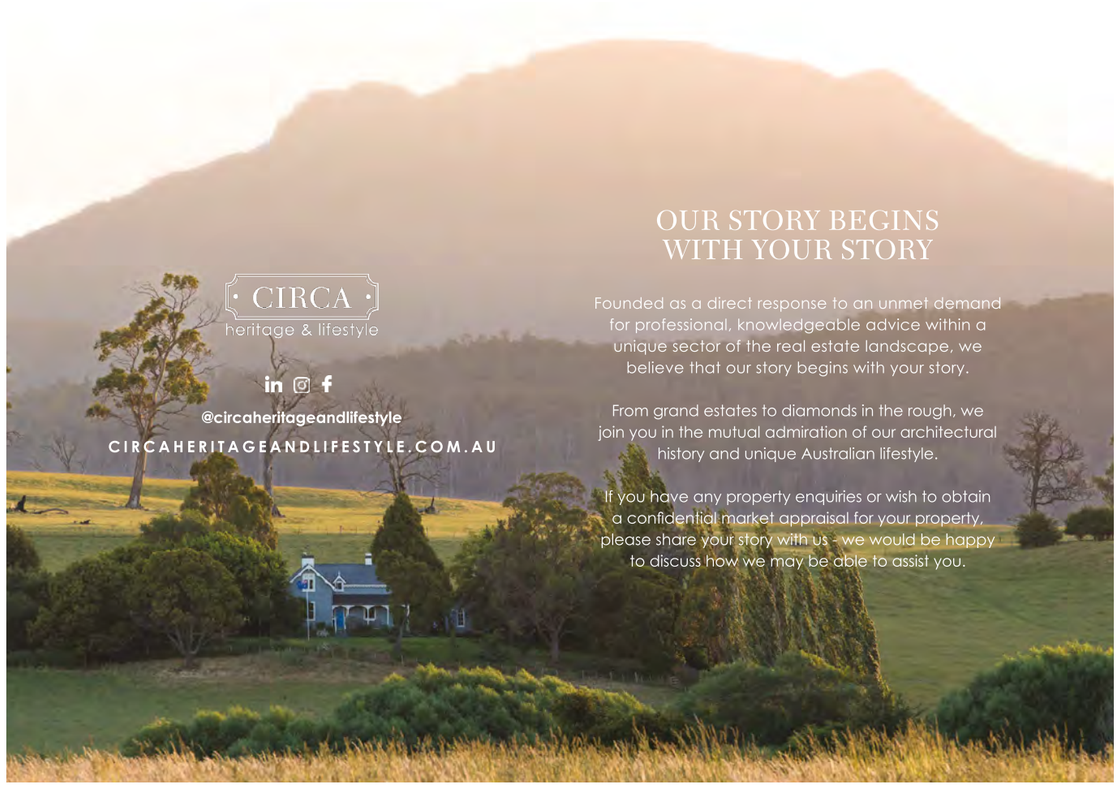
Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Maison Lesage has expertly produced sumptuous and highly elaborate embroidery created by hand by exceptionally skilled craftspeople. Maison Lesage elevates haute couture to the highest level and has done so in collaboration with many important couturiers, including Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, Yves Saint Laurent and, in this case, Karl Lagerfeld.

Lagerfeld was one of the most significant, original and prolific fashion designers of the late twentieth to early twenty-first centuries. Lagerfeld's haute couture collections for the House of Chanel are variants of the original elements of Chanel's remarkable modernist collections, which he transformed into an eclectic mix of disparate fashion modes. Lagerfeld brought Chanel out of the middle-aged bourgeoisie, opening it up to a younger clientele by using postmodernist concepts of fashion design to bridge the gap between high and popular culture. Lagerfeld's irreverent and bold stylistic revolution bore fruit. It is not since the days of its founder that the House of Chanel has received such recognition from the worldwide community of fashion *cognoscenti* and the media.

EVENING JACKET, JUMPSUIT, SKIRT 1996, WAS GENEROUSLY DONATED BY KRYSTYNA CAMPBELL-PRETTY AM AND FAMILY THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S CULTURAL GIFTS PROGRAM, 2023. FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CHANEL WORKS IN THE COLLECTION AT NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/8731

DR LILIANA POMAZAN IS AN AUTHOR, FASHION STUDIES LECTURER AND FASHION PRACTICE HISTORIAN.

CHANEL, Paris (Couture House) **Karl Lagerfeld** (Designer) **Maison Lesage, Paris** (Embroidery House) **François Lesage** (Designer) *Evening coat, jumpsuit, and skirt* 1996, autumn/winter 1996 – 97. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gift Program, 2023



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The Memory Palace: Cyrus Tang

MAJOR EXHIBITION
TOWN HALL GALLERY
WED 26 JUL – SAT 21 OCT



Image: Cyrus Tang, 'Lacrimae Rerum - 4505.00s', 2016, archival pigment print, 100 x 100cm, image courtesy of the artist and ARC ONE Gallery.

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Opening:
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2023 Judge: Asher Bilu



Image © George Eustice: *Sitting figure.*
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MAKING NEWS



NGV GIFTED WORKS BY PREEMINENT SURREALIST SCULPTOR HANS ARP

NGV

Twenty-four works by German-French artist Hans Arp (1886-1966) have been generously gifted to the NGV as part of the largest global donation of the artist's work to date. With this substantial gift of twenty-one plasters and three bronze works from the artist's estate, Stiftung Arp e.V, the NGV will house the most significant holdings of sculptures by Arp in the Asia-Pacific region.

Arp was one of the founders of the Dada art movement which emerged during World War I and challenged conventional definitions of art. His experimental and radical works were also included in *Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)* and Surrealism exhibitions, and he became known for his 'biomorphic' style of sculpture, which echoed organic forms occurring in nature. The artist's intensive use of plaster allowed him to make and remake, apply, and test dynamic modelling and sculpting techniques to produce his polymorphic forms.

The NGV is one of 10 museums worldwide – and the only institution in the Asia Pacific region – to welcome works from an extraordinary collection of 220 plasters and bronzes produced by the artist between 1933 and 1966. This unprecedented donation also marks the first step in the establishment of a global network of museums that will collaborate on new models of cooperative research into Arp's work, drawing upon across diverse perspectives and expertise.

ANNOUNCING THE NGV DECORATIVE ARTS CONSERVATION FELLOW

MaryJo Lelyveld

The NGV was awarded a generous three-year grant from the Gidleigh Foundation to support a Decorative Arts Conservation Fellow to facilitate the NGV's commitment to excellence in the research, treatment and preservation of the Collection, and the commitment of the Gidleigh Foundation to decorative arts preservation and skills development across the state and regional collections.

The NGV Decorative Arts collection crosses Australian, European and North American early arts and crafts traditions to works from the present day. Conservation of this collection requires broad knowledge of a range of materials, including ceramics, glass, metalwork, jewellery and furniture, as well as a comprehensive overview of art periods and styles.

This Fellowship is unique in Australia and offers a rare opportunity for the development of the conservation profession. It will contribute greatly to the conservation of the NGV Decorative Arts collection as well as support decorative arts preservation practices more broadly across regional Victorian public collections.

BOOK INTO NEW ADULT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Zoe Kirkby

NGV Adult Learning returns over winter, with opportunities for learners of all levels to deepen their engagement with the world through art and design history and ideas. These in-person and online courses draw from the Collection and exhibitions, featuring respected voices and experts from the NGV and internationally.

Two self-paced interactive online courses will open for enrolment in August:

Impressionism introduces participants to this significant and influential movement in international art history, exploring the social and historical contexts that paved the way for this highly innovative and experimental movement, and the groundbreaking people, techniques and technologies behind its enduring legacy.

In *Colour,* NGV curators and special guests guide participants through a study of the various facets of colour, including colour theory, the history of pigments, the science behind colour and our relationship with it.

Colour is available as an online course as well as a two-day intensive hosted at NGV International, which includes a before-hours viewing of the NGV Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2023 *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*.

This August will also see the launch of the second *Observations* online seminar series, exploring the history of design and decorative arts from the seventeenth through to the twentieth century. Uncovering a treasure trove of design objects in the NGV Collection, and across three full-day online seminars between August and October, *Observations* will feature presentations by world-leading experts from the UK, Europe, Asia and the United States sharing their research on key periods in history from around the world that continue to influence contemporary design history.

THE NGV WARMLY ACKNOWLEDGES A DONOR WHO WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

NGV PUBLICATIONS AWARDS

Adele D'Souza

We are proud to share that the NGV publication *QUEER: Stories from the NGV Collection* has won Book of the Year and Best Designed Fully Illustrated Book Over $50 at the Australian Book Design Awards.

Thank you to NGV Graphic Designers Karina Soraya and Dirk Hiscock, and the Publications, Graphic Design and Curatorial teams for making this achievement possible.

NEW EXHIBITION FOR FAMILIES

Kate Ryan

Opening ahead of the school holidays, the latest NGV children's exhibition *Up, Down and All Around: Daniel Emma for Kids* invites young budding designers to discover the role of design through a series of design challenges and hands-on activities created by industrial designers Daniel To and Emma Aiston.

Children can exercise their creative thinking and use their problem-solving skills when they draw new objects inspired by plates of food rotating on a sushi train, build new structures using geometric forms, make a snack using unexpected ingredients and imagine new images from existing sets of colourful shapes.

Industrial designers, Daniel To and Emma Aiston established design studio Daniel Emma in 2008. They work collaboratively on a wide range of projects from designing and producing objects and furniture to creating installations and exhibitions. They also design products for leading brands including Hay, Areaware and Petite Friture. They approach design by looking to create the unexpected from simple objects using simple forms, drawing influence and insight from daily activities and rituals.

Daniel Emma has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally and featured in Melbourne Design Week, and the Rigg Design Prize. Their works are represented in the NGV Collection.

THIS EXHIBITION IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY OFFICEWORKS, CITY OF MELBOURNE AND SPENCER KO.

OPEN DAILY UNTIL 8 OCTOBER 2023.

EXPLORE THE NGV COLLECTION AND EXHIBITIONS WITH NGV VOLUNTARY GUIDES

Michele Stockley

In conjunction with *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*, NGV Guides lead free thirty-minute drop-by introductory talks in the Clemenger BBDO auditorium every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday at 10.30am, and free tours of the exhibition on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2.30pm.

From July, take in a free 'Melbourne Stories' tour of the NGV Collection at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

SEE NGV.MELBOURNE/WHATS-ON/PROGRAMS-EVENTS FOR ALL TOURS OR SCAN THE CODE.

FRANÇOISE GILOT (1921–2023)

Laurie Benson

Inspired by her mother who was a watercolourist, Françoise Gilot said at the age of five that she wanted to become a painter. Her father, however, wished her to pursue a career in law, but even before Gilot completed her legal studies, she committed to becoming an artist.

During the German occupation of Paris she studied art at the Académie Julian, the Académie Ranson and the École des Beaux-Arts from 1943–45.

Her early abstract paintings feature strong and vibrant colours, but she also disciplined herself to draw from life.

In 1943, she met Pablo Picasso, forty years her senior, and soon they became a couple. They separated in 1953.

The NGV Collection features three works by Gilot, including *Blue eyes*, 1965, purchased with funds donated by the Bowness Family Foundation and George and Patricia Kline and family, 2017.

Blue eyes is an expressive portrait that derives its power through strong colour and lines with the viewer's attention being engagingly drawn to the sitter's blue eyes. Perhaps this sharp focus on a thoughtful iconic female figure is a conscious expression of an artist no longer under the yolk of the authoritarian Picasso.

Highly intelligent, articulate and talented, Gilot left a great legacy as an author, activist and above all as an artist. She passed away at the age of 101, leaving a rich career that spanned more than eighty years.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FRANÇOISE GILOT AT NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/23959

DONATE TO THE 2023 NGV REMBRANDT APPEAL

Misha Agzarian

The NGV is delighted to continue the 2023 NGV Rembrandt Appeal, centred around the extraordinary print, *Abraham Francen, Apothecary,* c. 1657. This year, the NGV has an exciting opportunity to add a rare and historically significant work by Rembrandt, one of the leading Dutch masters, to the Collection. The NGV is honoured to hold a strong representation of this enduringly compelling artist, however this extraordinary opportunity enables NGV to add an important work in Rembrandt's late style to the Collection.

We thank those who have already supported this Appeal – NGV Founder Benefactors Ken Harrison AM & Jill Harrison OAM, NGV Foundation Board Member and Life Members Barry Janes & Paul Cross, and NGV Foundation Member Neil Young KC for their leadership donations towards this exciting acquisition opportunity. See this work in *Rembrandt: True to Life*, on display at NGV International until 10 September.

DONATE ONLINE TODAY AT NGV.MELBOURNE/DONATE OR SCAN THE QR CODE.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV with Hans Arp's *Growth* (*Croissance*)1938, cast 1960 and *Crown of buds II* (*Couronne de Bourgeons II*) 1936, cast c.1950, existing works in the NGV Collection. Photo: Tim Carrafa

DESIGN STORE

Explore an exciting new retail collection in conjunction with Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2023 exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*.



NGV Design Store *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* collection. Art Director/Producer/Stylist: Emma Byrne. Photographer: Victoria Zschommler

The *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* range showcases Bonnard's vibrant use of colour and tone, with key artworks translated to silk scarves, candles, tote bags, jigsaw puzzles, tea towels, prints, placemats, tech cases and greeting cards.

Working closely with India Mahdavi and her studio team, the exciting and exclusive range features textiles and accessories drawn from wallpaper prints featured in the exhibition.

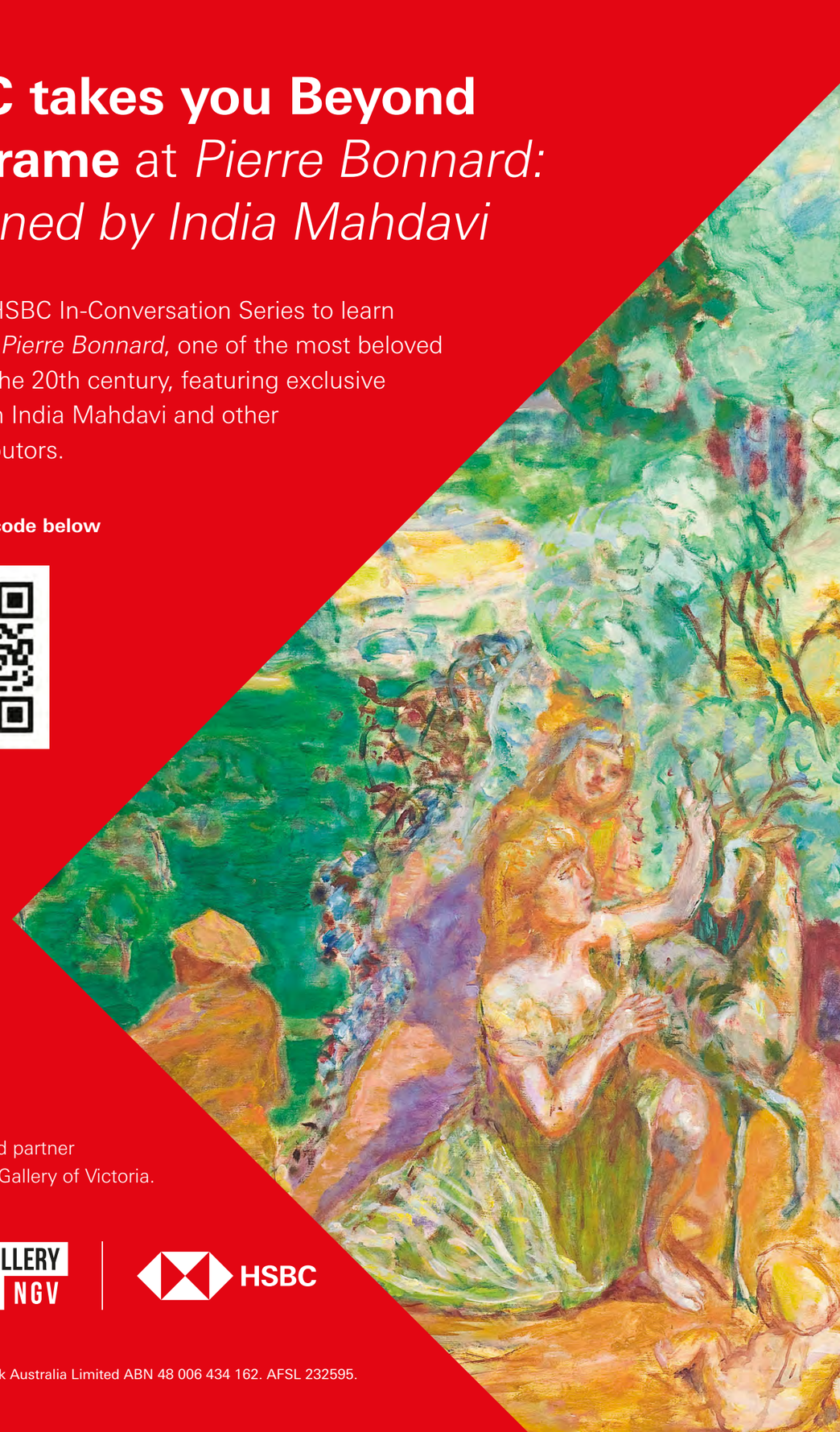
The NGV x India Mahdavi range includes caps, bucket hats, shopper bags, placemats, paper napkins, a tablecloth, apron and oven mitts, all exclusive to the NGV design store.

Mahdavi's 'petits objets' are also available to purchase in the design store, including her signature Baby Bishop stools, scented candles and serving tray, which will be displayed alongside additional designer French homewares and accessories.

HSBC takes you Beyond the Frame at *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*

Watch the HSBC In-Conversation Series to learn more about *Pierre Bonnard*, one of the most beloved painters of the 20th century, featuring exclusive content with India Mahdavi and other NGV contributors.

Scan the QR code below

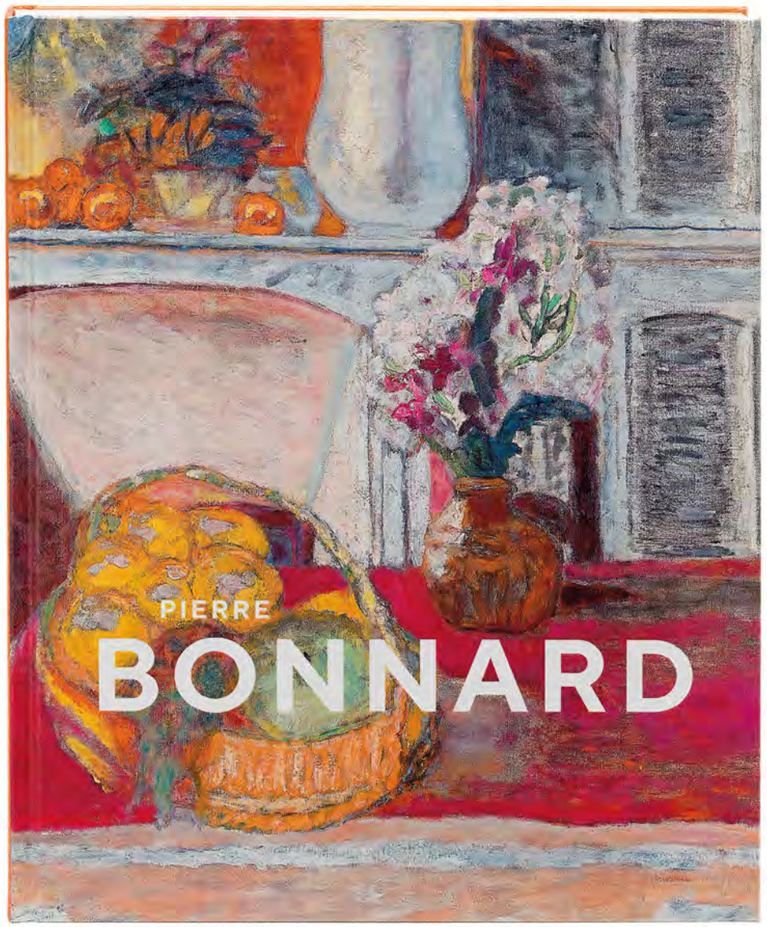


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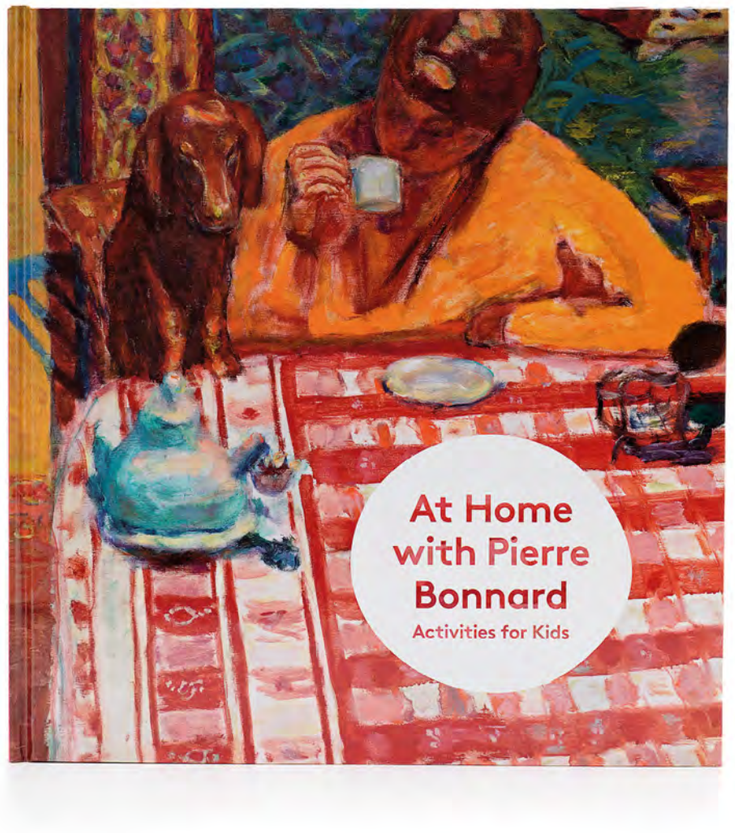
Pierre Bonnard

Isabelle Cahn, Ted Gott, Miranda Wallace, Meg Slater, Georgina Downey, Mark Taylor and Véronique Serrano

RRP: $59.95

Pierre Bonnard is one of the most beloved painters of the twentieth century, celebrated for his use of colour to convey profound emotion. He created book illustrations, posters and theatre décor during his career but is best known as a painter of domestic scenes and everyday life whose work speaks to the soul. *Pierre Bonnard* presents more than 100 works by Bonnard, spanning the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, including more than 50 paintings from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, with which the NGV has partnered on the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2023. With incisive essays on the artist's life and work, and on India Mahdavi's extraordinary scenography for the exhibition, *Pierre Bonnard* affirms the artist's position as a great painter not only in his time but in ours.

Pierre Bonnard published by National Gallery of Victoria in partnership with the Musée d'Orsay, Paris 2023



At Home with Pierre Bonnard: Activities for Kids

Kate Ryan, with illustrations by Cally Bennett

Ages 4+

RRP: $24.95

Eating breakfast at the table. Feeding a pet. Playing in the garden. These everyday moments inspired French artist Pierre Bonnard to paint some of the most beautiful works of the twentieth century. *At Home with Pierre Bonnard: Activities for Kids* introduces young readers to the artist and his art. With fun activities, colourful illustrations and reproductions of works by Pierre Bonnard, this activity book for children will fire their imagination, spark curiosity and encourage creativity. Play games at home and create colourful drawings inspired by Pierre's art. Look out for the animals in his paintings along the way!

AVAILABLE IN STORE AND ONLINE AT THE NGV DESIGN STORE. NGV MEMBERS RECEIVE A 10 PERCENT DISCOUNT. NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS RECEIVE A 15 PERCENT DISCOUNT.

At Home with Pierre Bonnard: Activities for Kids published by National Gallery of Victoria 2023

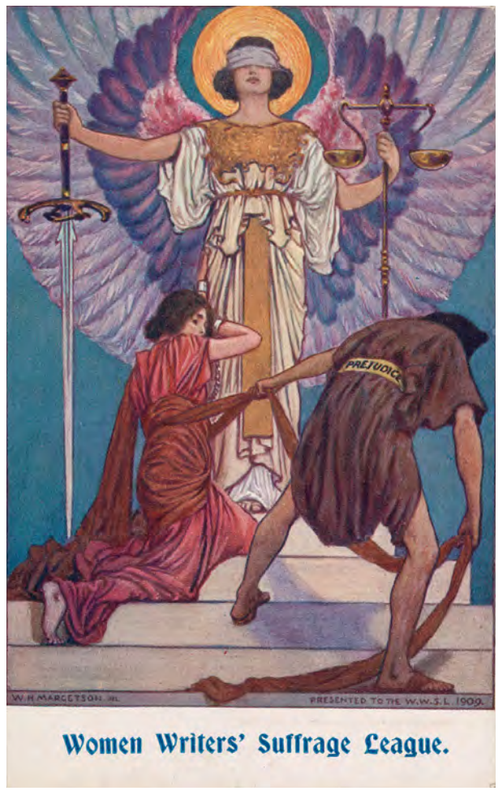
ADULT LEARNING

OBSERVATIONS 2023

The NGV's online seminar series, *Observations*, returns to examine the impact and influence of design from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

With a focus on the NGV's leading collection of historical decorative arts and design, historians, writers and curators from around the world delve into the movements, materials and manufacturers that shaped global design across three centuries. Topics include the role of design in the emergence of trade relations between Asia and Europe, to the rich design histories of Japan, South Korea and India.

Attendees also learn about key international design manufacturers including Wedgwood and Sèvres, and the wide-reaching influences of Art Nouveau, Shaker and Bauhaus design. With spotlight focuses on major twentieth century designers, *Observations* offers a range of perspectives on the enduring influence of design, experienced through the depth and breadth of the NGV Collection.The NGV warmly acknowledges a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.



SEMINAR 1 – DESIGN IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD: 1600–1700
Introducing the materials, technologies and manufacturers that shaped global design in times of change.

SEMINAR 2 – INDUSTRIALISATION AND THE RISE OF MODERNISM: 1800–1900
Situating the emergence of key design styles, including Art Nouveau, Shaker design and the Art and Crafts movement in Europe and North America, the Meiji period in Japan and the craft, trade and role of daily life on design in India.

SEMINAR 3 – TWENTIETH CENTURY DESIGN: 1900–1970
Introducing designers and design styles that reimagined modernism and exported radical new ideas across the world, including the work of designers Isamu Noguchi, George Nakashima, Charlotte Perriand, Frank Lloyd Wright and Ray and Charles Eames, and the Bauhaus, Milan Memphis and Surrealist movements.

The *Observations* program begins in August with seminars streamed online and accompanied by live events. NGV Members and educators receive discounted tickets to individual seminars and the series.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TICKETS VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/EXPLORE/COLLECTION/OBSERVATIONS

(left) **William Henry Margetson** (artist) England 1861–1940 **Women Writers' Suffrage League, London** (publisher) *Women Writers' Suffrage League* 1909. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Shaw Research Library Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family Suffrage Research Collection



Closing Soon

Catch *Melbourne Now* before it closes 20 August.



First staged in 2013, the inaugural *Melbourne Now* exhibition was an unprecedented survey of some of the most exciting local contemporary practitioners. Ten years on, *Melbourne Now 2023* again highlights the latest art, architecture, design, and cultural practice shaping Melbourne.

Bold in scale, *Melbourne Now* is displayed throughout all levels of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, showcasing new works and commissions by emerging, mid-career and senior practitioners as well as local collectives.

MELBOURNE NOW CLOSES ON 20 AUGUST. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/MELBOURNE-NOW-2023

MELBOURNE NOW IS SUPPORTED BY MAJOR PARTNER MACQUARIE GROUP, LEARNING PARTNER DEAKIN UNIVERSITY, SUPPORTERS DULUX AUSTRALIA, NEC, AND TOURISM PARTNER SOFITEL MELBOURNE ON COLLINS.

In The Next Issue

The September–October issue of *NGV Magazine* celebrates the exhibitions the NGV has in store as we head into summer 2023.

An array of new exhibitions and installations are set to open at NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia in the coming months. In the next issue of *NGV Magazine*, we take you behind the scenes of *Photography: Real and Imagined*, which opens on 13 October. In the NGV's largest survey of the photography collection, the exhibition includes more than 200 works by Australian and international photographers and artists working with photo-media from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and is set to include recent acquisitions on display for the very first time.

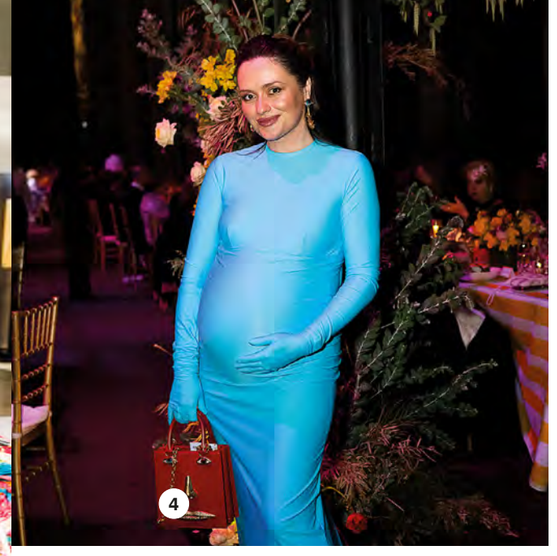
Also in this issue, we explore *Watercolour Country,* which brings together one hundred watercolours made by Arrernte, Western Arrernte, and Kemarre/Loritja artists working at Hermannsburg, across generations.

(above) Installation view of Troy Emery's *Mountain climber 2022* on display as part of the Melbourne Now exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne until 20 August. Purchased with funds donated by Tapestry Foundation of Australia, Dr. Brett Archer, Alan Roberts and family, John Rush KC and Sandra Rush, Janet Whiting AM, Phil Lukies and family, and donors to the NGV Summer Appeal, 2023. Image: Tom Ross



People


1


4

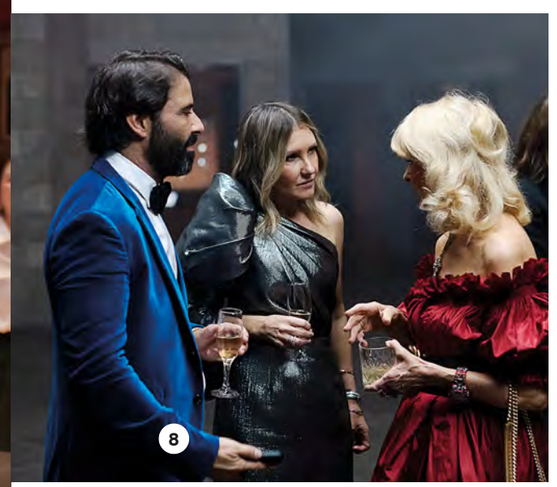

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1. Paula Savage, winner of the 2023 Melbourne Design Week Award presented by Major Partner Mercedes-Benz, pictured with Director of Marketing at Mercedez-Benz, Gavin Allen and NGV Director, Tony Ellwood AM at Melbourne Design Fair 2023. Photography: Aaron Francis 2. Dr Michael Weymouth and Olga Kononchuk at the 2023 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit 3. Carol Sisson at the 2023 NGV Annual Giving Dinner at NGV: International. Photo: Martin Wurt 4. Anastasia Fai Kogan at the 2023 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit 5. Karen Needs, The Honourable Tim Pallas MP and Susan van Wyk, NGV Senior Curator of Photography, at the 2023 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit 6. Daniel To and Emma Aiston, in *Up, Down and All Around: Daniel Emma for Kids* at NGV International. Photo: Eugene Hyland 7. Annie Smithers and Susan Thompson at the 2023 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit 8. David Abela, Tania Austin and NGV Trustee and Foundation Board Member Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM at the 2023 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit 9. Christophe Leribault, President Musee d'Orsay, designer India Mahdavi and Tony Ellwood AM at the *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* exhibition opening at NGV International. Photo: Liz Sunshine

AROUND VICTORIA



THE MEMORY PALACE: CYRUS TANG

26 July – 21 October
Venue Town Hall Gallery
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn

boroondara.vic.gov.au/arts

The exhibition *The Memory Palace: Cyrus Tang* features highlights from Cyrus Tang's multidisciplinary art practice. Tang examines the paradox of reconstructing ephemeral mental images and sensations in permanent materials, using sculpture, photography, video and installation, to reveal the sentiments of nostalgia within memory and fantasy.

DAVID ROSETZKY: AIR TO ATMOSPHERE

Until 3 September
Venue Castlemaine Art Museum
14 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine VIC 3450

castlemaineartmuseum.org.au

David Rosetzky is collaborating with members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Central Regional Victoria, including &so, Eden Swan, Terence Jaensch and Rhett D'Costa among others, to create a major exhibition commissioned by Castlemaine Art Museum. This large collaborative and multi-disciplinary work includes photography, filmmaking, performance, publishing, music, song, choreography by Jo Lloyd and social events created with and about local artists and community members.

FAYEN D'EVIE: I BRAVE A WHIRLWIND OF DUST, WHILE THOSE ABOUT ME CLOSE THEIR EYES…

26 July – 19 November
Venue Deakin University Art Gallery
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway, Burwood

Fayen d'Evie is an artist and writer, born in Malaysia, raised in Aotearoa New Zealand, and now living in the bushlands of Jaara country, Australia. This exhibition celebrates d'Evie's far reaching and influential practice that explores access as a force of new creative potentialities. Using sound, touch, movement, performance and language, d'Evie expands upon the limitations of the visual arts. Curated by James Lynch, this exhibition surveys recent projects with a range of interdisciplinary collaborators including, among others, performance maker Alex Craig, dancers Benjamin Hancock and Anna Seymour, printmaker Trent Walter, and paintings by the San Francisco-based artist and advocate Jennifer Justice.

CURRENT: GAIL MABO, LISA WAUP, DOMINIC WHITE

26 July – 21 October
Venue McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery
390 McClelland Drive, Langwarrin

mcclelland.org.au

Current features newly commissioned and recent work by three First Nations artists, Gail Mabo (Meriam), Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara/Torres Strait Islands) and Dominic White (Palawa/Trawlwoolway). Their work affirms their powerful connection to their lands, waters and ancestors. The exhibition highlights the three vital and contemporary multidisciplinary practices and references the movement in the passages of water along the eastern coast of Australia connecting land and people of the Torres Strait in the far north to Tasmania in the south. The *Current* mentorship program will support emerging First Nations curators and First Nations writers with a major exhibition catalogue.

WITH THANKS TO THE PUBLIC GALLERIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA. VISIT PGAV.ORG.AU FOR MORE EXHIBITIONS.

Cyrus Tang *Lacrimal Return 4505.00s* 2016. Courtesy of the artist and ARC1, Melbourne
© Cyrus Tang and ARC1, Melbourne

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with Christopher Lawrence | 20–23 October 2023 (4 days)
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with Scott Curry
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Credits: Teatro Regio di Parma © Teatro Regio/Municipality of Parma; Orava Quartet, photography by Dylan Evans; Scott Curry. Photo: Lyndon Mechielsen / Newspix

LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

(cover)
Installation view of **Pierre Bonnard**
French 1867–1947
The studio with mimosa
(*L'Atelier au mimosa*) 1939–46
oil on canvas
127.5 × 127.5 cm
Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle
Purchased from Charles Terrasse, 1979
(AM 1978 732)
Photo: Lillie Thompson

Installation view of **India Mahdavi**
Femme à la robe à pois blancs 2023
Wallpaper design
© India Mahdavi
Photo: Lillie Thompson

p. 7
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
Twilight, or *The croquet game*
(*Crépuscule, ou La Partie de croquet*) 1892
oil on canvas
130.0 × 162.2 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Gift of Daniel Wildenstein through the Society of Friends of the Musée d'Orsay, 1985 (RF 1985 8)
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

p. 7
Dod Procter
In a strange land 1919 (detail)
oil on canvas
76.2 × 61.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Mrs E. M. Gerard Shaw, 1946
© the Artist's Estate. All Rights Reserved / Bridgeman Images

p. 9
Jenna Lee and Kojima Shōten
Balarr (To become light) 2022 (detail)
washi paper, bamboo, earth pigments. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australia Artists, 2023. 3
© Kyoto Art Center

p. 16–7
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
The dining room in the country (*Salle à manger à la campagne*) 1913
oil on canvas
164.5 × 205.7 cm
Minneapolis Institute of Art
The John R. Van Derlip Fund (54.15)
Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art

p. 20
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
Twilight, or *The croquet game* (*Crépuscule, ou La Partie de croquet*) 1892
oil on canvas
130.0 × 162.2 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Gift of Daniel Wildenstein through the Society of Friends of the Musée d'Orsay, 1985 (RF 1985 8)
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

p. 21
Utagawa Hiroshige
Japanese 1797–1858
Hibiscus – Flowers of the four seasons
woodcut (colour)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1910 (510-2)

p. 22
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
Paris, Rue de Parme on Bastille Day (*Paris, Rue de Parme, le 14 juillet*) 1890
oil on canvas
79.2 × 40.3 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon (1995.47.2)
Photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

p. 24
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
The cab horse (*Le Cheval de fiacre*) c. 1895
oil on wood
29.7 × 40.0 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection (1970.17.4)
Photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

p. 25
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
Paris boulevard at night
(*Vue de Paris, la nuit*) 1900
oil on paperboard
45.1 × 58.1 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Bequest of John T. Spaulding (48.52)
Photograph © 2023 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

pp. 26–7
Merlyn Evans
The jail 1950
oil on canvas
61.0 × 91.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1953
© The estate of the artist

p. 28
William Roberts
Playground c. 1934
pencil and colour wash and watercolour
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1956
3376-4
© Estate of William Roberts. By permission of the William Roberts Society.

p. 29
Dod Procter
In a strange land 1919
oil on canvas
76.2 × 61.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Mrs E. M. Gerard Shaw, 1946
© the Artist's Estate. All Rights Reserved / Bridgeman Images

p. 35
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
Man and woman (*L'Homme et la femme*) 1900
oil on canvas
115.0 × 72.3 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Acquired, 1948 (RF 1977 76)
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Gérard Blot

pp. 36–7
Édouard Vuillard
French 1868–1940
Family lunch (*Le Déjeuner en famille)* 1899
oil on canvas
58.2 × 91.8 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris Bequest of Mme Lucie Grandjean-Hessel, 2016
(RF MO P 2016 9)
Photo © Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt

p. 38
Pierre Bonnard
French 1867–1947
Young girl with black stockings
(*La Jeune Fille aux bas noirs*) 1893
oil on wood
24.0 × 17.0 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Gift of Zeïneb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011 (RF 2011 6)
Photo © Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt

p. 39
Édouard Vuillard
French 1868–1940
Conversation at the Natansons' at Valvins
(*La conversation, chez les Natanson à Valvins*) 1896
oil on cardboard
29.8 × 36.3 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023 (2023.6)

p. 40
Installation view of **Pierre Bonnard**
French 1867–1947
Coffee (*Le Café*) 1915
oil on canvas
73.0 × 106.5 cm
Tate, London
Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the NACF 1941 (N05414)
Photo: Lillie Thompson

Installation view of **Pierre Bonnard**
French 1867–1947
Dining room at Le Cannet
(*La salle à manger au Cannet*) 1932
oil on canvas
96.0 × 100.7 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
On deposit at Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet
Accepted as payment of debts, 2009
(RF 2009 13)
Photo: Lillie Thompson

Installation view of **Pierre Bonnard**
French 1867–1947
Still life: Plate with fruit
(*Nature morte: assiette et fruits*) 1921
oil on canvas
41.3 × 50.5 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Bequest of Baroness Eva Gebhard-Gourgaud, 1965 (RF 1977 85)
Photo: Lillie Thompson

Installation view of **India Mahdavi**
Intérieur au fond jaune 2023
Wallpaper design
© India Mahdavi
Photo: Lillie Thompson

Installation view of **India Mahdavi**
Femme à la robe quadrillé sur un fond vert 2023
Wallpaper design
© India Mahdavi
Photo: Lillie Thompson

pp. 42–3
Salvador Dalí
conceived in 1937–38, executed by Green & Abbott 1938
Mae West Lips Sofa
wool, horsehair, wood and metal
77.0 × 205.7 × 96 cm
2023 NGV Annual Appeal in memory of Robert J. Wylde, 2023
© Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí. VEGAP/ Copyright Agency, 2023.

p. 47
Pierre Bonnard (artist)
French 1867–1947
Claude Terrasse (composer)
French 1867–1923
Libraries-Imprimeries Réunies (Ancienne Maison Quantin), Paris
(publishers)
France active late 19th century
F. Allier Père et fils (printer)
France active late 19th century
Petit Solfège illustré (*Small Musical Primer*) 1893
illustrated book with 30 offset lithographs
21.2 × 28.6 cm
Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by John and Cecily Adams, Dr Peter Chu, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2020

p. 48 (top, middle above)
Auguste Lumière
French 1862–1954
Louis Lumière
French 1864–1948
Mealtime for baby (Le Repas de Bébé)
1895
black-and-white 35mm film transferred to digital video, silent, 42 sec
Courtesy Institut Lumière

p. 48 (bottom, middle below)
Auguste Lumière
French 1862–1954
Louis Lumière
French 1864–1948
Place des Cordeliers in Lyon (Place des Cordeliers à Lyon) 1895
black-and-white 35mm film transferred to digital video, silent, 40 sec
Courtesy Institut Lumière

pp. 56–7
Installation view of
Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn
Dutch 1606–1669
Self-portrait 1659
oil on canvas
84.5 × 66.0 cm
Bredius/Gerson 51; RRP VI 274
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Andrew W. Mellon Collection (1937.1.72)
Photo: Tom Ross

p. 60
Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn
Dutch 1606–1669
Self-portrait etching at a window 1648
etching and drypoint, 6th state
16.0 × 13.0 cm (plate)
16.8 × 13.7 cm (sheet)
Bartsch 22; Hind 229 v/v; White & Boon 22 v/v; NHD 240 vi/ix
Felton Bequest, 1958 (3829-4)

p. 61
Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn
Christ Presented to the People: oblong plate 1655
drypoint and plate tone, 5th state
35.8 × 45.6 cm (plate)
36.1 × 45.9 cm (sheet)
close up
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1940 (1082-4)
close up

p. 64
(top)
Utagawa Hiroshige
Totsuka, *Motomachi fork* c. 1833–1834
(Totsuka, Motomachi betsudo)
from the *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido (Tokaido gojusan tsugi no uchi)* series
colour woodblock
23.8 × 36.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022

(bottom)
Utagawa Hiroshige
Hodogaya, *Shinmachi Bridge* c. 1833–1834
(Hodogaya, Shinmachi-bashi)
from the *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido (Tokaido gojusan tsugi no uchi)* series
colour woodblock
25.1 × 37.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022

p. 66
Utagawa Hiroshige
A sudden shower, *Shono* c. 1833–1834
(Shōno, hakū tokaidō gojyūsantsuginouchi 庄野 白雨 東海道五十三次之内)
from the *Fifty-three stations of the Tokaido Road* series 1833–34
colour woodblock
22.4 × 34.7 cm (image)
23.2 × 35.6 cm (sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022

p. 67
Utagawa Hiroshige
Numazu c. 1833–1834
from the *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido (Tokaido gojusan tsugi no uchi)* series
colour woodblock print
24.4 × 37.1 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2022
2022.665

p. 78–9
Jenna Lee and Kojima Shōten
Balarr (To become light) 2022
washi paper, bamboo, earth pigments
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australia Artists, 2023. 3
© Kyoto Art Center

p. 84
Margaret Olley
Dahlias and pears 1990
oil on canvas
74.0 × 100.6 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Mrs E. M. Borrow, Fellow, 1990
A7-1990
© The Estate of Margaret Olley. Courtesy of Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane

p. 86
Robert Rooney
William Mora, 1980 1980; 2014 {printed} from the *Portrait Photographs 1978–87* series 1978–87
inkjet print
20.0 × 30.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Bequest of Robert Rooney, 2019
2019.990.66
© Robert Rooney

p. 88–9
(top to bottom)
Indian
Kanchipuram sari
c. late 19th century
Madurai, Tamil Nadu
silk, gilt thread
501.0 × 110.0 cm
Gift of Anindita Basu in memory of Mrs Jyoti Bose, 2023

Indian
Baluchari sari
Murshidabad, West Bengal
c. 1930s
silk
535.0 × 118.5 cm
Gift of Anindita Basu in memory of Mrs Jyoti Bose, 2023

Indian
Sambalpuri sari
c. 1970s
Odisha
silk
602.0 × 121.0 cm
Gift of Anindita Basu in memory of Mrs Jyoti Bose, 2023

p. 90
CHANEL, Paris (couture house)
Karl LAGERFELD (designer)
MAISON LESAGE, Paris
(embroidery house)
François LESAGE (designer)
Evening coat, *jumpsuit, and skirt* 1996
{*autumn-winter* 1996–97}
silk, polyester, elastane, gold leaf, metallic thread, plastic (sequins, film, beads, buttons), metal (fastenings, chain)
(a) 88.5 cm (centre back) 59.0 cm (sleeve length) (jacket) (b) 108.0 cm (centre back) 68.0 cm (inner leg) (jumpsuit) (c) 106.0 cm (centre back) 30.5 cm (waist, flat) (skirt)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gift Program, 2023

p. 100
William Henry Margetson (artist)
England 1861–1940
Women Writers' Suffrage League, London (publisher)
England 1908–19
Women Writers' Suffrage League 1909
postcard: colour lineblock and letterpress on card
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Shaw Research Library
Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family Suffrage Research Collection

p. 106
Cyrus Tang
Lacrimal Return 4505.00s 2016
archival pigment print
100 × 100 cm
Image courtesy of the artist and ARC ONE Gallery

LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

END NOTES

pp. 18–21
Pierre Bonnard and Japan
1. Georges Roque, La strategie de Bonnard: Couleur, lumière, regard, Gallimard, Paris, 2006.
2. This description is based on the author's examination of Brassaï's 1946 photograph of Bonnard's studio wall at Le Cannet.
3. Ursula Perucchi-Petri, 'Japonisme in Bonnard's work', *Pierre Bonnard: Observing Nature*, National Gallery of Australia exhibition catalogue, 2003, p. 133.
4. Jo Ann Lewis, 'Prints that colored Bonnard's world', *Washington Post*, 3 Nov. 2002, < https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/style/2002/11/03/prints-that-colored-bonnards-world/26ae5652-773e-4841-be6f-cdceb610a7d6/>, accessed 30 Apr. 2023.
5. Ted Gott, ''Popular and practical: the early poster, theatre and decorative work of Pierre Bonnard', *Pierre Bonnard*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2023, p. 59.
6. Perucchi-Petri, p. 123.
7. Karen Schneider, 'Pierre Bonnard and Japanese Art', blog from The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, 3 Apr. 2012, <https://blog.phillipscollection.org/2012/04/03/pierre-bonnard-and-japanese-art/>, accessed 30 Apr. 2023.
8. Pierre Bonnard, 1943, quoted in Perucchi-Petri, p. 123 and Lewis, 2002.
9. Perucchi-Petri, p. 134.
10. Miranda Wallace, 'Chez Bonnard: a world of aesthetic emotion', *Pierre Bonnard*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2023, p. 122.
11. David E. Gliem, 'Revisiting Bonnard's Japonisme', *Open Inquiry Archive*, vol. 1, no. 7, 2012.
12. Perucchi-Petri, p. 126.
13. Perucchi-Petri, p. 132.
14. Pierre Bonnard, 1942, quoted in Gliem, 2012.

pp. 22–5
A salute to the flâneur
1. Bailly-Herzberg 1989. .159 (Rousen, 31 January 1896; to Lucien Pissarro): 'hideuse': 'un fiasco complet'
2. Thadée Natanson, 'Pierre Bonnard', *La Revue blanche*, vol. X, no. 1, 1896, pp. 71–74.
3. Gustave Geffroy, 'L'Art d'aujourd'hui. Pierre Bonnard', *Le Journal,* 8 January 1896, p. 1.

pp. 26–9
Make way for the Modernists
1. Quoted in Alexandra Walton, 'The archival trail: Paul Nash the war artist' Tate, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/paul-nash-1690/paul-nash-war-artist>, accessed 12 May 2023
2. Frank Rutter, *The Sunday Times*, 1 May 1927, quoted in Alison James, *A Singular Vision: Dod Procter, 1890–1972*, Penlee House, Penzance, 2007.

pp. 34–41
Embracing Uncertainty in Fin-de-siècle France
1. Karen Stock, 'Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton: masculinity in question', PhD, New York University, pp. 264–5, <https://ifa.nyu.edu/research/dissertations-2000s.htm>, accessed 10 June 2023.
2. Notable examples include: Stock; Francesca Berry, 'The gender politics of the Nabis', in Mary Weaver Chapin and Heather Lemonedes Brown (eds), *Private Lives: Home and the Family in the Art of the Nabis*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2021, pp. 94–100; and Katherine M. Kuenzli, *The Nabis and Intimate Modernism: Painting and the Decorative at the Fin-de-Siècle*, Routledge, London, 2017.
3. Rosina Neginsky, Marthe Segrestin and Luba Jurgenson, *Anxiety, Angst, Anguish in Fin de Siècle Art and Literature*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge, 2020=, p. xix.
4. Kuenzli, p. 13.
5. ibid., p. 12.
6. August Strindberg, 'On the Inferiority of Women'" *La Revue Blanche* no. VIII, Jan. 1895, p. 5.
7. Stock, p. 23.
8. André Mellerio, *La Lithographie originale en couleurs*, L'Estampe et l'Affiche, Paris, 1898, p. 9.
9. Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth Century Paris and London*, University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles, 1999.
10. Deborah Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style*, University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles, 1989.
11. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle*, Viking, New York, 1990, p. 8.
12. Stock, p. 89.
13. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988, p. 160.
14. Stock, p. 93.
15. Showalter, p. 11.

pp. 42–4
'A chair may serve many uses, though not necessarily that of sitting down.'
1. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* ed. by Cyrus Hoy, A Norton Critical Edition, 2nd edn (New York: Norton, 1992), V. 2. 4–5.
2. Breton, André, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane) Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1969., p.14.
3. Reverdy, *Ibid*. p. 20
4. Lautréamont, Comte de, *Les Chants de Maldoror* (translated by Guy Wernham), New York, New Directions, 1946, p. 263

pp. 56–9
Rembrandt's collection of curiosities
1. E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt. A Life in 180 Paintings*, Local World BV, Amsterdam, 2019, pp. 126–7.
2. R. W. Scheller, 'Rembrandt en de encyclopedische kunstkamer', *Oud Holland*, vol. 84, 1969, pp. 81–147.
3. Lorraine Daston & Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, MIT Press, New York, 1998, p. 272.
4. B. van den Boogert (ed.), *Rembrandt's Treasures*, W Books, Zwolle, 1999.

pp. 84–5
Honouring Margaret Olley
1. The Tweed, 'Margaret Olley 100 year celebration' *The Tweed,* https://visitthetweed.com.au/margaret-olley-100-years, accessed 8 June 2023.

pp. 90–1
Karl Lagerfield for Chanel
1. Patrick Mauriès, 'Introduction', *Chanel Catwalk: The Complete Collections,* Thames and Hudson, 2020, p. 226.

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Exhibition organised by the Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Institutio Nacional de Belles Artes Y Literatura (INBAL)
image Frida Kahlo, born Mexico City 1907, died Mexico City 1954, Diego on my Mind, 1943, oil on Masonite, 76 x 61 cm; The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of Mexican Modernism.

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Detail from WA1965.89 **Marie Spartali Stillman, 'Cloister Lilies'**. Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.



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Deborah Klein *Three women* 2021 (detail). synthetic polymer paint on canvas. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat. © the artist

artgalleryofballarat.com.au


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