

# Photography—

Real and Imagined

See the new exhibition  
at The Ian Potter Centre:  
NGV Australia

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*Pierre Bonnard:*  
*Designed by India*  
*Mahdavi* final weeks

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Welcome to  
*Wurrdha Marra*;  
and Hermannsburg  
watercolours

**MAGAZINE**

ISSUE 42 SEP–OCT 2023 \$15


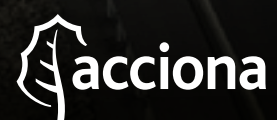




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10 Sep 2023

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Image: Jaume Plensa, *Laura*, 2013, Cast Iron



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© National Gallery of Victoria 2023  
ISSN: 08147833  
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Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia  
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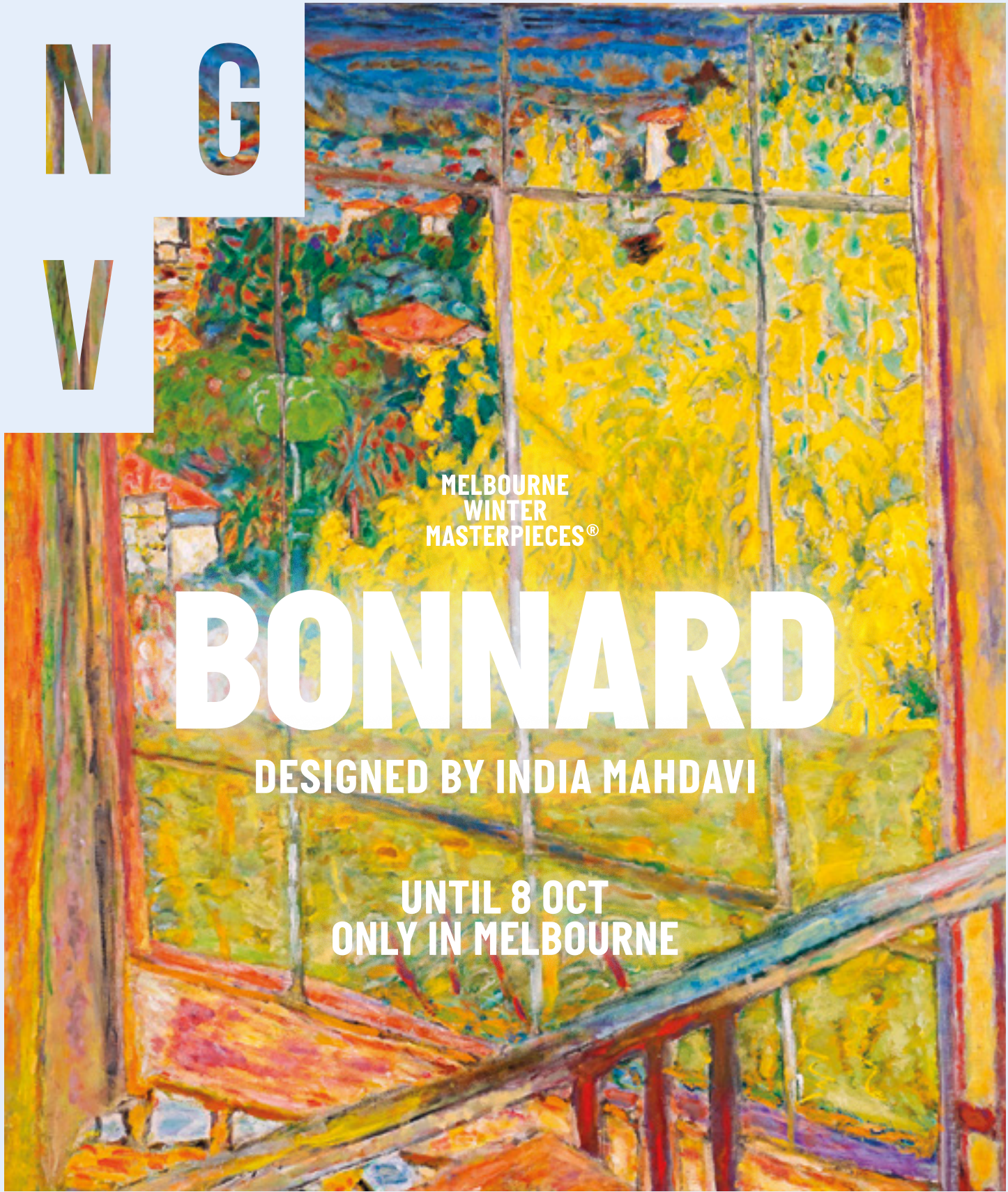
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Every effort has been made to obtain accurate information for this publication. The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the NGV. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain 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.

(cover) **Todd McMillan** *Equivalent VIII* 2014 (detail) from the *Equivalent* series. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014 © Todd McMillan, courtesy of Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest





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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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## FROM THE NGV

This year at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia we have been excited to present many engaging and thought-provoking works by local artists in the recently-concluded exhibition *Melbourne Now*. I am pleased to introduce you to exciting new exhibitions opening this spring at NGV Australia which reveal the diversity of the NGV Collection and its capacity for deep storytelling.

From 13 October, *Photography: Real and Imagined* presents a generous and thoughtfully curated free exhibition that takes two perspectives on photography – as documentation and reflection; and conversely, as imagination and illusion. There are many works to explore in this exhibition, from Australia and around the world, that draws entirely from the NGV Collection. In this issue of *NGV Magazine* NGV senior curator Susan van Wyk introduces the exhibition. We thank Tourism Partner Sofitel Melbourne on Collins for its support of the exhibition and sincerely acknowledge and thank the Bowness Family Foundation for their longstanding and visionary support of the NGV photography collection and the associated *Photography: Real and Imagined* publication.

We also introduce *Watercolour Country: 100 works from Hermannsburg* which opens on 27 October. It features works spanning the 1930s to now, including seventy-seven works generously gifted to the NGV in 2022 by former NGV Trustee and NGV Life Member, the late Darvell M. Hutchinson AM. In her essay, NGV curator Sophie Gerhard reminds us that this influential Australian movement ‘can be traced back to a single painter, Albert Namatjira, who, through his art practice and teaching, has inspired four generations of painters.’

Also in October, we launch the newly named *Wurrdha Marra*, a dedicated space on the entry level of NGV Australia for showcasing First Nations art and design. *Wurrdha Marra* means ‘Many Mobs’ in the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung language. The name is newly bestowed by the Wurundjeri Council and for this we warmly thank the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung for guidance, and Auntie Joy Murphy Wandin AO.

We acknowledge the recent passing of two incredible supporters of design and the arts, Gordon Moffatt AM and David Bardas AO, and extend our condolences and best wishes to their families.

At NGV International, we conclude our editorial coverage of the 2023 Melbourne

Winter Masterpieces exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* with insights into Pierre Bonnard’s love of motoring and new technology, alongside a new essay by Dr Louise Wallace on a recurring figure in the artist’s lifelong visual studies – his partner and wife Marthe de Méigny. For generously supporting *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*, I extend warm thanks to co-exhibition organiser and Exhibition Partner the Musée d’Orsay, Paris, Presenting Partner Visit Victoria, Premium Partner HSBC, Major Partners EY, Telstra, Qantas, NET-A-PORTER, Sustainability Partner Acciona and Learning Partner, The University of Melbourne.

This issue also features the University of Melbourne’s Dr Olivia Meehan, an expert in collections-based learning and the science of slow looking, with some pointers on engaging deeply and patiently with the art of Pierre Bonnard – and with art in general – for many cognitive benefits.

I encourage you to practise slow looking next time you take a journey through the NGV galleries and exhibitions – you never know what you will discover.

**Tony Ellwood AM**  
Director

In this issue of *NGV Magazine*, we welcome new works to the NGV Collection, share their stories and ways you can connect further. On page 62, Imogen Mallia-Valjan looks at the rise of the influential Shaker movement in the United States in the nineteenth century as a preview to the NGV online seminar series *Observations: Moments in Design History*. Tickets are now available for Seminar Two: *Traditional Crafts and the Rise of Modernism*, which includes an insightful presentation by Sarah Margolis-Pineo, an expert in Shaker design and former Curator of Hancock Shaker Village. See page 64 to book and for links to more adult learning courses at NGV, including online courses dedicated to Impressionism and Colour.

Dr Ted Gott shares the story of an ambitious painting by Marie-Victoire Lemoine, *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* circa 1798–99 which

presents a compelling social document of the remarkable but brief time when the *Merveilleuses* (the marvellous) brought the free dress sense of ancient Greece to the fore in contemporary Parisian society. The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for support in acquiring this work. You can see *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* now on display on Level 2 at NGV International.

Also new to the Collection is Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran’s *Bi Warrior Figure*, 2022. Nithiyendran is a Sydney-based Sri-Lankan born contemporary artist and this work partly reflects his interests in syncretic and material languages specific to South Asia. Nithiyendran’s *Bi Warrior Figure* is the first of the artist’s works to join the NGV Collection and we warmly thank Rob Gould for generously supporting the acquisition of this work. Read more in an interview with NGV Curator Amita Kirpalani on p.82.

Australian filmmaker and speculative architect Liam Young also discusses his latest work with Elisa Scarton, on display in *Planetary Redesign*, Young’s first major Australian solo exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. *The Great Endeavor*, 2023, is presented direct from its global premiere at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. Together on display with *Planet City* 2020, commissioned for the NGV *Triennial* and generously supported by the Bagôt Gjergja Foundation, the exhibition proposes thought-provoking redesigns of our planet through an immersive display of moving image works, costumes and photography.

We hope you enjoy these artworks, exhibitions and stories and more in this issue of *NGV Magazine*.

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



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### DR OLIVIA MEEHAN

Melbourne, Australia

Dr Olivia Meehan is an art historian who makes connections between art, literature, nature and gardens across continents and through centuries. Since graduating she has worked in museums and galleries, and as a lecturer and tutor in the History of Art. Her current research focuses on Observation, Imagination and Slow Looking.

### DR LOUISE WALLACE

Belfast, Northern Ireland

Dr Louise Wallace is a painter, writer and educator. She completed her PhD at the Belfast School of Art in 2005, where she currently works as a lecturer in painting. Her essay 'Who killed Marthe Bonnard? Madness, morbidity and Pierre Bonnard's *The bath*' was published in the *Journal of Contemporary Painting* (2018).

### RAMESH MARIO NITHIYENDRAN

Sydney, Australia

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran is a contemporary artist interested in global histories and languages of figurative representation. He explores politics relating to idolatry, the monument, gender, race and religion with specific references to South Asian forms and imagery. While he is best known for his inventive approach to ceramic media, his material vernacular is broad.

### DR FILIZ YENİŞEHİRLİOĞLU

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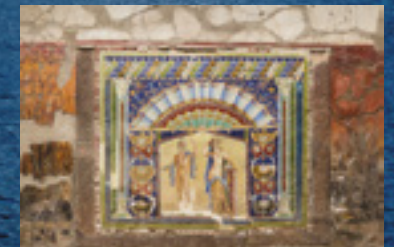
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## Photography Real and Imagined

This new exhibition examines two perspectives on photography; photography grounded in the real world, as a record, a document, a reflection of the world around us; and photography as the product of imagination, storytelling and illusion. Highlighting major photographic works from the NGV Collection, including recent acquisitions on display for the very first time, *Photography: Real and Imagined* examines the complex, engaging and sometimes contradictory nature of all things photographic. Here, NGV Senior Curator of Photography Susan van Wyk explains why.

**BY** SUSAN VAN WYK



Photography was once described by writer and critic Lucy Lippard as having ‘a toe in the chilly waters of verisimilitude’, a proposition that raises a raft of questions.<sup>1</sup> Is reality so uncomfortable that we only engage with it partially, or out of necessity? Can a photograph show the truth, and if it does, whose truth is it showing, the photographer’s, the subject’s, or the viewer’s? If truth is the end game, what does this mean for creative practice and other types of photography? This proposal, despite being initially amusing, highlights the complexity encountered when trying to neatly encapsulate any selection of photographs. The suggestion that photography is only partially, and somewhat uncomfortably, engaged with the notion of truth deftly points to the ways that photographs jostle alongside one another, shifting between imagination and reality.<sup>2</sup>

As a selection of images, the works in *Photography: Real and Imagined* show the history and development of the NGV’s Photography department, which was founded in 1967 with an expansive brief to acquire both Australian and international photography.<sup>3</sup> In the early years of collection development, the emphasis was very much on documentary photography, with the first photograph to enter the Collection being *Surry Hills street, 1948*, by Australian photographer David Moore. This acquisition, a masterful image showing inner-urban poverty in postwar Australia, signalled at the outset a confidence that photography could capture the real world with great and lasting effect. Within two years, the collection had extended to include international photography, and in 1971 the acquisition of František Drtikol’s *Nude, 1927–29*, introduced an imaginative, studio photograph to the collection. The collection has since grown to reflect the breadth of photographic activity, including historical and contemporary creative practice, documentary photography, and commercial and vernacular photographs.

*Photography: Real and Imagined* teases out connections between iconic and lesser-known photographs. It does not set out to be a history of photography, but historical context does inform the content, leading to nuanced discussions of past

and present, real and imagined. The photographs that follow not only fit within this binary proposition, but they often flit between the two. These riches of the NGV Collection span the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but they are not presented chronologically, instead they are categorised putting them in a dialogue with one another that both explores and transcends the time in which they were made.

The photographs reflect more than fifty years of collecting that began with the aim of bringing the icons of photography to Melbourne. In the decades since, the collection has also been shaped by fortuitous opportunities to include lesser known, often quirky works. This breadth of collecting has enabled the development of a nationally and regionally significant photography collection, and from its earliest years the collection has informed NGV publications and exhibitions that featured photography.

When the first exhibition based on the NGV Photography collection was curated in 1969, it was done so in the belief that documentary photography could reflect the real world in informative and meaningful ways. The fact this was followed just two years later by a very different project, one in which creative image making was of primary importance, shows how quickly the conversation about photography expanded.<sup>4</sup> That these two exhibitions were curated from such a newly established collection reveals how quickly the acquisition and exhibition programs came to include both ‘real’ and ‘imagined’ photography.

PHOTOGRAPHY: REAL AND IMAGINED OPENS ON LEVEL 3, THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA ON 13 OCTOBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/PHOTOGRAPHY-REAL-IMAGINED.

SUSAN VAN WYK IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, PHOTOGRAPHY.

THIS IS AN EDITED EXTRACT FROM SUSAN VAN WYK (ED.), *PHOTOGRAPHY: REAL AND IMAGINED*, NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, 2023, WHICH CAN BE PURCHASED FROM NGV DESIGN STORE.

WE WARMLY THANK THE BOWNESS FAMILY FOUNDATION FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE FULLY-ILLUSTRATED PUBLICATION. SEE P. 101 FOR DETAILS.



(p. 16 ) **Zoë Croggon** *Fonteyn* 2012. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2013 © Zoë Croggon. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

(right) **Sarah Waiswa** *Finding solace* 2016, from the *Stranger in a familiar land* series 2016. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased NGV Foundation, 2017 © Sarah Waiswa



# Selected works from *Photography: Real and Imagined*

## Cindy Sherman *Untitled #183-A* 1988

BY DR LAURA HENDERSON



Cindy Sherman's *History Portraits* series is delightfully weird. Riffing on baroque and romantic portraits in op-shop costumes, the series collides highbrow and lowbrow aesthetics into punchy, biting images. Sherman rose to prominence with her series *Untitled Film Stills*, 1977–80, in which she perfectly captured the look and feel of cinematic tableaux, creating images that seemed to be plucked directly from a strip of celluloid. Yet in *History Portraits*, 1988–90, she creates photographs with an obvious, jarring mismatch between the works she references and the aesthetic execution, culminating in works with a deliberate, almost ballsy tackiness. The obvious prosthetics, patchy make-up and flat lighting completely depart from her earlier emulations to offer a fresh lens on historic images.

Through composition, Sherman gleefully points out the flaws in her recreations: In *Untitled #183-A*, 1998, she arranges the frame so that a crease in her prosthetic cleavage is dead centre, pushing you to look right at the crudest detail. With giant breasts and a book dangling from her fingers, Sherman is daring you not to laugh.

But underneath the humour, there's an acerbic politic of representation. *History Portraits* rebuke a cultural perception of historic portraiture as 'proper'; through exaggeration, Sherman reveals the camp<sup>1</sup> qualities of the genre. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), author Judith Butler pointed out that drag helps expose how gender works: in performing femininity, drag queens show all gender as performance. Here, Sherman takes this same approach to our cultural construction of class, identity, and history. Draped in fake pearls<sup>2</sup> and staring down the barrel of the camera, *Untitled #183-A* is a Anderson's 19th Century Folktale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. By making these photographs look cheap, silly and awkward, she reveals the inherent absurdity of iconic images in art history, and the privileged figures who commissioned them.

DR LAURA HENDERSON IS AN NGV SENIOR CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE FELTON BEQUEST FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK.



## Alex Prager *Crowd #11 (Cedar and Broad Street)* 2013

BY ELLINOR PELZ

'DON'T WALK' – run! A mass of commuters and wanderers fill the street, each intentionally or perhaps blissfully unaware of one another or pedestrian guidelines. A crowd forms. Bodies collide into and manoeuvre around one another, each enthralled in reaching their end destination. While some people appear frustrated and stressed, others remain unphased amidst the chaos that swirls around them.

In *Crowd #11 (Cedar and Broad Street)*, 2013, we are Alex Prager's flâneur looking down at her uncanny mis en scène. At once, Prager's seductive rich colour photograph beckons us to plunge into the horde below and join the masses, as much as the bubbling atmosphere inclines us to monitor the scene from afar.

Prager's lens captures a shared cultural experience that reminds us how vulnerable we are to the fleeting passages of time, and as Sontag notes – its relentless dwindling and eventual fade. It highlights how so many of us throughout our days are connected by proximity but not necessarily engagement, as we find ourselves buried in our devices or internal monologues. It's easy to forget that those around us may experience similar ruminations of worry, anxiety, or the desire to feel joy or be loved.

ELLINOR PELZ IS NGV PROJECTS ASSISTANT, NGV CONTEMPORARY. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE BOWNESS FAMILY FUND FOR CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK.

(p. 20) Cindy Sherman *Untitled #183-A* 1988, printed 2003, from the *History portraits* series 1988–90. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 2004 © Cindy Sherman. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Bowness Family Foundation

(above) Alex Prager *Crowd #11 (Cedar and Broad Street)* 2013. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Bowness Family Fund for Contemporary Photography, 2014 © Alex Prager. Courtesy Alex Prager Studio and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, Seoul and London. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Bowness Family Foundation





# Hasan Hajjaj Master Cobra Mansa 2013

BY CORAL GUAN

The dapper gentleman at the centre of this portrait exudes pure cool. Who is he and why is he framed by cans? And where did he get those glasses? On first encountering Hassan Hajjaj’s work, I was struck by his energising celebration of colour and pattern. The Moroccan-born, London-raised artist is known for his punchy and eclectic photographs which straddle the line between photography and sculpture.

Frequently, Hajjaj’s work comprises a print photograph framed within three-dimensional shelves, inside which sit Warholian repetitions of a canned good. Not unlike a sartorial street portrait, the eponymous subject of Master Cobra Mansa shows off his gleaming white outfit with one leather loafer turned outwards. The photograph’s staged nature is revealed through the telltale fold of the textile backdrop. Master Cobra Mansa (‘cobra mansa’ meaning ‘tame snake’) is a world-renowned practitioner of the Afro-Brazilian martial art capoeira, which combines acrobatics, music and dance. Here, he leans on a berimbau, a single-stringed musical bow with origins in Africa, used in capoeira. The mesmerising tile-like border of *pimentão*

*doce* (capsicum) cans are a nod to Cobra Mansa’s Brazilian origins. For Hajjaj, moving from Marrakesh to London aged twelve felt akin to switching from technicolour to black and white. It was through fashion, design and music that the artist and his friends created complex worlds to honour who they were. The sense of love in Hajjaj’s work is palpable – love for the vibrancy of people, music and Marrakesh, the city of his heart.

CORAL GUAN IS NGV PROJECT ASSISTANT, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION PROJECTS. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE ORLOFF FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK.

Hassan Hajjaj Master Cobra Mansa 2013. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Orloff Family Charitable Trust, 2019 © Hassan Hajjaj



# Max Dupain Impassioned clay 1936

BY SOPHIE PRINCE

I first learnt about the processes of double-exposure photography in high school. I immediately fell in love with the technique of layering unique images – which functioned like individual fragments of a memory, focus, feeling or gaze – becoming enmeshed and dream-like in quality. I felt the effect either invited projection or reflected the inner world. Although I never pursued being an artist because I found making art overwhelmingly broad, experimenting in the darkroom

was one of the early experiences that instilled an interest in art and sensitivity towards artists for actualising the new or ineffable. *Impassioned clay*, 1936, makes me feel a sense of closeness. The technique, which has repeatedly captured the imaginations of artists and students, people young and old, the inexperienced and experienced stirs in me a sense of connection through an enduring interest in the capacity for the technique to capture and convey meaning through symbolic pairings; whereby, the ‘real world’ is rendered as both literal and impossible. When I look at *Impassioned clay* with the intention of putting biography and research aside, I perceive Max Dupain’s gaze as guided by form and influenced by Surrealism. The interplay between textures

and subjects, movement and focus make me wonder how he felt seeing work take shape. Was it what he envisioned? Did the work reveal something to him? If the work is purely formal, I still wonder what that means? I wonder of the chance that I see what Dupain saw. I see form as a beautiful force that reaches across nature and humans, history and the living.

SOPHIE PRINCE IS NGV CURATORIAL PROJECT OFFICER, AUSTRALIAN AND FIRST NATIONS ART. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE WILLIAM KIMPTON BEQUEST FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK.

Max Dupain *Impassioned clay* 1936. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. William Kimpton Bequest, 2016. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest





## Polixeni Papapetrou *Witness* 2006

BY ELISA SCARTON

**Writing about her** *Haunted Country* series, 2006, Australian photographer Polixeni Papapetrou recounts a vacation at a school friend’s houseboat on Lake Eildon in 1977.<sup>3</sup> Just 17, Papapetrou decided to hike Mount Enterprise alone, setting off at 6am, only to lose her bearings on the return trip. Tearstained and sunburnt, she eventually finds her way back to the houseboat, but the memory persists

almost 30 years later when she ventures once more into the Australian bush as an artist. *Haunted Country* continues Papapetrou’s oeuvre of photographing her children and their friends – something the artist began doing after the birth of her daughter Olympia in 1997. In this series, Olympia and Solomon, and their friends are children of different epochs lost in landscapes across Victoria. The children are stranded and disorientated, surrounded by a countryside that feels ancient and inspiring, but also vast and unforgiving. Papapetrou described these ‘bush-lost’ children as a reflection on the ways children become lost to adults. She writes:

‘In these images, I have tried to capture feelings about Australia, but also about children and their eternal vulnerability in both the natural and social orders. Those who wander into this space run the risk of becoming the prey of the land and being forever lost to us’.<sup>4</sup>

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS ROBERT NELSON FOR GIFTING THIS WORK THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S CULTURAL GIFTS PROGRAM, 2015

**Polixeni Papapetrou** *Witness* 2006, from the *Haunted Country* series 2006. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Robert Nelson through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2015. © Courtesy of the estate of Polixeni Papetrou. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest



## Elad Lassry *Truffle goat cheese, Emmentaler, fork and spoon* 2010

**I find myself** gravitating to a work that reminds me of fond memories and family. Elad Lassry’s *Truffle goat cheese, Emmentaler, fork and spoon*, 2010, transports me to a childhood of family dinners where the highlight was the cheese platter. It was the ‘90s and we never had anything as fancy as truffles and Emmentaler, but the blocks of apricot and almond cream cheese and wheels of cheddar were devoured with just as much gusto and always with a sliver of fig paste on the side.

The idea that something can be both mundane and precious, utilitarian and unique, is the common thread in Elad Lassry’s work. The Israeli-born artist applies a standardised approach to all his still-life photography. Whether they are cheese or people, animals or your kitchen cutlery, his subjects are always lit in the same way, printed to a standard size and framed in jewel-coloured frames. The effect is of stock footage, of supermarket catalogues and trade magazines, of commercial photography and the artificial world of the studio,

and yet, there is something about these subjects that still feels special – why have they been chosen to be photographed and framed? Why have they been preserved and placed on a proverbial pedestal? Why are they worthy of being remembered?

ELISA SCARTON IS NGV SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE RUTH MARGARET FRANCES HOUGHTON BEQUEST FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK.

**Elad Lassry** *Truffle goat cheese, Emmentaler, fork and spoon* 2010. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2015 © Elad Lassry and 303 Gallery, New York





## Michael Cook

### *The Civilised series* 2012

BY KYLA MCFARLANE

**Bidjara artist** Michael Cook poses a question in his *Civilised* series: ‘What makes a person civilised?’<sup>6</sup> Specifically, Cook seeks to understand how the Dutch, English, Spanish and French seamen – buccaneers, traders, navigators and explorers – who visited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries might answer it.

Quotes from Luís Vaz de Torres, Willem Janszoon, Jan Carstenszoon, William Dampier and James Cook relating to early contact on these shores appear in cursive

script in the sky above solitary subjects in each photograph in this series. This beauty, settled in the muted, watery palette of the images, belies the tenor of these texts, which expresses the Europeans’ observations and judgment of the First Peoples of what is now Australia. Cook portrays his present-day Antipodeans dressed in clothing reminiscent of historical European garb, at the meeting of land and sea. Each conveys an individual attitude while some appropriate colonial gestures, such as holding a Union Jack, pointing a crucifix at a Tasmanian Devil, or clutching a bible.<sup>6</sup>

In his own words, Cook says his *Civilised* series, 2012, ‘suggests how different history might have been if those Europeans had realised that the Aborigines were indeed civilised’.<sup>7</sup>

KYLA MCFARLANE IS SENIOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS CURATOR, MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

**Michael Cook** *The Civilised series* 2012. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013 © Michael Cook and Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin. Digital records of this artwork have been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

(right) **Jeff Wall** *Untangling* 1994, printed 2006. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased NGV Foundation and with the assistance of NGV Contemporary, 2006 © Jeff Wall. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Bowness Family Foundation



## Jeff Wall

### *Untangling* 1994

BY AARON WHITFIELD

**Canadian-born artist** Jeff Wall, is one the most well-known photographers working today, and his practice is credited with playing a key role in establishing photography at the forefront of contemporary art.

Initially working in painting, sculpture, photography and conceptual art, Wall was inspired by the emerging conceptual art movement of the 1960s and later extended Conceptualism’s spirit of experimentation into his new version of pictorial photography.

After a break in art making between 1971 and 1977, it was during a visit to the Prado Museum in Madrid in 1977 that Wall was moved by the paintings of Velázquez

and Goya. He felt that, due to what he saw as the dominance of photography and film, it was no longer possible for modern artists to paint like the great masters. Seeking a new method to represent everyday life pictorially, and while travelling Europe, Wall passed a large backlit advertising transparency and recognised the artistic potential of photography as a high-gloss, contemporary, seductive medium. He began making his ‘cinematographic’ photographs, where each photograph is carefully staged and rehearsed like a scene from a film.

Displaying his photographers as large scale transparencies in light boxes, Wall distinguished himself from the documentary and street photography that had dominated up until that point.

In *Untangling*, 1994, a large backlit Cibachrome transparency (a photographic process used for the reproduction of film

transparencies on photographic paper), we see a mechanic’s garage. This instantly reminds me of chores I undertook as a teenager working in my parent’s own garage.

We see a sense of order in the shelving where the motors are neatly lined up and, although precariously stacked, boxes are ready to be lifted down from the top shelf. In contrast, in the foreground a chaotic jumble of rope sits on the dirty oil-stained floor; the mechanic with a look of defeat at the task ahead. His expression is one I certainly recognise from the many hours I have spent on similar tasks.

Here, everything has its place, even among the chaos, just like in my parent’s garage.

AARON WHITFIELD IS NGV FUNDRAISING OFFICER.

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## EXHIBITION



# SLOW LOOKING WITH PIERRE BONNARD

BY DR OLIVIA MEEHAN

*‘The painting will  
not exist if the viewer does  
not do half the work.’*

———PIERRE BONNARD, 1945<sup>1</sup>

The practice of slow looking encourages us to engage with a work of art for a sustained period of time. Studies into museum visitor behaviour reveal that most people spend from eight to thirty seconds looking at a single work of art. Many art museums around the world are advancing the practice of slow looking by inviting visitors to spend longer – five minutes, or more – with one work, with the hope of deepening their experience. Pierre Bonnard suggests that the viewer plays an essential

role in activating the painting, bringing it into existence through observation and contemplation, giving it a life beyond its material presence.

Bonnard did not paint from life in the way that the Impressionists before him did, rather he traced the edges of memories, recalled dreams and regularly engaged in imaginative practice. On his daily walks in nature, he recorded each experience in a leather-bound pocket diary. Along with his sketches, he regularly noted the weather and other observations. His small diaries



were an aide-mémoire, providing a shorthand for the expansive and rich environments and colours he went on to express in his paintings. A longer, closer look is richly rewarded as the details emerge.

Slow looking is not without its challenges. It requires focus and patience, both of which are becoming more difficult to develop amid the urgency and fast-paced nature of daily life. We are offered an overwhelming amount of visual stimuli and information, especially via social

media feeds that often compels us to spend our time looking and reading. In this context it may even seem indulgent to contemplate a picture or an object for longer than a minute.

Rebecca Chamberlain's fascinating research into the neuroscience and psychology of the perception of visual art reveals numerous cognitive and social benefits to slow looking. She has also proposed that Bonnard's specific colour combinations and spatial distortions are ideal for experiments in sustained

observation. Bonnard's application of 'colours that are similar in lightness but contrasting in hue' create a certain 'vibratory perceptual effect', and along with the absence of a central vanishing point invite us to explore the entire pictorial plane.<sup>2</sup> Bonnard's wide-angled view often encourages the eye to drift around the canvas, allowing us to generate our own rhythmic pattern of viewing.

Visual thinking strategies may prove useful for slow looking. The first step is to find a work that draws you closer. Try to



look at it from a few different angles. Try not to read the object label just yet! The joy in this exercise is first to concentrate purely on the work before you. You can return to the label later, but in this moment trust your perception. What are you really seeing? Is there something familiar, unusual, or perplexing in the imagery? Note colour, form and shapes. You may start to feel restless, ready to move on, but try to stay a little longer. Look away for a moment and then return to your work with fresh eyes. Are there new details starting to emerge? Can you describe your reaction in just two words? Try to define the atmosphere or the mood of the work. How does it make you feel? Allow these prompts to settle as you continue to explore the work.

Let's take a moment to look at *Twilight*, or *The croquet game*, 1892 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) which is on display in the first room of the exhibition. At first glance, patterns and colours sidle up, and dissolve into each other. But go to the top right-hand corner where three golden shapes hover over a group of figures rendered in the form of luminous silhouettes. The gold that can be glimpsed through the dense green foliage may be telling us it is twilight. Layers of green fold over themselves, as a patch of lawn connects with tree and bush forms. Are you starting to sense the atmosphere of a long summer evening? Dark patches of paint provide a contrast in the middle ground of the painting to reveal a group of figures. Their heads are turned to the woman holding a croquet mallet. She is wearing a pale-yellow dress, and the loose ends of a powder blue sash billow around her. They lead our eye to the playful dog who appears to tilt his head, pouncing on the spot as he anticipates a hit to the ball. Now we are beginning to appreciate the true liveliness of this work in its radiant twilight state.

In his interior works, Bonnard actually invites us into the picture plane by, for instance, bending and tilting tables: although we may be positioned at a dining room table, things may feel a little uneasy or precarious, sliding off in different directions. In *Dining room in the country*, 1913 Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota, which is in the NGV exhibition's 'Still Life' room, the doors and window are

## Pierre Bonnard suggests that the viewer plays an essential role in activating the painting, bringing it into existence through observation and contemplation, giving it a life beyond its material presence.

———DR OLIVIA MEEHAN

opening inwards, and a woman leaning on the windowsill stoops in towards us. The soft lilac blue of the sky is reflected on the table top via the door frame, a hazy atmosphere of sunlight spills inside, effortlessly connecting the two spaces. This light traces the edges of objects, and gently touches the faces of the two cats seated with us at the table. They appear tiny in this monumental painting, but their illumination creates an unmissable presence. What other objects are there? The intimate and sometimes troubling relationships in Bonnard's works invite us to consider how things settle together, sometimes in unusual and unexpected ways.

In a letter to his good friend Henri Matisse, Bonnard wrote, 'During my morning walks I amuse myself by contemplating different conceptions of landscape – landscape as space, intimate landscape, decorative landscape etc. But as for vision, I see things differently every day. The sky, objects all change continually, one can drown in it, but that's what brings life'.<sup>3</sup>

Be assured that whatever you discover through slow looking at Bonnard's works, be it beauty or bewilderment, these are all things which the artist intended you to observe, imagine and bring to life. Suspend all sense of pace and distraction;

give yourself up to just one work and perhaps these small reflections will inspire your own dreaming around and inside not only the works of Pierre Bonnard, but in the visually rich world around us.

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. TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE VIA NGV.MELBOURNE.

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DR OLIVIA MEEHAN IS OBJECT-BASED LEARNING SPECIALIST IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

(p. 32–33) Installation view of **Pierre Bonnard** *Dining room overlooking the garden (The breakfast room) (Salle à manger sur le jardin)* 1930–31. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously, 1941 (392.1941); and *The dining room in the country (Salle à manger à la campagne)* 1913. Minneapolis Institute of Art, The John R. Van Derlip Fund (54.15) © 2023. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence on display in *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* at NGV International. Photo: Lillie Thompson



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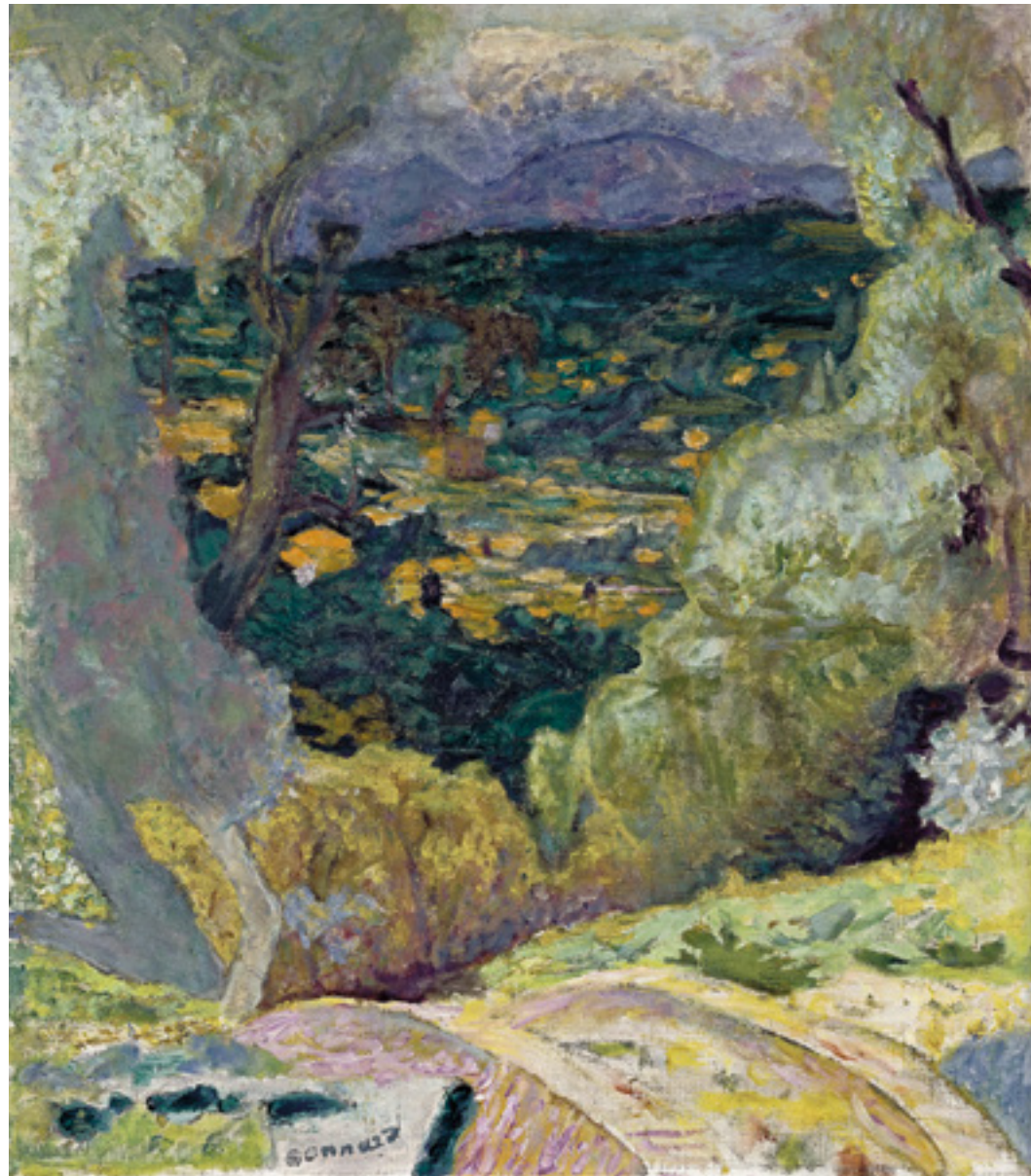
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Children playing in *Up, Down and All Around: Daniel Emma for Kids* until 8 October 2023 at NGV International. Photography: Lillie Thompson





# BONNARD IN MOTION

BY DR MIRANDA WALLACE

The eye of the painter gives human value to objects, reproduces things as a human eye sees them. And this vision is *mobile*. And this vision is *variable*.

—PIERRE BONNARD <sup>1</sup>

In 1905, Pierre Bonnard participated in a motoring tour of France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, initiated by his friend and avid motoring enthusiast, Octave Mirbeau. Mirbeau was also a novelist, lawyer, anarchist and, as an influential art critic, a passionate advocate for the work of Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir and Paul Gauguin. The third passenger was their mutual friend, the publisher Thadée Natanson, who had recently divorced his wife Misia, and endured the closure of *La Revue blanche* – the highly influential journal he owned with his two brothers and which had published illustrations by – and thereby financially supported – Bonnard and innumerable other young artists in the 1890s.

Their itinerary took them along straight roads through French and Flemish fields, onto muddy country lanes rutted by cartwheels and intermittently blocked by flocks of sheep, and into towns with immense waves of cobblestones that shuddered and juddered the tourists, leaving them bruised and shaken and ready for an overnight rest, before impatiently resuming their journey the following day.

Mirbeau wrote a pseudo-travelogue based on the trip that gave starring roles to the chauffeur, Brossette, and to the Charron Girardot & Voigt vehicle (CGV for short). Published in 1908, the book was titled *La 628-E8* after the CGV's numberplate. Mirbeau dedicated the book to one of the car's inventors, Monsieur Fernand Charron, thanking him 'for month upon month of perfect freedom, away from humdrum worries and greater cares; a holiday, indeed, from myself.' <sup>2</sup>

Bonnard contributed more than two hundred ink drawings and small sketches to fill the margins of a 1908 special edition of *La 628-E8*. Just as he had done when riding the Paris metro or walking the city's streets, Bonnard had observed and absorbed all that was around him, creating an amusing and perceptive document of the trip. He drew charming portraits of the many dozens of feathered and furred creatures they sped past (or nearly reduced to mince-meat), and sketched characters encountered during their travels, including politicians, sex workers, entertainers, innkeepers, royalty, cyclists, and 'the worst of all the animals on the road' (according to Mirbeau) – other motorists.

High-speed mobility had induced a mind-altering shift in scale and perception in the general populace in these first years of the twentieth century when motorised transport was far more accessible than the nascent technology of aviation. Bonnard was particularly sensitive to it. Mirbeau claimed that he and his companions were suffering from the disease of *la vitesse* (speed), the typical victim of which he described as follows:

He cannot keep still – quivering, nerves taut as springs, impatient to be off the moment he arrives, in agony to be somewhere – anywhere – else. His brain is a racetrack around which jumbled thoughts and sensations roar past at 60 miles an hour, always at full throttle. Speed governs his life: he drives like the wind, thinks like the wind, makes love like the wind, lives a whirlwind existence. Life comes hurtling at him and buffeting

him from every direction, as in a mad cavalry charge, only to melt flickeringly away like a film or like the trees, hedges and walls that line the road.<sup>3</sup>

Bonnard had always been an early adopter of new technology, whether in the form of the handheld Kodak camera with which he began taking snapshots in the early 1890s, or as a receptive viewer of the cinematic vision of his friends Auguste and Louis Lumière, who provided tangible moving proof of the fleeting nature of visual experience, especially in the modern metropolis. Like the majority of his late nineteenth century peers, Bonnard did not see the place for such new technology within the realm of art, even in the expanded field of 'design art', which he and the other young artists, who together were known as Les Nabis, had sought to create. We might speculate that if Bonnard was alive today, he may well be working at the cutting edge of motion picture technology. In the early 1900s, however, Bonnard was working almost exclusively in oil paint, with notable regular forays into illustration and graphic work. Painting was to remain his *métier* (job), but we see, in his paintings, how Bonnard grappled with the radically altered view of the world that modern technology induced.

Bonnard's own physical restlessness was less reckless than Mirbeau's, but it nonetheless seems to have gripped him early and had a prolonged influence on his vision. He was always an inveterate stroller of the streets, a quintessential *flâneur* in fin-de-siècle Paris. When provided with options for greater mobility – the horse-drawn cab, the omnibus and, of course, the motor car – Bonnard seized them all enthusiastically. And he was very attuned to the changing nature of Parisian streets: the prominence of the avocado-green car in *La Place Clichy*, 1912 (Musées de Besançon, Paris), for example, flags Bonnard's keen attention to the presence of these 'iron horses' where once only exhausted horses and carriages had passed by.

Bonnard acquired his first car in around 1912, a Renault 11CV. Frequent shifts of residence gave him cause to use





a succession of cars – including a Ford, a Lorraine-Dietrich and a Citroën – to drive around the French countryside, indulging in the sense of freedom that travelling at speed induced. Indeed, on one occasion, Bonnard set out from Vernonnet, where he and his partner Marthe de Méigny had a house, for a short break in the capital, where he always maintained a studio in Montmartre district. He had strapped several finished and unfinished canvases to the roof of the car. Stopping by his framer Monsieur Bouin in Paris, he discovered some of the canvases had disappeared from his roof. 'I don't know if it was braking hard or a gust of wind that did it, but they've gone!' <sup>4</sup>, he exclaimed.

If his enthusiasm for motoring had some unfortunate consequences, we can also perhaps identify some benefits in Bonnard's mature works. Bonnard's heightened response to the experience

of speed and mobility (and consequential openness to optical adventure) perhaps has its greatest impact, ironically, in his still-life paintings, where his creatively free sense of composition untethered objects from conventional spatial construction. The most dramatic changes can be traced in paintings of the mid 1920s, around the time Bonnard acquired Le Bosquet, his house on the hillside above the glamorous Riviera town of Cannes. Bonnard bought the house in 1926, but he and Marthe immediately ordered renovations to the house that meant they only moved in in 1927. One can imagine the intensity of the frequent trips to the house this would have necessitated, from temporary accommodation nearby, in Cannes or Le Cannet.

During the renovations, Bonnard also undertook a long trip to the United States, necessitating much travel by ship, rail and car to visit New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh

and Washington DC. He sent a postcard to his nephew Charles Terrasse, showing an image of the recently enlarged Standard Oil Building – an icon of America's oil-fuelled might and power – located on Broadway in lower Manhattan, inscribed with the simple message 'very curious trip' (*bien curieux voyage*).

*Southern landscape: Le Cannet, 1929–30* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), brilliantly captures the vertiginous descent from Le Cannet towards Cannes, as views across the town and out towards the distant Esterel mountains momentarily reveal themselves. Parallel tracks in the foreground suggest our viewpoint is from behind the (left-hand) wheel of a car, hurtling towards the open void at the centre of the canvas. The inwardly curving trees that line the road suggest, however, that they will soon enfold us in their embrace as we plummet downwards, the vista disappearing into thin air. The painting holds us in fragile suspense, a precarious moment in which we visually plot the forward path of our movement through space, but remain forever on the brink.

Back in his studio, Bonnard applied his observations of time, space and movement to that most static of genres, the still-life painting. He closely analysed the process of perception and its synthesis. In 1927, describing this process to his nephew (who was then writing a monograph about his uncle's work), Bonnard said,

I stand in the corner of the room, near this sun-drenched table. The eye sees distant masses as having an almost linear aspect, without relief, without depth. But near objects rise towards it. The sides trail away. And these vanishing trails are sometimes rectilinear – for what is distant – sometimes curved – for planes that are near. The vision of distant things is a flat vision. It is the near planes that give the idea of the universe as the human eye sees it, of a universe that is undulating, or convex, or concave.<sup>5</sup>

The peculiar perspectives of *Corner of a table, 1935* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), make more sense in light of his statement. It is

as if, in looking at an arrangement of mundane objects on a table, Bonnard thinks of them as mere points on a broader plane, pinpointed by his proximity but likely to recede from view at any moment. Curved shapes evoke the curvature of his eye and of the earth, and his (and our) temporary occupation of a single point on a spectrum of visual experience. The inanimate becomes animate and is set in motion by the painter who recreates his vision before – and for – our eyes. Bonnard's paintings present a pictorial space that is his alone.

This space was undoubtedly influenced by the revelations of the 'camera eye', with which Bonnard composed a still-life arrangement as early as the 1890s, at Le Grand Lemps. In the photograph *Corner of a table in the garden at Le Grand-Lemps, c.1892*, (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) we see part of an outdoor luncheon table, with three women and two children located beyond it. Two further guests, indicated by an arm and strands of curly hair, flank Bonnard and his camera. The table is laden with carafes, bottles and glasses, round and oval dishes of food; a checked tablecloth supports these all within its grid. The image possesses an overall sweeping blur, suggesting the movement of the photographer as much as, if not more than, the photographed. Undoubtedly a snapshot that captures a fleeting moment, this photograph contains the kernel of Bonnard's aesthetic vision and sense of pictorial space. The very fact that he did not use a tripod or call for absolute stillness shows his wish for life to continue before his eyes, unimpeded. Although the work of art involved the 'arrest of time', it was not to be composed or ideally formulated for that captured moment.

In *Dining room at Le Cannet, 1932* in the NGV exhibition in the 'Still Life' room (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), we find a composition in temporal disarray. The periphery of the canvas is more cluttered with objects than the centre, as if a centrifugal force has pushed them to its outer edges. We might focus first on the animate objects – Marthe, in a brightly coloured jacket, who appears frozen in her ministrations to a serene cat sitting on



her lap. Beside Marthe, in front of a white mantlepiece, is the upright form of a ladderback chair, recognisable from other paintings of Le Bosquet's interior, which possesses a permanence and stolidity fitting its nature. Other inanimate objects in the foreground, however, appear as if caught in an instant, literally in suspended animation – as if mobility is part of their nature. Our eyes continue to scan the scene, taking in the teapot, a glass, a semi-transparent bottle that seems to taper into thin air. The breadbasket at lower right seems on the verge of sliding downwards. At the centre of the painting, an odd rectangular box with red interior seems to defy perspective by widening as it recedes, suggesting it is rising up to meet our gaze. The lower left quadrant of the canvas is largely empty save the white tablecloth, its surface covered with touches of semi-translucent and more chalk-like patches of white paint, interrupted only at the edges by dishes bisected by the canvas edge.

In February 1934, Bonnard wrote a short note in his daybook: 'Painting, or the transcription of the adventures of the optic nerve'.<sup>5</sup> Characteristically brief and aphoristic, this statement nonetheless seems to summarise Bonnard's career-long artistic ambition. Transcribing his optical adventures was, for Bonnard, the purpose of his painting, his raison d'être as a painter. His adventures became more risky, more thrilling as he pursued them with greater determination in his

final years. Life came 'hurtling at him ... from every direction', and he sought to capture it on canvas before it could 'melt flickeringly away like a film or like the trees, hedges and walls that line the road'.

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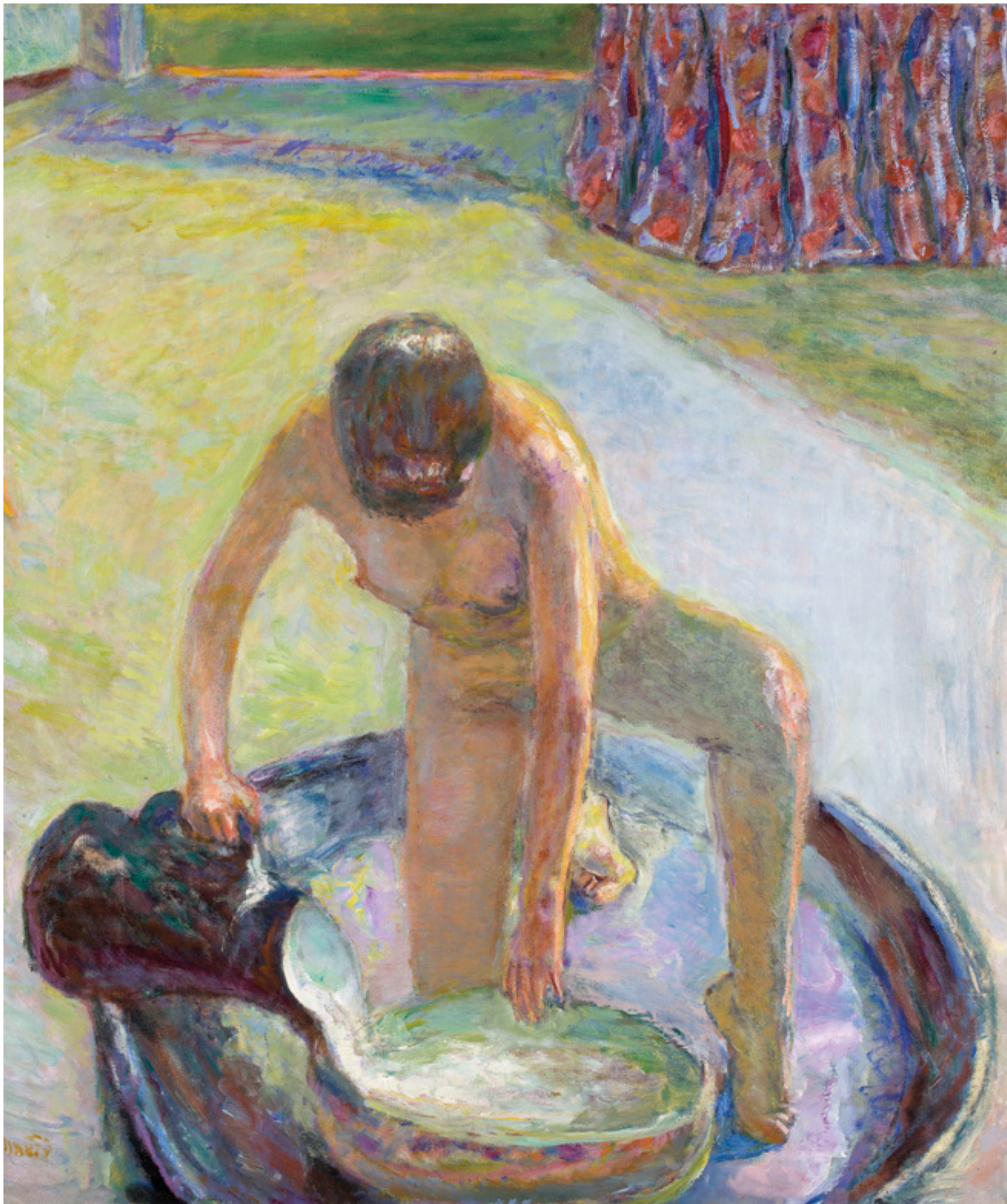
DR MIRANDA WALLACE IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION PROJECTS.

(p. 36) **Pierre Bonnard** *Southern landscape: Le Cannet (Paysage méridional: Le Cannet [Paysage de montagnes, décor méridional])* 1929–30. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. On deposit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle. Acquired from the artist by the State, 1933. Photo © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Philippe Migeat

(p. 38) **Pierre Bonnard** *La 628-E8* 1908, by Octave Mirbeau. The Louis E. Stern Collection. Acc. no.: 686.1944.1-104. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

(above) **Pierre Bonnard** *Corner of a table in the garden at Grands-Lemps c. 1899*. Musée d'Orsay (original) Image courtesy Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet © Musée d'Orsay/Patrice Schmidt





## THE WOMAN BEHIND The Bather

Marthe de Méigny was the long term partner, wife and muse of the painter Pierre Bonnard. Her familiar figure – dark bob, heavy fringe, stooped shoulders – is a constant presence in the painter's depiction of domestic interiors, daily rituals and garden scenes. The pair met in 1893 and until her death in 1942 de Méigny's figure recurs within Bonnard's work to an extent which is remarkable in modern painting. Over the last fifty years there has been much speculation about de Méigny's character and the nature of the Bonnard marriage. This speculation is based on historical rumour, leaving contemporary audiences with many questions. Who is the woman behind the myth of Marthe and why is she critical to understanding Bonnard's art?

BY DR LOUISE WALLACE

Born in 1869, Marthe de Méigny's real name was Maria Boursin but she changed it when she moved to Paris at the age of twenty-two. It is thought she was making artificial flowers in a factory when she began a relationship with Bonnard in 1893. Bonnard had recently completed his legal studies. Despite his family's reservations he decided not to pursue a career in law, choosing instead the more precarious path of an artist. De Méigny quickly became central to his new bohemian life as his model and lover. Bonnard painted her repeatedly throughout their partnership of forty-nine years in all manner of daily domestic activities – eating breakfast, feeding the dog, bathing.

Her recurring presence throughout Bonnard's body of work is one of the reasons de Méigny is critical to understanding his art, which was radical in its commitment to domestic interiors and scenarios. This radicalism invited scorn



and criticism from a number of Bonnard's peers and critics (as I will explore in more detail later) with many constructing a domestic drama as though to explain Bonnard's painterly focus on the interior. The story centres on Bonnard's alleged affair with Renée Monchaty in the early 1920s. After his marriage to de Mélny, Monchaty took her own life. The two events have been spuriously connected, often through hearsay. The consequential narrative is that Bonnard was full of guilt over Monchaty's death while de Mélny became increasingly paranoid and misanthropic.

There was little understanding or empathy for de Mélny and her crucial presence in Bonnard's life and work. For example, Waldemar Januszak's 1998 review was typical of a critique more often directed at the woman rather than the art on display:

'Marthe was a spiky, neurotic, selfish, demanding wasp of a woman (who) had perfected the art of being nude'.<sup>1</sup>

Perplexed by Bonnard's emphasis on domestic scenes and daily routine, many critics at that time decided that de Mélny's alleged neuroses and health

It may be surprising to discover that the sexist tenor of this criticism persists, despite more awareness around mental health. Consider Philip Comar's analysis of Bonnard's bath paintings in 2016:

'We must account for the self-denial involved in devoting oneself to painting the same woman for an entire lifetime.'<sup>3</sup>

To better understand this misogynistic characterisation of de Mélny we must turn attention to issues of gender and class in fin-de-siècle France. Bonnard's father was a senior official in the French Ministry of War. The family was part of the haute bourgeoisie. Bonnard himself was highly educated and briefly worked as a lawyer. His social circle comprised industrialists, bankers, prominent doctors and famous painters, all men. French society at the time was built upon acutely observed class divisions. The working class were thought to have poor education and no understanding of culture, particularly peasant families from the country. Marthe's real name (Maria Boursin) was considered simple and would have betrayed her rural roots. Perhaps this is why she changed it to the more aristocratic sounding de Mélny. Certainly Bonnard's wealthy patrons struggled to accommodate her apparent differences and as she grew older her relationships with Bonnard's social circle broke down. In 1948, the Museum of Modern Art in New York staged a posthumous retrospective of Bonnard's work. John Rewald wrote in the catalogue essay:

'quiet and almost pathologically shy ... It is said that Madame Bonnard's fragile health demanded long sojourns in the country (or was it rather her shyness, her desire to flee the noisy boulevards, to escape acquaintances and even friends?)'.<sup>4</sup>

Was de Mélny's desire to escape a result of difficulties tied to class divisions, along with purported concerns over her health? Rewald's opinion was based on interviews with Bonnard's friend Thadée Natanson, a banker and publisher of *La Revue Blanche*. Natanson was a man of influence – a high profile figure among

## Recent research by Lucy Whelan sheds light on Marthe de Mélny's own ambitions to be a painter, portraying a very different picture of a woman of culture and some critical success.

—DR LOUISE WALLACE

This narrative re-emerged some seventy years later through reviews of a major touring retrospective, *Bonnard* at the Tate Gallery, London and the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1998. For the first time an exhibition brought together Bonnard's many late interiors. Significantly, all the great bather paintings were exhibited in one room. There seemed to be a collective shock across catalogue essays, journal articles and newspaper reviews. Art writers puzzled over Bonnard's intense focus on his marital home and his wife. It was almost as though art history could not fathom why a male painter might choose to make a pictorial study of the interiors of his life, marriage and home.

issues somehow trapped him at home. Tom Lubbock's writing characterises this unsubstantiated viewpoint:

'it must have been miserable, or miserably unequal, a sorry sort of shut-away mutual bondage, with her (on some accounts, basically a nutcase) wholly dependent on him, and him a dubious martyr, needing and nursing and using her dependence ... One hardly likes to speculate what mixture of grief, remorse, nostalgia and resentment is to be fathomed here. An exemplary marriage – an abyss'.<sup>2</sup>

the Parisian cultural elite whose social status was in stark contrast to de Mélny. His opinion of her colours early accounts of the Bonnard marriage. Natanson's niece Annette Vaillant published a highly influential Bonnard biography in 1965 containing interviews with her uncle, where he describes de Mélny as:

'scrawny restless irritable: a feverish goblin with acid eyes like green grapes'.

There is another side to the story of de Mélny that has not yet been adequately reported. Her great-niece Pierrette Vernon offers us an alternative picture of their relationship, one where Bonnard is fiercely protective of de Mélny in the face of social ridicule. Vernon describes an event that precipitated the Bonnard marriage in 1925:

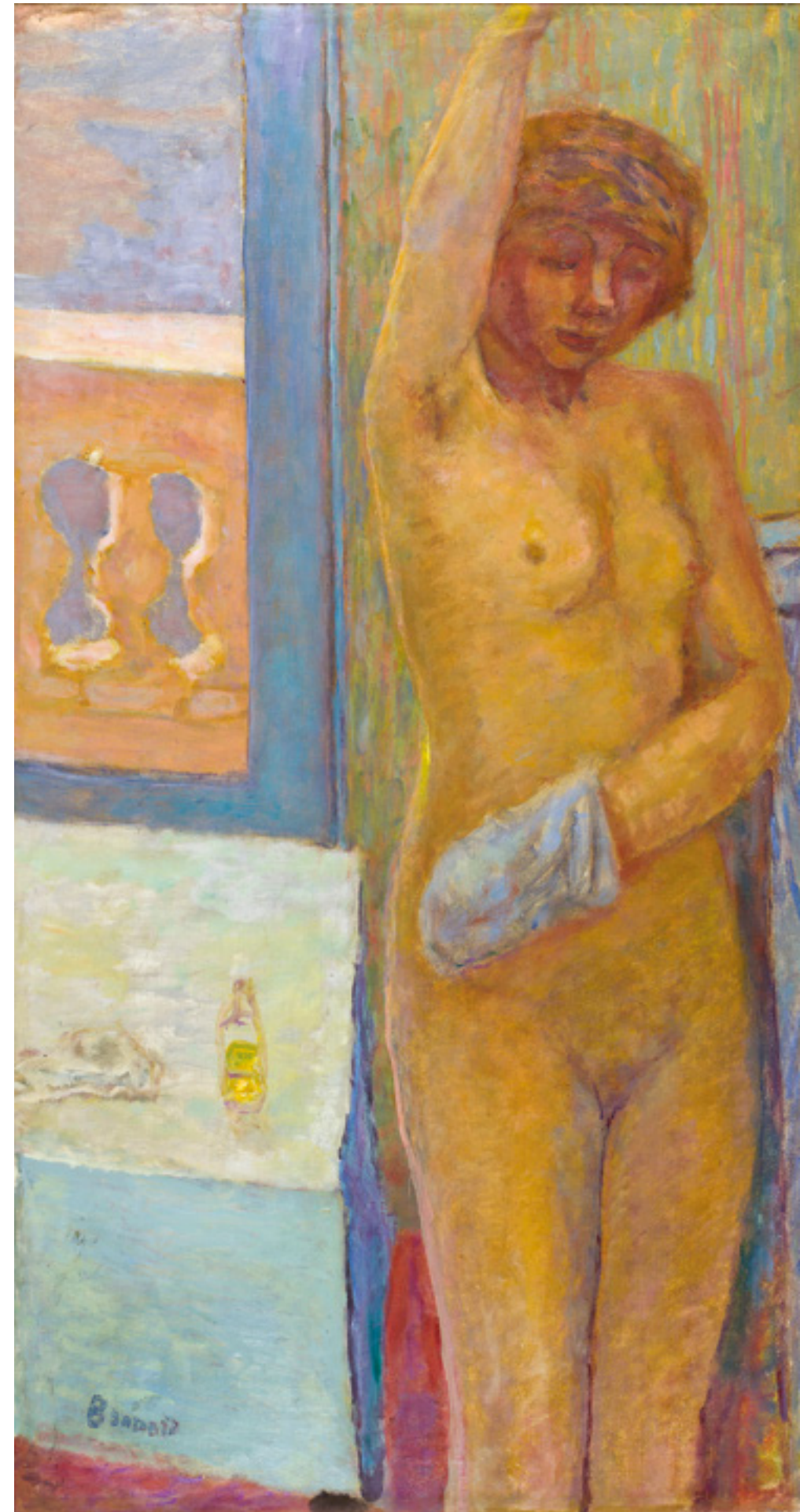
'At a soiree someone said Marthe was not the kind of lady one marries. The next day Bonnard married her. The whole story is really a question of two different milieux'.<sup>5</sup>

Recent research by Lucy Whelan sheds light on de Mélny's own ambitions to be a painter, portraying a very different picture of a woman of culture and some critical success. She was excited by her future as an artist, writing to her family in 1915, 'I am on the route to splendour'<sup>6</sup> and had one solo show in 1924 which was widely praised and sold well. It is not known whether she continued to pursue her artistic ambitions. In 1941, the year before she died, Bonnard wrote to a friend, 'Marthe has started working again ... watch out gents'.<sup>7</sup>

Whelan's research positions de Mélny as an independent spirit, seeking financial and creative autonomy,

'a radically different kind of woman whose very hairstyle was a provocative signal of her liberation from pre-war social constraints'.<sup>8</sup>

De Mélny's self-possession and ambition would have been frustrated at a time when it was almost impossible to become a successful female artist, when societal frameworks demanded other priorities of married women, positioning them as homemaker, mother and bourgeoisie hostess.





De Méigny was forty-six when she married and would remain childless. Pierrette Vernon stated:

'Nobody knows about that subject but I can say that Marthe was missing children'.<sup>9</sup>

Certainly their childless marriage would be another marker of difference within Bonnard's social milieu.

Once the Bonnards moved to their villa Le Bosquet in Le Cannet, his paintings focused on the daily rituals of married life. He installed a bathroom with running taps and a modern bathtub, describing it as the only luxury de Méigny ever wanted. Andrew Graham-Dixon estimates that:

'From 1927 to 1947 he made 59 paintings of the dining room; 21 of the small sitting room; 15 of the bathroom; 11 of the studio; 6 of the bedroom; 1 of the spare bedroom; 1 of the kitchen; 1 of the staircase and 102 of the gardens'.<sup>10</sup>

Bonnard's domestic project is in stark contrast to more usual depictions of the cabaret, cafe, bar and brothel in works by Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Pablo Picasso. Rather than recognise the radical nature of Bonnard's work, his paintings of Le Bosquet continue to be regarded with suspicion and pity, with de Méigny's role in this closely examined. Philippe Comar's analysis is typical of a masculinist reading of the domestic space:

'Loving a wallpaper pattern (...) a cat's blurred outline, the body of a nude woman going about her household chores, means that one has given up many dreams, lost many illusions'.<sup>11</sup>

Yet from his early beginnings with the artist group, Les Nabis, Bonnard was always interested in depicting interiors and household chores carried out by the female members of his family. This subject returned as a central theme when

he moved into his marital home. The formal innovations of those late paintings are evidence of the painter's enduring curiosity for the play of light within a room and the constant presence of a female companion. In Bonnard's paintings of Le Bosquet there is a sense of remembered intimacy and quiet routine. Forms dissolve and resolve until the viewer locates the equally blurred figure of de Méigny within the composition and somehow the intention of the painting becomes clear. However art history has chosen to describe her indistinct form as inaccessible and unreadable.

The bath paintings are perhaps at the heart of Bonnard's domestic project and have been subject to an implicitly gendered death narrative. Art critics repeatedly describe Bonnard's bath as a coffin and de Méigny as a modern-day Ophelia. This language is also problematic. Shakespeare's character Ophelia in *Hamlet* is the classic 'mad woman' of literature, a hysteric who drowns herself. The pernicious nature of this analogy points to the difficulty that various authors face in placing Bonnard's painting within the genre of the bather, which is more usually characterised by male objectification of the female body. In Bonnard's depiction of his wife, something different is happening. In *The Bath*, 1925, her body is barely delineated in the delicate collapse of line and colour. She is a vehicle for painterly effects rather than masculine desire.

The Ophelia metaphor plays to the so-called madness of de Méigny. In the early twentieth century there was poor understanding of women's health, both physiological and psychological. The lived female experience from puberty through the reproductive years and into menopause was greatly misunderstood. Any woman who fell short of a limited and limiting image of femininity – virtuous, submissive, maternal – was potentially under suspicion. De Méigny was regarded by Bonnard's peers with such distrust that Arthur Hahnloser, an ophthalmologist and wealthy patron 'attempted to arrange for medical

intervention'.<sup>12</sup> At that time, medical intervention could entail electro-shock therapy, genital mutilation and lobotomy.

It would seem that from her sixties onwards, and apparently suffering poor physical health, de Méigny preferred to remain undisturbed at Le Bosquet. Her great niece states that she had asthma since birth and it is suspected that she had tuberculosis in later life. A popular treatment for the illness at the time was cold baths. If de Méigny suffered with consumption from her fifties onwards, it would cast a different light on her stillness and fixed introspection in works like *The Bath*.

Interestingly, tuberculosis in fin-de-siècle France was thought of as a working-class disease. Consumptives endured social embarrassment and cloistered themselves away due to shame and the contagious nature of the disease. If the patient managed to recover from the initial bout, this would be followed by years of relapses. There was also a culture of surveillance built into treatment whereby:

'Hygienic practices of TB patients were exhaustingly supervised, treatment and nutrition was highly monitored and ambulation and mobility was heavily surveyed'.<sup>13</sup>

Bonnard's documentation of later life in Le Bosquet certainly aligns with ideas of seclusion, supervision and surveillance. Apart from the many paintings of de Méigny, Bonnard kept a diary in which he made daily sketches of her various routines.

Without any medical documentation, it is not possible to confirm whether de Méigny had tuberculosis. It is certain however that her death in 1944 left Bonnard heartbroken. He wrote to the Hahnlosers:

'You understand the full extent of my sorrow (...) after long days of painful loneliness (...) I am preparing to return to Paris where I will be closer to my family. I can't stay on alone here'.<sup>14</sup>

'If we look beyond the gossip to the truth contained in the paintings, we are struck by Marthe de Méigny's pivotal role across Bonnard's life and work.'

———DR LOUISE WALLACE



(p. 40) **Pierre Bonnard** *Nude crouching in a tub (Nu accroupi au tub)* 1918. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Gift of Zeineb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011 (RF 2011 23) Photo © Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Patrice Schmidt

(p. 43) **Pierre Bonnard** *Nude with blue glove (Nu au gant bleu)* 1916. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Gift of Zeineb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011 (RF 2011 20) Photo © Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Patrice Schmidt

(right) **Pierre Bonnard** *Siesta (La Sieste)* 1900. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1949. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited





Henri Cartier-Bresson's photographs of Bonnard at Le Cannet that same year depict a thin and isolated figure wrapped in a scarf; the villa seems strangely empty other than the artist and his many paintings in progress.

If we look beyond the gossip to the truth contained in the paintings, we are struck by de Meligny's pivotal role across Bonnard's life and work. In *The studio with mimosa* (Centre Pompidou, Paris), completed in October 1946, three months before Bonnard died, de Meligny leans into the bottom left corner of the composition. She appears as an old woman now looking directly at Bonnard as he paints the astonishing yellow of

the mimosa dominating his studio window. Although she had died four years earlier, de Meligny returns in one of Bonnard's final visions where she is still at the heart of his creative impulse, dappled with golden light.

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DR LOUISE WALLACE COMPLETED HER PHD AT THE BELFAST SCHOOL OF ART IN 2005. HER ESSAY 'WHO KILLED MARTHE BONNARD? MADNESS, MORBIDITY AND PIERRE BONNARD'S "THE BATH"' WAS PUBLISHED IN THE *JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY PAINTING* (2018).

**Pierre Bonnard** *The red blouse (Marthe Bonnard)* (*Le Corsage rouge (Marthe Bonnard)*) 1925. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. On deposit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle. Purchased at auction, 1937 (RF 1977 66) Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay)/image RMN-GP

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ALSO ON DISPLAY



# planetary Redesign

Australian film director and speculative architect Liam Young returns to the NGV with the world premiere of his latest film, *The Great Endeavor*, 2022. Elisa Scarton speaks to him about his new exhibition, which is on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

BY ELISA SCARTON



**Elisa Scarton** Your new exhibition brings together *Planet City*, 2020 originally commissioned by the NGV and supported by the Bagôt Gjergja Foundation, for the *NGV Triennial*, and the world premiere of your new work *The Great Endeavor*. What can visitors expect?

**Liam Young** I've called the exhibition *Planetary Redesign* and it presents these two interconnected films along with still photography, costume, data and interviews about the work.

*Planetary Redesign* speculates that addressing the climate emergency is not only a technological problem – it is a social, cultural and political one. Through the works, we see the potential for creativity and collective action to rebalance the ecology of the planet.

**ES** Your 15-minute short film, *Planet City*, 2020, provided a window into an alternative urban future that has been created as an antidote to the climate crisis. The work represents a speculation on what might happen if we radically reverse the sprawl of cities and design a planet city where all existing countries can reside. You describe the work as ongoing, so how has it developed since its 2020 premiere?

**LY** As an artist, my medium is imaginary worlds. I develop a world, and within this world you can pull out an image or you can set a story, you can focus on one character versus another. It's constantly in flux. For the premiere of *Planet City*, we focused on a festival that's taking place within that world. Since then, we've just been inhabiting the world and spending more time in it. Based on where the 'real' world is going and what particular ideas we think we can rub up against *Planet City*, it's been shifting and changing. For example, I visited the world's largest solar farm and the world's biggest wind power station, and all that real world research has been incorporated into the project.

**ES** Why is it so important to bring that real world research into *Planet City*?

**LY** Every speculation, no matter how sci-fi it is, begins with deep research into the present moment and the present condition. In the case of *Planet City*, it was about talking to the world's leading technologists involved in the infrastructure of clean energy and scalable ways of sustainably producing food.

All *Planet City* is really doing is turning up the volume on this research and imagining what would happen if all the things currently holding them back weren't there. For example, pressures from the fossil fuel lobby, and existing trade regulations that support traditional farming and agriculture. What would happen if we fully embraced these new technologies? What would that look like?

Climate change is no longer a technological problem. Climate change is now a cultural and political problem. It is a crisis of the imagination. We're not sitting around waiting for some tech billionaire to figure it out for us. In many cases, all the technologies required to solve all the problems we've created for ourselves are already here. The point of such a speculation and imaginary city like *Planet City* is to return ultimately to our cities, but with new eyes.

**ES** If *Planet City* is an infinite experiment of sorts, why did you feel the need to branch off and create your new work, *The Great Endeavour*?

**LY** The thing governing all my work now is this idea that we have no viable aspirational images of the future. All the images of a utopian or hopeful future that have gained traction are based on the outdated models of 1960s' and 1970s' environmentalism. Those strategies are wholly unsuited to the scale of crisis in which we now find ourselves. Trees on rooftops; community gardens; moving out to the country and growing your own mushrooms and tomatoes in the backyard – that kind of emphasis on individual responsibility and small-scale communal actions is just completely insufficient. But, on the other hand, every image of the scales of action that we now require every image of acting at a planetary scale, sits within the realm of the dystopia; the planetary is the remit of the Bond villain, or evil mega corporation, or Thanos, or any number of contemporary villains in popular culture.

*The Great Endeavor* is hopefully a counter to these dystopian images. It is a viable and hopeful film.

**ES** What story does *The Great Endeavour* tell?

**LY** *The Great Endeavor* portrays the construction of a global system of greenhouse gas extraction and storage, powered by vast renewable energy infrastructures – together they are capable of removing huge quantities of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

To achieve this, I visualise global collective action to set in motion an extraordinary scale of construction, which would require an enormous effort of global cooperation between nation states, between companies and organisations. Rather than simply lay out the science and the facts, I created a world with stories, sounds and characters – a narrative that will help us get behind that project and see it as being a viable thing that we both can and should be doing.

**ES** And the soundtrack?

**LY** To build *The Great Endeavor* we would need millions and millions of people from around the world. And I was interested in the ways that we could talk about that workforce as a community shaping a collective planetary action. We started researching the history of workers' songs, which actually began as a system of control where when a group of often Black bodies would be moving through a field, they would sing a song to keep their bodies in rhythm with each other as they're moving through the field, cutting down the wheat or picking the cotton to try and stay in line.

Across time, those songs evolved into the language of a community and they became sung in solidarity. Out of that came collective action, the birth of the union movement, thinking about workers acting as a whole. The songs became a critical way those workers would identify with one another and come together. My brief for Lyra Pramuk, the composer of the soundtrack, was to imagine a planetary workers song for this new community of global labourers, but also to say, what would a chorus of a million voices sound like?



**ES** Finally, what do you want audiences to take away from *Planetary Redesign*?

**LY** The future is a project. It isn't something that just rushes over us like water. The future is something that we all actively shape and define. Neither of the projects in the exhibition are attempting to be predictions, nor are they prototypes to be implemented. They're stories about a possible future that force us to question how we're acting today and arm us with sufficient evidence of the possibilities that lay ahead of us, so that we can make the right kinds of decisions.

The more light we shine on this landscape through stories, films, comic books and narratives; the more this landscape gets illuminated, and the easier it is for us to navigate a path through it. If climate change is now a crisis of the imagination, then *Planetary*

*Redesign* is a call to arms, an invitation to hope and imagine the type of future you want to inhabit and the steps we might need to take to get there.

*PLANETARY REDESIGN* IS ON DISPLAY AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE; NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 11 FEBRUARY. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE.

LIAM YOUNG IS AN AUSTRALIAN FILM DIRECTOR AND SPECULATIVE ARCHITECT. ELISA SCARTON IS NGV SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR.

(pp. 48–49) **Liam Young** *Planet City* 2020 (render). Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Proposed acquisition with funds donated by Bagôt Gjergja Foundation, 2020 © Liam Young

(above) Liam Young. Image supplied by artist.



## DEEP READ

# PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Born into a middle-class family in Paris, 1754, Marie Victoire Lemoine was among the first women artists to come into prominence in Paris alongside two of her sisters, Marie Élisabeth and Marie Denise. In *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* (c. 1798–1799), which recently joined the NGV Collection through the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, a fashionable young woman wears several hundred livres worth of the light Indian cloth, known as muslin.

BY DR TED GOTT

The story goes that, at a certain point in their marriage, whenever Napoleon saw his wife Josephine wearing a light muslin dress, he came running at her, snatching at her clothing and tearing it in places, or emptying his cup of coffee onto her attire, so that she would be forced to retire and change into something other than the sheer Indian-made fabric, exported from England, which he detested.

Muslin is most typically an unbleached or white cloth, produced from finely combed cotton yarn. It originated in Northern India and first appeared in Europe in the seventeenth century. Becoming increasingly available to Europe with the English occupation of India in the eighteenth century, it found great popularity at the end of that century in France. Its open weave allowed the movement of air, and therefore was suitable for the hot, dry summers that descended on Paris. A luxury product in France, and Josephine's favourite fabric, muslin cost 150 livres per metre at the time.

After he became Emperor in 1804, however, Napoleon was determined to outlaw muslin; and he decreed that the

wearing of silk and velvet fabrics manufactured in France was mandatory for all those attending his imperial court. His motive was both patriotic and practical. At Lyon, some 25,000 people had been employed in the textile and fashion industries during the eighteenth century. Following the Revolution, 20,000 people fled from Lyon, and the textile business was at its lowest ebb. Light muslin fabric imported from England was now, in Napoleon's eyes, both seditious and associated with a lewdness of behaviour that he felt to be inappropriate at his court. After 1806, when, at war with England, he established the Continental Blockade, muslin became one of the British products that was now banned from importation into all French-controlled territories in Europe.

Muslin is central to the story of an extraordinary painting generously given to the NGV by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, a life-size portrait by Marie Victoire Lemoine of a fashionable young lady wearing several hundred livres worth of the light Indian cloth.

In early August 1799 Citoyenne (Citizen) Lemoine registered 'item 166' for display at the annual Paris Salon, 'Tableau. Portrait en pied d'une jeune fille





appuyée sur une croisée' [Painting. Full length portrait of a young girl leaning on the edge of a window].

Born into a middle-class family in Paris in 1754, Marie-Victoire Lemoine was to share her passion for painting with two of her sisters, Marie-Élisabeth and Marie Denise; as well as with her cousin Jeanne-Élisabeth Gabiou, better known by her married name Jeanne-Élisabeth Chaudet. Lemoine's initial art training was with the history painter François-Guillaume Méguenot, an artist largely forgotten today. Méguenot rented an apartment from the husband of the prominent *ancien régime* portraitist Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (the NGV Collection contains several of her works), whose art is believed to have had more influence on Lemoine's development than that of her teacher.

Lemoine's earliest known commission is a 1779 portrait of the Princess de Lamballe, Queen Marie-Antoinette's ill-fated friend who was to be murdered during the French Revolution in September 1792. This was shown at the Salon de la Correspondance, a venue opened in Paris in 1779 by the arts entrepreneur Pahin de la Blancherie as an alternative exhibiting space for artists who were not members of the Académie royale, which was a boon for women artists who were denied access to official art training. In the final days of the *ancien régime*, Lemoine appears to have benefited from royal patronage, earning a living that enabled her to purchase property during the first years of the Revolution and thus obtain a degree of financial independence (this was important given that, unlike her sisters, Lemoine never married).

She first exhibited at the Paris Salon in Year V of the Republic (September 1796), when she showed what is today her best-known painting, *The interior of an atelier of a woman painter*, 1789 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Clearly a homage to Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, this was a work that would have been unwise to exhibit before the fall of Robespierre in July 1794 and the end of France's revolutionary Reign of Terror (since Le Brun had fled into exile, denounced by revolutionary leaders as a royalist traitor).

Following the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, fashion changed quickly. The Revolution swept away the elaborate trappings of couture from the former royal court (such as the exaggerated structure of pannier hoop skirts), privileging instead less ornate and less expensive forms of clothing and toilette inspired by the perceived sobriety of the ancient Roman Republic. The boned corset was now condemned as damaging to good health. High-heeled shoes were abandoned, as were the enormous wigs that had soared to preposterous proportions during the *ancien régime*. In the early Revolutionary period, any excess in fashion became suddenly suspicious. Outfits woven in the patriotic national colours of red, white and blue became popular; and in August 1792, wearing the cockade in these colours became mandatory by decree. Anyone found in public without a cockade was subject to arrest. People stopped addressing one another as 'Madame' or 'Monsieur', adopting the new egalitarian term 'citoyen/ne', citizen. After the fall of the monarchy in September 1792, and the beginning of the Reign of Terror, the situation became even more severe.

The day after the tyrant Maximilien Robespierre was guillotined on 28 July 1794, however, ornate carriages reappeared on the streets of Paris. Since more than 40,000 French citizens had been beheaded during the Reign of Terror, it must have been somewhat of a relief that only a few thousand were now guillotined during the reprisals that took place before peace was restored with the establishment of a new ruling body, the Directorate, in November 1795.

Four years of relative stability now followed in France, during which time a kind of party reaction burst out, particularly in Paris. People could have servants again, without fear of being executed. Perfume was back, especially for men. Nightlife exploded, with an ever more extravagant succession of theatrical productions, musical soirées and lavish balls, as people, especially the young, celebrated simply being alive after the scourge of the Terror was lifted.

During the time of the post-Revolution French Directorate government (2 November 1795 to 9 November 1799),

fashion swung away from Roman models and turned instead towards the supposed egalitarian harmony of ancient Greece. Association with ancient Rome was now felt to be compromising, given Rome's history of descent into Imperial dictatorship following the assassination of Julius Caesar. Instead, dressing *à la Grecque* for progressive women in Parisian society in the later 1790s became ever more symbolic of freedom from oppression of every kind.

So, when Marie-Victoire Lemoine's *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* was unveiled at the Paris Salon of 1799, this painting could not have seemed more up to date.

Lemoine's painting depicts at life-size a young woman standing before a windowsill, upon which is propped a largish book. Her right elbow anchors the book in place, while she toys with its pages with the fingers of her left hand, gazing languidly out at the viewer. At the right of the composition is a claw-footed *tabouret* or stool, and at the left a marble-topped *guéridon* or small table whose supports are adorned with gilt-bronze winged sphinxes and lions' feet. Placed upon the *guéridon* is an ancient south Italian *oenochoe* (wine container), here repurposed as a vase for flowers. Next to the *oenochoe* we see a roll of cloth that extends down to the ground, decorated with Greek *anthemion* or palmette motifs. All of these furnishings are in accord with the *style étrusque* (a misnomer for works actually paying homage to ancient Greece) that predominated in France during the Directorate period.

Rosy-cheeked, with brownish-green eyes and an almost cherub mouth, this young woman's hair is cut somewhat messily short in the fashionable new style for both men and women known as a *coiffure à la Titus*. A deliberate rebellion against the elaborate hairstyles and powdered wigs fashionable for both men and women during the aristocratic *ancien régime*, the origins of the Titus can be dated to May 1791, when the revered Republican actor François-Joseph Talma played the role of Titus Junius Brutus (a pro-monarchy Roman conspirator sentenced to death by his father in 509

BCE) in Voltaire's tragedy *Brutus* (1730), with his hair cut dramatically short. Such was the celebrity and influence of Talma that, it has been recorded, 'Eight days later, all the young people of Paris had their hair cut short, and from that evening dates the fashion of styling one's hair *à la Titus*'.<sup>1</sup> The unruliness of the sitter's Titus haircut in *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* is tamed somewhat by a red headband. In fact, she appears not to have shorn all her hair off, but tucked some tresses into this headband, so that she could reverse out of the Titus look on a different occasion. It was primarily women who wore their hair cut short this way, while the fashion for men became long hair either hanging down as spaniel's ears or tied up in a bun. Writing in 1810, the Parisian hairstylist Palette praised the way in which Titus cuts for women 'impart a youthful air, rendering other adornments, jewels and feathers unnecessary'.<sup>2</sup>

The young woman depicted in Lemoine's painting wears neo-Greek *cothurnes*, probably made from silk taffeta, with flat leather soles replacing traditional women's high heels. Newly fashionable during the Directorate, fashion historian Susan Siegfried has noted how 'flat shoes implied a new degree of mobility and independence for women' and, when represented in art of the period, 'claimed a freedom of movement for women at a symbolic visual level'.<sup>3</sup> Most prominently, Lemoine's sitter is dressed in a lightly flowing, sheer and sleeveless muslin tunic, cinched under the bosom instead of the waist in emulation of the women's garments depicted on ancient Greek vases.

This singles her out as one of those known at this period as *Les Merveilleuses* (the marvellous women).

The *Merveilleuses* who dressed like this in the late 1790s delighted and scandalised Parisian society in equal measure, especially when their transparent garments were worn over flesh-coloured underwear, giving them the initial appearance of appearing in public virtually nude.

Two of the most celebrated *Merveilleuses* were Thérésia Cabarrus (later Madame Tallien) and her friend

Joséphine de Beauharnais (later Madame Bonaparte). The two ladies met when both were imprisoned during the Reign of Terror. Joséphine's husband Alexandre de Beauharnais was beheaded in July 1794, and Joséphine and Thérésia were also both scheduled to be guillotined, being freed in the nick of time by the overthrow of Robespierre. During the Directorate, both women had affairs with Paul Barras, the bisexual Principal Executive of the Directorate. It was Barras who arranged Joséphine's marriage to a young soldier coming up through the ranks in 1796, Napoléon Bonaparte. Over in Britain this strange four-way relationship was satirised in scurrilous engravings, such as that by James Gillray which showed Napoléon peeping through a curtain at a stark naked Thérésia and Joséphine dancing before a drunken Barras.

Both Thérésia and Joséphine were keenly aware of political statements about newly regained freedom that their Grecian-style garments imparted. However, in addition to being satirised as naked prostitutes in English propaganda of the day, they were also denounced in France for dressing with such diaphanous minimalism. The scurrilous pamphlet *Lettre du diable à la plus grande Putain de Paris* [Letter from the Devil to the greatest Whore in Paris] attacked Madame Tallien for dressing in precisely the fashion worn by Lemoine's sitter in our painting: 'You don't like French fashion; we must invent another; so quickly, then, the Greek, Roman costume; naked arse, bare throat, gauze dress, flesh-colored pants; Greek-style straps, Greek-style boots'.<sup>4</sup>

Tallien certainly did like to push the envelope. Such as the night in the winter of 1799/1800 when she turned up at the Paris Opéra wearing a white sleeveless tunic hung just below her knees, open sandals with rings on all her toes, and no underwear. Napoléon's power broker Talleyrand commented that: 'Il n'est pas possible de s'exposer plus somptueusement!' ('One could not be more sumptuously unclothed!').<sup>5</sup>

Once Napoléon seized power in the coup d'état of 17–18 Brumaire Year VIII (9–10 November 1799), ending the reign of the Directory, the social reign of the

*Merveilleuses* was also doomed. Tallien's night at the opera was particularly galling for Napoléon, providing him with far too much information. As the new First Consul, Napoléon acted quickly to assert his more conservative taste in women's fashion (and his wife Joséphine was the first *Merveilleuse* to have her *à la Grecque* clothing mothballed). As one newspaper reported in December 1799: 'Women are returning to wearing silk fabrics again. This is not because the cold forces one to cover oneself, but because fashion forces one to agree with decency. It is said that Bonaparte testified several times that he did not like naked women in a living room and so today they dress to please him'.<sup>6</sup> Marie-Victoire Lemoine's *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* thus presents a compelling social document of the remarkable but brief time when the *Merveilleuses* brought the free dress sense of ancient Greece to the fore in contemporary Parisian society.

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THE NGV WARMLY THANKS KRYSZYNA CAMPBELL-PRETTY AM AND FAMILY FOR THEIR SUPPORT. SEE THE WORK ON DISPLAY ON LEVEL 2. NGV INTERNATIONAL OR FIND OUT MORE AT NGV.MELBOURNEWORK/143913

(p. 53) **Marie-Victoire Lemoine** *A young woman leaning on the edge of a window* (*Une jeune femme appuyée sur le bord d'une croisée*) c. 1798–99. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022



## COLLECTION

THE LEGACY  
OF THEOTTOMAN  
EMPIRE

After reaching its peak in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire dissolved 100 years ago. Istanbul-based historian Dr Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu takes a closer look at the context of art and design of the period.

BY DR FILIZ YENİŞEHİRLİOĞLU

In 1399, a Muslim Turkish tribe of Central Asian origin founded the Ottoman Empire in North-West Anatolia, Türkiye. Starting as a small principality, it grew through the annexation of provinces and assimilation with the

local populations into a vast empire ruling over the Balkans, the Middle East, Anatolia, North Africa, and north of the Black Sea, as well as temporarily in the Caucasus countries and North-West Iran.

After the conquest of İstanbul by Sultan Mehmet II in 1453, the principality became an empire with a centralised administrative system in relation with the palace institutions. The imperial, or palace (*mülkiye*), institution, personally led by the sultan, provided the leadership and direction for the other institutions as well as for the entire Ottoman system. In the nineteenth century, different regions of the Empire started to declare their independence and the last group, which were the Turks in Anatolia, founded the Republic of Türkiye in 1923 as a nation-state, thus bringing to an end the Ottoman Empire and the Khalifat.

Ottoman art and architecture is palace art. The members of the palace and the ruling class attached to the palace were the supporters and patrons of art. Artistic productions were based on high-quality handicrafts and the artisans were grouped according to their expertise. They received wages for their work and also extra gifts on special occasions. The artworks had their origin in previous Islamic traditions before the

Ottomans. Illuminated manuscripts, bookbinding, ceramic and tile work, textiles, carpets, metal and woodwork formed the basis on which one could admire the creativity of the artists. Thus, for the viewer, the perception of visual aesthetics derived from design and colour. The royal miniaturists created the motifs, patterns and the compositions that later were used on diverse types of material.

The Classical Age of Ottoman art occurred during the sixteenth century. This is the period when the Empire reached its largest geography, becoming a multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious empire with the dominance of the Muslim ruling class. The artistic Classical style of this period, like architectural works, became a visual language defining the diversity of the Empire and the palace. The administrative members in different regions of the Empire were influential in the dissemination of this Classical style. The local patrons preferred the palace style as well, if they wanted to show their attachment to the palace.

Karamemi is the Ottoman miniaturist who innovated the Classical style by using diverse flowers that illustrated their natural appearances. Before him, the designs were more abstract deriving from natural flowers or leaves. Karamemi brought a more realistic representation to the floral ornamentation. Designs are two-dimensional, and the colours are painted according to a decorative layout. One can find different types of roses, hyacinths, carnations, spring branches, pointed leaves that curve around their axes, daisies and more. These motifs can be designed in different compositions according to the material they are designed on. They can be drawn as seen from a bird's-eye view, or three-quarter profile. They can be in full blossom, or in buds. They can be shown in groups, as bouquets. Their size differs according to which material they are used. If on textiles, for example, they are large and expressive in volume. The aim is that they can be incorporated with previous styles.

Ottoman decorative arts shape space with decorative patterns and colours. One must perceive that this space







appears on two planes: the background on which all the patterns are painted, and the plane that develops because of the interrelationships between the patterns. Although there is no three-dimensional drawing and expression in the colouring of patterns, the simplest curves, the repetition of lines, the turning of the forms into themselves or the formation of opposite curves create a compulsory and visual plastic relationship between these two spatial planes. While the space created on the background creates an environment in which the forms can move freely, the space created between the ornamentation, instead of piling them on top of each other and distorting them,

helps them to fully emerge with all their forms and volume. Classical Age Ottoman poetry also uses these images as metaphors.

Objects created for the palace, even everyday objects, were made of expensive materials.

Silk was the main textile for costumes, gold would be used in manuscripts and gold, silver and rare stones would be used to decorate jewellery. Artisans would coat objects with precious and valuable materials to turn them into objects of luxury. Ceremonial arms and armour, and even helmets, were decorated with such rare stones.

Ottoman ceramics and textiles were much appreciated in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Italian traders commissioned ceramics from İznik, the main production centre and textiles from Bursa – a city in north-west Anatolia famous for its textile production. In Ottoman art of the Classical Age the quality of the object produced in terms of quality and quantity has always been at the forefront. Due to these superior qualities, Ottoman fabrics and tiles were among the luxury consumer goods sought after in Europe, in the sixteenth century and beyond. As the demand for and consumption of Ottoman items increased in European markets, they were first imitated, then altered and reinterpreted in these countries. The style chosen and reproduced in both fields is the Classical Age style.

From eighteenth century onwards, the taste of Ottoman patrons shifted to European productions. Ottoman artists innovated a hybrid Ottoman Baroque style in their artworks. In the nineteenth century the royal artisan groups of the palace were abolished and replaced with individual artists. Murals

representing landscapes and canvas painting became part of Ottoman art. The first Academy of Fine Arts was opened in İstanbul in the second half of the nineteenth century. Classical Age styles also continued in artistic productions. Ottoman-style influences can still be found in contemporary European objects, affirming the aesthetic quality and sustainability of these design activities.

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(p. 84) **Turkey** (manufacturer) *Fork and spoon* early 20th century. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1932. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

(p. 84–85) **Turkey** *Scimitar* 19th century. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of John H. Connell, 1914

(p. 86) **Turkey** *Dish* late 16th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1970. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

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## IN THE COLLECTION

# ALL AMERICAN CHAIR

The NGV's recent acquisition of *Windsor bench*, c. 1820, brings the first example of early nineteenth century American vernacular furniture into the Collection. In this special feature, Imogen Mallia-Valjan takes a look at the work and the shift in design tastes in the United States following the Revolutionary War.

BY IMOGEN MALLIA-VALJAN



By the time of the American Revolution, 1763–1783, furniture-making had become one of the leading industries in the United States and the taste for simple and sturdy was interwoven into furniture design. As post-revolutionary America gained economic independence from Europe, small regional centres greatly contributed to this growth as they began manufacturing goods for production that had previously been concentrated around port cities. Cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia were centres of production for high-quality adaptations of primarily English but also German designs. One such design, which has become a symbol of American colonial history, is the Windsor chair.

Initially developed in England during the early eighteenth century, the Windsor chair and bench variations are thought to have been produced in the American colonies as early as 1725 in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

Characterised by a spindle back, solid wooden seat with legs and arms that were dowelled in, its simple, yet strong, construction made it ideal for use outdoors. The popularity of

the Windsor chair was well established by the late eighteenth century as was the desire for specifically Philadelphian-crafted products. In 1766 an advertisement for Philadelphia-made Windsor chairs in a Charleston newspaper described the chairs on offer as 'well painted, high back'd, low back'd, sack back'd, and settees or double seated, fit for piazzas or gardens, children's dining and low chairs'.<sup>2</sup> Not only does this show the diversity of Windsor chair productions on offer at the time, but also the reach of Philadelphian artisanship. Prior to 1790, records have shown that more than 6,000 Windsor chairs were shipped from Philadelphia to colonies in the Caribbean and even back to Europe. While the exact manufacturing centre of the *Windsor bench*, which recently entered the NGV Collection is unknown, it is reasonable to assume that it was made in the north-east of the United States where production was centred.

Although drawing on the form of its precursor, the English Windsor chair, the American productions quickly became a unique form in their own right and are identifiable as a uniquely American design. It has been suggested that the plainer tastes of the American population

accounted for the divergence in design from the English Windsor chair to the distinct American version, perhaps as a result of the historical need for functional and sturdy pieces. A key point of difference between the English Windsor chairs and those made in the United States is the use of paint, which can be seen on the NGV's example. As noted in the previously mentioned advertisement, they are marketed as being 'well painted'. Chairs were painted to enliven interiors when the chair was to be used indoors, but also served to hide the humbler wood that was often used in American furniture. Most American Windsor chairs and benches made use of Hickory, a light but strong wood to create the spindles for the backrest of the chair, while the seats were often made of a softer wood that was easier to carve. However, the American Windsor chairs were often minimally shaped and the common bamboo styling was executed in paint, not moulding, which can also be seen on the NGV's example. The paint served to simulate the grooves that is seen in bamboo stems.

As with the English precursor, American Windsor chairs were often used in outdoor settings. This is particularly true of Windsor benches as these often found a home in gardens and on the large porches that are typical of American colonial homes. As the popularity of the style continued to grow, the Windsor chair was also used indoors and could be found inside wealthy city homes and country estates.<sup>3</sup> While the early examples of the American Windsor chair tend to have a half-rise backrest and the later ones, have a higher full-rise backrest, there was a large variety of designs to choose from. One of these different versions that became popular was the writing armchair. This differed from the regular examples through the inclusion of one much larger armrest that formed a small table on which one



could not only rest their arm, but also write. These writing chairs were most commonly seen in home libraries and offices.<sup>4</sup> These varied forms soon found a new market in organisations, such as libraries which sought large quantities of seating for members. By the 1820s, these larger scale productions had assisted in making furniture businesses highly competitive and the consumer market once again significantly expanded as immigration from Europe boomed.

Well after the American Revolution and into the nineteenth century, Windsor chair makers in Boston began to rival those in Philadelphia and produced their own unique versions of the chair. A variation known as the Boston rocker rapidly gained acclaim and popularity. These were characterised by the usual tall spindle back, but also a rocking base. Some of the Boston rockers were even produced with regular chair legs and a rocking attachment could be purchased to transform the chair into a rocker when desired. The chairs produced in Boston were soon shipped around the country and also abroad to the Caribbean in the same manner as the Philadelphian productions had been for decades.

The Windsor chair remains popular today and many boutique furniture stores in America sell contemporary versions for the dining table, breakfast bar and gardens, and it has truly become a universal design that fulfils many needs across the home.

AMERICAN CURATOR AND HISTORIAN SARAH MARGOLIS-PINEO SPEAKS ABOUT ANOTHER AREA OF AMERICAN VERNACULAR FURNITURE – THE SHAKER MOVEMENT – ON 23 SEPTEMBER AS PART OF THE NGV'S OBSERVATIONS: MOMENTS IN DESIGN HISTORY SEMINAR SERIES. FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK TICKETS SCAN THE QR CODE.

IMOGEN MALLIA- VALJAN IS NGV CURATORIAL PROJECT OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN.

(pp. 68–69) **United States** (manufacturer)  
*Windsor bench* c. 1820. National Gallery of  
Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, NGV  
Supporters of Decorative Arts, 2023

# OBSERVATIONS: Moments in design history

Where were 18th century secrets hidden?  
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The NGV's international online seminar series returns, this time to examine the impact and influence of design across key historical moments and movements. With a focus on the NGV's leading collec-tion of historical decorative arts and design, historians, writers and curators from around the world examine the movements, materials and manufacturers that shaped global design across centuries. Topics include the role of design in the emergence of trade relations between Asia and Europe, and their rich design histories.

## SEMINAR 2 – TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND THE RISE OF MODERNISM

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*Industrialisation and the rise of modernism* explores Art Nouveau, Shaker and the Art and Crafts movement in Europe and North America, the Meiji era and Mingei in Japan and the craft, trade and the demands of daily life on design in India.

## SEMINAR 3 – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN: 1900–1970

*Conceptual design: 1900–1970* examines the designers who reimagined modernism and exported their radical new ideas across the world, highlighting 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 design movements.



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AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA

# Shared history



Throughout September and October at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, new NGV Collection displays bring together historical and contemporary Australian and First Nations art, offering meaningful conversations and stories between places, artworks and artists.

**BY** BECKETT ROZENTALS AND SHONAE HOBSON

In a new approach to NGV Collection displays on Level 2 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, audiences will soon experience the legacies of 65,000 years of continued artistic and cultural practice. The inaugural display commences with a series of important works by First Nations artists, including Alec Mingelmanganu, Paddy Compass, Mick Kubarrkku, Crusoe Kuningbal and Lily Karadada whose painted carvings and barks form part of an enduring visual tradition that dates to early cave paintings. In dialogue, slender Mimih spirits who impressed their images on rock faces highlight the deep spiritual gravitas of these enigmatic figures. Mabel Juli's *Karrngin Ngarrangkarni (Moon Dreaming)*, 2002, explores stories of forbidden love, kinship systems and the origins of mortality. Aimed to be always evolving, these galleries allow for an ongoing conversation between artworks from the Collection, and visitors will find rich stories stemming from new and familiar works.



An emphasis on the rich history of trade and cultural exchange between Yolŋu and Makassan voyagers from Sulawesi (Indonesia) is conveyed in the mesmerising weaving by Burarra artist Mary Mirdaburrwa. This story of First Peoples voyages is continued with Harden Sidney Melville's *Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, off Cape Grenville, North East Australia*, 1874, supported by the Warren Clark Bequest and Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest in 2020. A shipboard artist on the *HMS Fly* during the 1840s, Melville explored the coast of Australasia, and this painting is an exceptional depiction of contact between Torres Strait Islanders and European maritime explorers. The canoe passengers are shown collecting objects from a shipwreck, and although historical records confirm salvaging trips like this were made by Torres Strait Islanders, this is the only known painting that depicts such efforts.

Completing, rather than beginning this narrative, is the story of British arrival. Painted in London in 1895, Marshall Claxton's *An emigrant's thoughts of home* communicates the story of nostalgia and uncertainty experienced by those in pursuit of a new homeland. This union of collection works demonstrates the extent of cross-cultural exchange that existed before British arrival and provides audiences with a deeper appreciation of the artistic developments before settlement.

Displayed with Eugene von Guérard and Louis Buvelot's romantic depictions of the Australian landscape is a possum skin cloak by Yorta Yorta/Mutti Mutti and Boon Wurrung artist Lee Darroch. Commissioned by the NGV in 2018, *Gumuka, baitja biganga* (*Old woman, old man possum skin cloak*) is the first cloak to enter the Gallery's collection and narrates the history of Darroch's Yorta Yorta Country and identity. The cloak represents four message sticks that tell cultural stories of family and Country. Darroch has burnt customary markings onto the cloak and heightened these linear designs with earth pigments mined from Barmah ochre pits in Yorta Yorta Country.

The traditional garment is paired alongside a late nineteenth century *Afternoon dress*, c. 1878, by Brisbane dressmaker, Miss Margaret Scott. Miss Scott included elements of French fashion in her garments, and following the Parisian model established by Charles Frederick Worth, Miss Scott was one of the first Australian designers to label her gowns. Miss Scott imported luxurious fabrics, and her garments were completed with both hand-stitching and sewing machines, which were first imported to Australia in the 1850s.

Central to the reimagining of the NGV Collection in these galleries is the discourse between beloved icons of the First Nations and Australian Art collections. A reply to the patriotic attitudes that emerged in Australia during the late nineteenth century, Tom Roberts's *Shearing the rams* was completed at Brocklesby Station, Corowa, in 1888. Self-consciously nationalistic, the now iconic depiction of shearing signalled the rise of a post-colonial identity defined through agricultural pursuits. Juxtaposing *Shearing the rams* are works by Wurundjeri leader and activist William Barak. Barak's *Untitled (Ceremony)*, 1903, and *Figures in possum skin cloaks*, 1898, prompt new interpretations and serve as a counter-narrative to early nationalistic ideals depicted in Australian Impressionist

paintings. Barak's experience of colonisation and dispossession, including his time at Coranderrk, an Aboriginal settlement established near Healesville, from 1863 until 1903 are some of the earliest examples of Indigenous fights for land rights.

Central to the advancement of modernism in Australia was the dedication of women artists to work in modern styles. While throughout the interwar years, women artists were among the best painters and printmakers in the country, predominantly their work was relegated or overlooked during their lifetimes. In 1933 at the age of sixty, Violet Teague travelled to the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission where she met Arrernte artist Albert Namatjira, whose watercolours continue to inspire generations of artists.

Following the incredible social and artistic changes that occurred in Australia and worldwide throughout the 1960s and 1970s, in the 1980s and early 1990s there were also many significant firsts in the art world, including the inaugural First Nations and women artists to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale. In 1982, New-Zealand born Rosalie Gascoigne was the first woman artist to exhibit for Australia in Venice. Acclaimed for her textural works assembled from found objects, such as feathers, shells, wood, road signs and corrugated iron, Gascoigne moved to Mount Stromlo Observatory on the outskirts of Canberra in 1943, and the surrounding region was to greatly inspire her practice. Following her first exhibition at age fifty-seven, Gascoigne quickly rose to prominence as one of Australia's most admired artists.

Kukatja and Wangkajunga lore man Rover Thomas had emerged as an artist in the early 1980s and is recognised as a leader of the Warmun School of Painting from the East Kimberley region. His paintings of Country and historical events, including his life as a stockman in the Great Sandy Desert, became synonymous with a new wave of artistic practice. He was awarded the John McCaughey Prize and later went on to be included in the 1990 Venice Biennale alongside Ngarrindjeri artist Trevor Nickolls, the First Indigenous artist to do so.

The union of the Australian and First Nations art collections has enabled an exciting and important reimagining of the NGV Collection and the new display invites audiences to reconsider pivotal moments in Australian art history, and reflect on shared cultural narratives.

BECKETT ROZENTALS IS NGV CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN ART AND SHONAE HOBSON IS NGV CURATOR, FIRST NATIONS ART.

OPENING THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA, LEVEL 2. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE

(p. 68) **Marshall Claxton** *An emigrant's thoughts of home* 1859. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by the National Gallery Women's Association, 1974. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

(p. 69) **Mary Mirdaburrwa** *Sail* 1998. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1998. © Mary Mirdaburrwa/ Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

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AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA

A walk through

# WATERCOLOUR COUNTRY

Honouring the timeless legacy and thriving contemporary practices of the Hermannsburg School of Watercolourists, *Watercolour Country: 100 works from Hermannsburg* brings together the NGV's significant holdings from this pivotal school of Australian art, including seventy-seven never-before displayed works generously gifted to the NGV in 2022 by former NGV Trustee and NGV Life Member, the late Darvell M. Hutchinson AM.

BY SOPHIE GERHARD







With works spanning from the 1930s into current day, *Watercolour Country: 100 works from Hermannsburg* presents more than forty Arrernte, Western Arrernte, Eastern Arrernte and Kemarre/Loritja artists, all with profound connection to the area around Ntaria/Hermannsburg. Displayed side-by-side, stories of kinship, family and spiritual ties resonate within the works, painting an intimate portrait into life and culture on their Country.

Though the Hermannsburg watercolourists encompass a congregation of significant and leading artists, the movement can be traced back to a single painter, Albert Namatjira, who, through his art practice and teaching, has inspired four generations of painters. Namatjira was born Elea in 1902, and baptised and renamed Albert by his parents upon their move to the Lutheran Aboriginal mission at Ntaria. Namatjira's father's Country lay towards Mount Sonder and Glen Helen

Gorge, in the MacDonnell Ranges. His mother's was in the region of Palm Valley in Central Australia, just outside Ntaria. At age thirteen, he was initiated by Arrernte Elders and lived out bush for six months, during which time he was taught the laws and customs of his community.

In his adolescence, Namatjira married Ilkalita, a Kukatja woman from the area west of Ntaria, near Papunya and Haasts Bluff. Her name was later changed to Rubina. The couple built a house nearby to the mission and together had eight children that would survive infancy: five sons – Enos, Oscar, Ewald, Keith and Maurice; and three daughters – Maisie, Hazel and Martha. Namatjira supported his family by working as a camel driver, blacksmith and general stockman, as well as by making and selling small, traditional wooden art pieces. In 1934, two Australian artists, Rex Battarbee and John Gardner, visited the mission, bringing with them their watercolour paintings to show the

locals. Namatjira was immediately struck by the art form, and offered to comeleer for Battarbee and act as his guide around Ntaria in return for painting lessons.

Namatjira proceeded to develop his own style of painting, which featured accurate renderings of distinctive local flora and geological features of the landscape, tantamount to his indelible knowledge and connection to his Country. Before long, his art began garnering great attention from non-Indigenous audiences, with works completely selling out in the artist's first exhibition, held in Melbourne in 1938.

The 1930s was a period that saw the rollout of the Australian government assimilation policy, a brutal ruling that aimed to erase the identities and cultures of Aboriginal people. At this time, citizenship was not awarded to Indigenous Australians, nor were many fundamental human rights, including the right to vote, own land, have relations with non-Indigenous Australians or



drink alcohol. For most First Nations people, these rights were not granted until the 1967 referendum; however in 1957, ten years before this event, Namatjira was granted citizenship in response to the growing respect for his watercolours. Soon after, Rubina Namatjira was also awarded citizenship in order to keep her and Albert's marriage, a marriage then between an Australian citizen and an Aboriginal woman, legal.

To many non-Indigenous Australians, and to British audiences observing the colony's 'advancements' from afar, Namatjira's watercolours were seen as a successful example of colonial assimilation, his technique in using Western art materials a progressive development in the abandonment of traditional art-making practices from Indigenous communities. Under closer inspection, however, and to those willing to see beyond their materiality, the art of the Hermannsburg watercolourists, at their core, are

exquisite depictions of traditional sites and sacred knowledge. They convey with authoritative understanding the ecology and geology of the Northern Territory, while brilliantly depicting the intimacies and intricacies of light, time and seasonal change.

Embracing the sumptuous possibilities in palette provided by their medium, Hermannsburg watercolours are vivid with colour, the artists employing soft purple tones of dawn and dusk, so particular to central Australia, and rich hues that evoke the scorching, dry desert heat. Often encoded with stories of Dreaming and community, these works are shrouded with messages of history, belonging and survival. To Jillian Namatjira, watercolourist and niece of Albert Namatjira,

Some white people think, 'Oh! Dot dot painting really has meaning. Landscape is only pretty coloured rocks and trees. We only want dot

paintings'. But these hills have meaning and we have stories too, the landscape artists. We can also talk about where the different Dreamings come from, and where they meet up and so on. Often they tell these stories for the sand paintings. White people they shouldn't say 'that's only landscape, dot dot painting over there is sacred'. No. Both ways of painting are equally important work. We have two ways of painting: sand painting and landscapes. For us they both have the same dreaming story. This landscape painting we do, it shows the country, We don't just paint anything, that's not our way. We are inspired by the country and the Dreaming as we paint.<sup>1</sup>

Exploring the medium in a modern context, and displayed within the exhibition, are contemporary artists, including Mona Lisa Clements, and Kathy, Reinhold and Clara Inkamala.





Descendants from Hermannsburg's original school of watercolourists, their work depicts the evolution of Arrernte Country and its transition to modern life, marrying stories and tradition passed down from ancestors with contemporary issues and politics. Unpacking the intangible relationship between history and contemporality within her practice, Clements has said,

I paint the current and old Namatjira Family and the old days in Ntaria. For example, I painted my uncle Kevin Namatjira while he painted his family in Hermannsburg at the Cafe, at the Hermannsburg Precinct. I also painted Lenie Namatjira, my aunty teaching her grandchildren Carissa and Kiara Malthouse at Hermannsburg how to paint in watercolours. I paint stories that I have been told or that I see in pictures from the old days. For instance, how water was sourced from the creek. Western Arrarnta people were getting water for their families in buckets. I paint people and children from the community painting out bush near the Finke

River. I always paint my country in the background, being the West MacDonnell ranges and Mt Hermannsburg.<sup>2</sup>

Echoing the magnitude of its display, *Watercolour Country: 100 works from Hermannsburg* reflects the choir of voices whose unique and powerful depictions of Country imbue the thriving legacy of this school of artists.

WATERCOLOUR COUNTRY: 100 WORKS FROM HERMANSBURG IS ON DISPLAY FROM 27 OCTOBER AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/WATERCOLOUR-COUNTRY

THE NGV RECOGNISES THE LATE DARVELL M. HUTCHINSON AM FOR HIS GENEROUS GIFT TO THE NGV COLLECTION AND WARMLY THANKS HIS FAMILY FOR THEIR SUPPORT.



(pp. 60–61) **Albert Namatjira** *Central Australia, MacDonnell Ranges* 1958. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022 © Namatjira Legacy Trust/Copyright Agency, Australia

(p. 62) **Albert Namatjira** *Finke River Gorge* c. 1956. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022 © Namatjira Legacy Trust/Copyright Agency, Australia

(p. 63) **Ewald Namatjira** *Untitled* c. 1950. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022 © The Artist/Licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Limited

(p. 64) **Albert Namatjira** *Haast Bluff, Central Australia* 1940s. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022 © Namatjira Legacy Trust/Copyright Agency, Australia

(pp. 64–5) **Mona Lisa Clements** *West McDonalds Ranges* 2016. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased NGV Foundation, 2018 © Benita Clements

(p. 65) **Albert Namatjira** *MacDonnell Ranges at Heavitree Gap* early 1950s. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by Esso Australia Pty Ltd, 2018 © Namatjira Legacy Trust/Copyright Agency, Australia





## AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA



# WELCOME TO Wurrdha Marra

Opening in October, the NGV proudly unveils *Wurrdha Marra*, a permanent gallery space dedicated to showcasing First Nations art and design. *Wurrdha Marra* serves as a welcoming introduction to The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, inviting visitors to delve into the rich cultural heritage and artistic expressions of First Nations peoples.

**BY** MYLES RUSSELL-COOK

*Wurrdha Marra* means 'Many Mobs' in the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung language and is the name newly bestowed by the Wurundjeri Council upon a dedicated permanent gallery space at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia for exhibiting First Nations art from Australia. For Indigenous peoples around the world, art and design are part of a continuum where the past intersects with the present, where different materials converge, and where diverse perspectives collide. Across countless generations since long before the written word, First Nations people have used art to pass down important cultural knowledge. *Wurrdha Marra* celebrates watershed moments in recent history, by offering a series of visual dialogues and juxtapositions from many mobs around the Country.

The works included in the inaugural display are by emerging artists, as well as senior practitioners across both time and place. Including new acquisitions and never before seen works, each of the artists has in their own way been at the forefront in creating new forms of expression, and in both maintaining and regenerating customary cultural practices and iconography.

Highlights in the display include a recent acquisition of ten an-gujechiya, a type of fish trap made in Arnhem Land, and brought into the NGV Collection by Linda Herd and the Canny Quine Foundation, Paul and Wendy Bonnici, Violet Sheno, Sarah and Brad Lowe, Nick W. Smith, Craig Semple, Beatrice Moignard and Emily Hardy, and Kade McDonald. In Maningrida, Burrara people produce two distinctive fish traps: the cone-shaped an-gujechiya, and mun-dirra, which is a woven fish fence. These traps are meticulously crafted using mirlarl vine, sourced from the jungle. For the Burarra people, their deep connection to the land and waterways defines their understanding of the natural world.

Also returning to display is another monumental weaving from the NGV Collection, commissioned for the *NGV Triennial* exhibition in 2017 with the support of Vicki Vidor OAM and Peter Avery. *PET Lamp Ramingining: Bukmukgu Guyananhawuy (Every family thinking forward)* is a large collaborative woven lamp, produced by nine artists from Bula'bula Arts and integrated into the PET Lamp design system by Spanish designer Alvaro Catalán de Ocón and Studio Alvaro Catalán de Ocón. The forms of the weaving were carefully linked together to create a singular large scale collaborative work, the first of its type.

A recent work, and proposed acquisition, by Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji artist, Tony Albert, *History Repeats*, 2022, utilises found materials from the artist's vast collection of what he specifically terms





(p. 78) **Zoe Prudence** *An-gujechiya (Fish trap)* 2021. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Craig Semple, 2022 © The Artist and Maningrida Arts and Culture

(p. 80) **Brook Andrew** *Polemics* 2000. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of the artist, 2002 © Brook Andrew/Copyright Agency, 2023. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

(above) **Queenie McKenzie** *Texas country, other side* 1994. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994 © The Estate of Queenie McKenzie. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation



'Aboriginalia'. Aboriginalia objects are linked by their appropriation of First Nations Australian iconography to serve as non-Indigenous domestic decorative design. *History Repeats* is part of the artist's ongoing interrogation into the appropriation of Indigenous histories and cultures and the implications of inauthentic cultural engagement.

Alongside Albert's work is another exciting recent work, *Dhatam*, 2023, a bark painting by Dhalwangu artist Guruwuy Murrinyina. *Dhatam* refers to plants that grow at Garrimala – a billabong near Gängan and a sacred site for Guruwuy Murrinyina's grandmother's clan, the Gälpu people. The twisting lines in white and green ochre reference Witiitj (the olive python) and his companion Djaykung (the Javanese file snake). Witiitj is an omnipotent Ancestral being, known in English as the Rainbow Serpent. The Gälpu clan *miny'tji* (designs), which appear within the leaves and forms of Malaluba's *Dhatam*, are sacred and elude to the power that exists within these beings.

Collaborative furniture design from Mer in the Torres Strait includes *Sik Utem* (sleeping bed), 2019, also known as Peimpeim Sik, or the Dreaming bed. This work was made using a common joinery technique called post and rail, found also in traditional Meriam bamboo construction. The rope lashing around each joint of the design's frame is based on a traditional method of vine fastening used to secure prongs on fishing spears and in the construction of bamboo houses, turtle fences and wind breaks.

Yamatji/Wajarri designer Nicole Monks's *Walarnu (boomerang chair)*, 2013, takes its shape from the aerodynamic movements of Aboriginal hunting boomerangs. The high back is made from steel in repetition of shape, symbolic of the boomerang's movement through the sky. 'The hunting boomerang shape is very different

from the very symmetrical common boomerang', Monks says. 'It does not come back.' The seat is made from kangaroo skin and fur, opening up a design conversation about hunting methods and technologies used by Aboriginal people.

Bundjalung/Ngapuhi performance artist Amrita Hepi's work, *Scripture for a smoke screen: Episode 1 – dolphin house*, 2022, generously supported by Craig Semple, delves into the captivating 'dolphin communication project', or 'dolphin house experiment' from the 1960s which aimed to teach dolphins human language, in hopes of one day establishing communication with extraterrestrial life forms. Amid the complex narratives of language and understanding, Hepi invites reflection on a fundamental question: What do we do when we don't speak the same language? And how do we treat others when we don't understand them?

Highlighting contemporary art and design, the works in the opening display of *Wurrdha Marra* can be seen as a bridge. Delving into the past, and unearthing little known narratives, the practitioners on display challenge preconceptions about First Nations art and design in Australia. In the context of *Wurrdha Marra*, which is a space designed to be constantly changing, the works reveal overlapping themes and shared tendencies as much they do differences, and encourage audiences to consider the relationship between artworks, both past and present.

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

WURRDHA MARRA OPENS GROUND LEVEL AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA IN OCTOBER. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE WURUNDJERI COUNCIL FOR ITS SUPPORT. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE



## NEW TO THE COLLECTION

# Bi Warrior Figure

Sydney-based artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran shares the story behind *Bi Warrior Figure*, 2022 – the first of his works to join the NGV Collection. The NGV warmly thanks the Rob Gould Foundation for generously supporting its acquisition.

BY RAMESH MARIO NITHIYENDRAN

The transfiguration of earth, fire and water is central to my practice. The raw, elemental and primordial sensibilities of fashioning or reflecting life from clay or molten metal makes me feel connected to the artisans who worked with their hands, earth and fire thousands of years ago. These artists, particularly from Asia, creatively highlighted reverence for humanity, animals and systems of belief through the masterful creation of deity or godlike forms. This might be a controversial thing to say, but when I experience this type of vernacular or ancient Buddhist and Hindu sculpture from Asia, I can't help but feel that 'Western art' is dull. This is of course an unmediated, first response. When I encounter objects such as this seventeenth-century Tibeto-Chinese bronze Avalokiteshvara that enchants me with its multiple arms and heads, or the beauty and sensuality of this seventeenth-century Nepalese Ganesha, I experience a sense of magic. The way

culture, imagination and artisanship are integrated into these works, which are part of the NGV Collection, is mind-blowing. But there is also something to be said about the fact that these sculptures, produced hundreds and sometimes thousands of years ago, remain functional and compelling among a zeitgeist of screen domination and the expectations we have for instant satiation and gratification.

To circle back to my initial provocation, I should clarify that I don't believe Western art is dull. I love art. I love learning about the parallel histories that have informed our visual and material cultures. In fact (and perhaps to some surprise), the histories of European modernism were where I found solace and a sense of belonging as a teenager who felt routinely out of place in the context of my family, school and most social settings. I was obsessed with Pablo Picasso in high school.

I loved the energy of his figurative abstraction. However, as an adult I have been able to think beyond the Eurocentric centres that my education privileged. This de-centering activity or bending of regional axes is no doubt reflective

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran *Bi Warrior Figure* 2022. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by the Rob Gould Foundation, 2023  
© Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

of broader, revisionist approaches to histories and culture. We are increasingly looking to the voices of those who have been marginalised, misrepresented or excluded in art, film, television and music.

My childhood was modest. I was the child of Tamil refugee parents. We seldom travelled and I never went to museums or galleries outside of high school excursions. I encountered Hindu sculptures for the first time as a five-year-old in Western Sydney at Westmead temple. We would go here for various cultural celebrations. Colourful sculptures of Shiva, Ganesh and Pavarti adorned the interior and exterior of the architecture. These gods often wore garlands made from brightly coloured fresh flowers. Offerings of bananas and coconuts surrounded them and the pungence of incense encapsulated the area. Memories like this provide interesting ground to reflect upon the preservation and display of deities from Asia in various museum collections around the world.

Within the context of collecting institutions, the headless and or limbless figures, such as this Indian Bodhisattva from the second century in the NGV's collection, routinely capture my imagination. While these incomplete bodies are generally destabilising or startling, I've often naively gazed at these fragmented figures and imagined possibilities of regeneration.

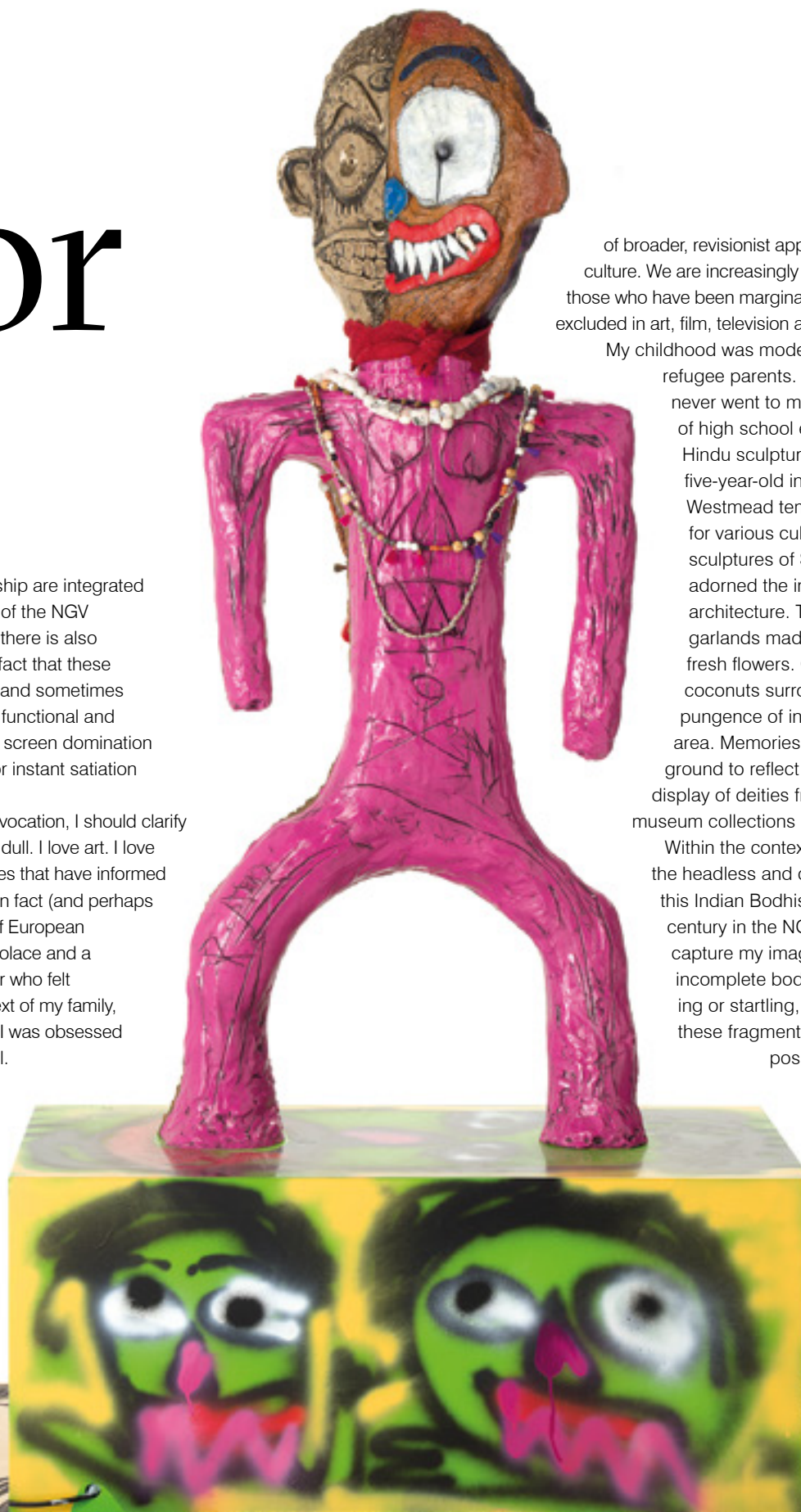
How can these 'incomplete' figures, often embedded among complex histories of iconoclasm, achieve completion, reparation or even sentience in current times?

The thoughts, reflections and provocations detailed above lingered when creating *Bi Warrior Figure*, 2022; a work that partly reflects my interests in syncretic and material languages specific to South Asia. It is a double-sided warrior or guardian figure made primarily from bronze. The work started as an ephemeral sculpture built with raw clay. Seashells, a rubber snake and other detritus were impressed into its surface before it was cast in bronze at Mal Wood Foundry in Melbourne via a lost wax casting process. After it was painted, polished and patinated, it was adorned with dyed hessian and a hand-strung necklace made in Sydney. The figure stands proudly on a steel plinth, gesturally sprayed with five expressive faces. This plinth is joined to a large irregular triangular base made from plywood. I scribbled all over this wooden base with a black Posca marker.

Analogous to the Surrealist 'exquisite corpse' method, I often build large figures in parts. Heads, torsos, limbs, masks, headpieces and votive props are often built separately and pieced together in crude or haphazard ways. Traces of their joining processes are intentionally kept visible. However, it is only once the heads are attached and the eyes are in their final places that I feel my sculptures become complete. The Hindu concept of Darshan refers to the spiritual significance of a devotee making eye contact with the image of a deity. This process is central to the recognition of divinity. For *Bi Warrior Figure*, I worked collaboratively with TILT Industrial Design to synthesise a motor and motion-activated sensor to enhance the viewer's experience of and participation with the faces of the work. With a clunky, cartoon-like sensibility, the head of this warrior moves in randomised rotations upon physical encounter with a viewer. The viewer literally activates the work through a physical process of seeing.

RAMESH MARIO NITHIYENDRAN IS A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST INTERESTED IN GLOBAL HISTORIES AND LANGUAGES OF FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATION.

*BI WARRIOR FIGURE* FORMED A KEY PART OF A CO-COMMISSION WITH ACCA, MELBOURNE AND ATLISSIAN. FIRST EXHIBITED AS PART OF THE SOFTWARE COMPANY'S *WONDERSPACE* PROGRAM IN 2022. IT WAS THEN RECONTEXTUALISED WITHIN RAMESH'S SOLO EXHIBITION, *UNDERGOD* AT SULLIVAN + STRUMPF, MELBOURNE IN 2023 BEFORE IT ENTERED THE NGV COLLECTION. SEE IT AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA FROM OCTOBER.





# A journey of giving

Rob Gould has been generously donating works to the NGV Collection for more than thirty years. Here, he speaks with NGV Curator Amita Kirpalani about his journey of giving.

BY AMITA KIRPALANI

That Rob Gould’s design work is held in the British Museum collection shouldn’t perhaps be a surprise. Gould designed and promoted the 2017 *Yes Pink Triangle* campaign in relation to the Gay Marriage plebiscite here in Australia. The British Museum then acquired the 10,000 ribbons and 12,000 placards associated with the campaign. The *Pink Triangle* is a symbol for the LGBTIQA+ community, a reclaimed symbol of self-actualisation, which originated as a Nazi symbol used to identify gay men in concentration camps. In his artist statement for the British Museum, Gould wrote, ‘My life continues to be enriched by involvement with causes for the greater good and witnessing positive changes and attitude shifts, including my own, that have resulted along the way’.<sup>1</sup>

He has always been cognisant of how political his own sexuality, and relationship with his sexuality was; in conversation he notes, ‘I accidentally came out very publicly when I was 16 years old. A decade before it was legal in my home state’.<sup>1</sup> Gould reflects on how his art life has always operated as a kind of activism. He feels that ‘making a difference’ and ‘making things better’ has always been an important part of his engagement with the arts and particular social issues; most notably, he has also worked on and fundraised for campaigns such as ‘Stop the Jabiluka Mine’ and ‘Close the Woomera Detention Centre’.

Gould Galleries, a cornerstone of the Australian commercial sector, closed in December 2017 after 38 years. However Gould continues to exhibit contemporary artists through his new venture Gould Creative. And after fifty years of advocacy alongside his commercial enterprises, Gould established the Rob Gould Foundation in 2022, pledging support for the NGV to collect Queer artists where the subject matter concerns ‘unmistakeably Queer issues’. Following the NGV exhibition *QUEER: Stories from the NGV Collection*, Gould has made important contributions to the NGV’s collection of works by contemporary queer artists, for integration into future exhibitions and displays.

Recently, The Rob Gould Foundation has enabled the NGV to welcome works by Paul Yore and Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran to the Collection, artists whose works examine each artist’s own queer identity while also tackling broader social, political issues and, on occasion, art historical issues. Yore, for example, works across installation, sound, video, collage, assemblage and textiles, often employing needlepoint, quilting and appliqué techniques. His work includes sexually and politically loaded imagery that engages with religion, queer identity and pop-culture. Yore uses a variety of found images and materials to create work that celebrates hybrid and fluid identities, unstable and contradictory meanings, often criticising contemporary society and material excess. Yore’s textile work *Fags hate God*, 2022,



continues the artist's practice of loaded imagery in a mixed media collage, including found objects, beads, buttons and shells. The Rob Gould Foundation also donated the work *Young dumb and full of numb*, 2022, a collage where the title appears in colourful block letters and features a pacifist ‘no war’ flag, as well as a multimedia slideshow of fireworks. Like his imagery, Yore’s titles often borrow from popular culture, twisting phrases or quotes with a tongue-in-cheek nature. Here, he references the recklessness of young men while alluding to queerness and signaling a growing disillusionment with the world as it is.

Gould’s generous and longstanding commitment to the NGV Collection is evident in the breadth of collection areas that have benefited from his support. This includes Sidney Nolan’s *Leda and swan*, 1960, Norman Lindsay’s *Spring’s innocence*, 1937, works by Benjamin Landara, fashion works by Issey Miyake and Jean Paul Gaultier and Kate Rodhe’s *Tail harvest*, 2006.

Gould’s mission now, as he describes it, is to invite others in, and encourage others to join him to encourage support for queer practitioners for the benefit of both the artists and the NGV Collection.

AMITA KIRPALANI IS NGV CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART.

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS ROB GOULD FOR HIS SUPPORT.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE NGV COLLECTION, PLEASE CONTACT THE NGV FOUNDATION ON NGV.FOUNDATION@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU OR VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/NGV-FOUNDATION

Rob Gould. Photograph: Selina Ou, NGV

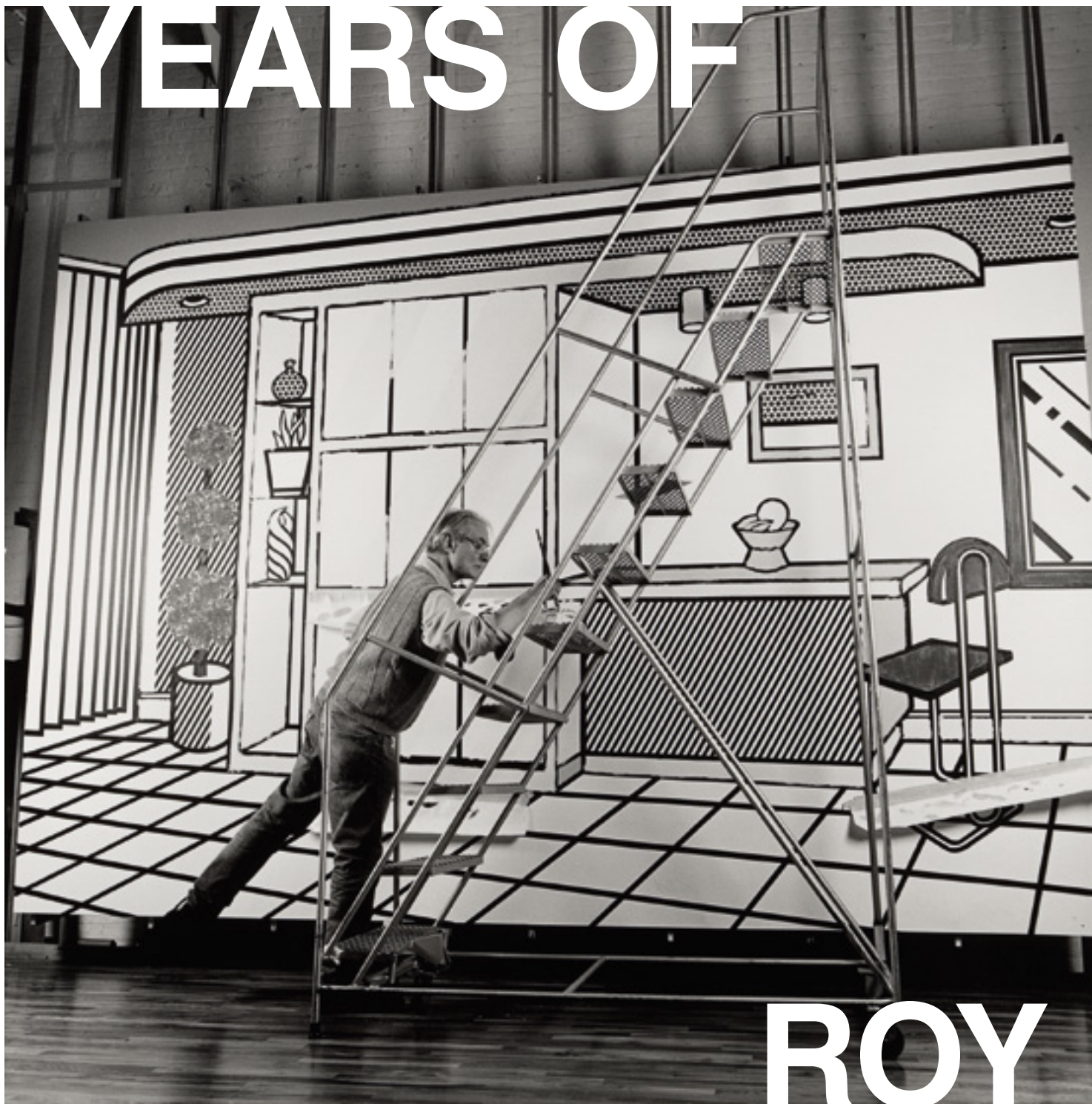


**Howard Arkley** *Explosion* 1996. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria in memory of Howard Arkley by Rob Gould, Governor, 2000 © Courtesy of the artist’s estate and Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

(bottom left) **Tomo Koizumi, Tokyo** (fashion house) **Tomo Koizumi** (designer) *Look 27, top and skirt* autumn–winter 2019–20. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, Tania and Sam Brougham, Tommy Hilfiger Australia, PVH Brands, the Rob Gould Foundation, SIRAP Art Collective and donors to the 2020 NGV Annual Appeal, 2020 © Courtesy of the designer



## ART ANNIVERSARIES

100  
YEARS OFROY  
LICHTENSTEIN

27 October 2023 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of American artist Roy Lichtenstein. Perhaps best known for his association with the 1960s international Pop Art movement, Lichtenstein became one of the most influential and recognisable artists of his time. The NGV Collection features two works by Lichtenstein, both from distinctive periods in his career. In 2023, the NGV was also fortunate to acquire a 1986 photograph of Lichtenstein by the late American photographer Nancy Lee Katz, as part of a significant gift by Michael S. Sachs.

BY CLARE McLEOD

Born in 1923 in New York City, Roy Lichtenstein showed artistic promise as a child and in early life. He began to paint and draw as a young teenager, and at fourteen years old attended Saturday classes at Parsons School of Design. Here, his subjects included the jazz clubs he frequented on 52nd Street and in Harlem. His love of jazz extended to his musical ability in piano and clarinet, perhaps inherited from his mother who was a trained pianist. In 1939, he also studied at New York's Arts Students League. His talent in visual arts was further nurtured at Ohio State University (OSU) where he studied fine arts as an undergraduate, and later completed a Master of Fine Arts after finishing military service in the Second World War.

At OSU, teacher Hoyt L. Sherman, aided him in questioning ideas surrounding perspective and perception in art-making. Lichtenstein taught across several tertiary educational institutions at different periods during the 1940s to 1960s and at other times worked a range of part-time jobs. All the while, he was developing his own artistic style and technique, exploring a variety of approaches to art-making in his early career. He began to amalgamate cartoon and comic book imagery with abstract brushstrokes in his work, as well as borrowing stylistically from modern artists, such as Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee. In 1961, spurred on by artists that he met at teaching stints in New York and New Jersey, Lichtenstein began to reincorporate cartoons into his work, while removing the abstract brushstrokes, and thus created his first Pop Art paintings.<sup>1</sup> This year marked a notable shift in his style, and he began to embed further elements of commercial art into his work over the next decade and beyond.

The earliest work of Lichtenstein's in the NGV Collection is colour offset lithograph, *Stedelijk Museum poster*, 1967, produced especially to announce his exhibition at the Amsterdam museum. The work includes Lichtenstein's signature appropriation of Ben-Day dots, a common feature of many of his paintings and prints. Ben-Day dots were typically used in the mechanical process of commercial engraving for newspapers and comic books to portray shading and dimension. At times, they were spaced out and overlapped to create the appearance of additional colour, an economic usage of colour that Lichtenstein

favoured. In this work in the NGV Collection, Lichtenstein has used them in black and red to fill both geometric and facial form, alongside blocked areas of colour. This pared-back use of colour, is also characteristic of much of Lichtenstein's work. In a 1967 interview with *Artforum*, Lichtenstein spoke of his restrained colour palette, explaining that he chooses the colours for their 'completeness' [sic].<sup>2</sup> Art historian Diane Waldman has remarked that his colours are 'employed for maximum potential'<sup>3</sup> a trait of the work that ultimately shines through via use of such bold, primary hues.

Waldman has also written on a series of works by Lichtenstein from 1966 to 1970, known as the *Modern* series. Some components of *Stedelijk Museum poster* align with the features that typified this series. According to Waldman, these *Modern* works derived from motifs in Art Deco architecture and design, combined with some elements of 1960's Colour Field theory and the geometric nature of 1930's artwork.<sup>4</sup> In *Stedelijk Museum poster*, geometric form comes to prominence through a range of overlapping and intersecting shapes and lines. The striking yellow shape that diagonally divides the work, is dynamic in appearance and highly indicative of Art Deco graphic design. Moreover, the use of representational figures and forms were few and far between in the *Modern* series.<sup>5</sup> Where they were used, they were flatter and less dimensional than the figures seen in other works. This is reflected in the *Stedelijk Museum poster*, as the face in the top right-hand corner has been woven into the fabric of the broader composition, rather than leaping out as the sole subject. It is notable that the column featured in the work seems to diverge from what was typical of the *Modern* series. It was, however, a motif that Lichtenstein employed in earlier works of the 1960s. The work as such, is perhaps a blend of features from different periods in his career.

*Composition IV*, 1995, a colour screenprint, also held in the NGV Collection was produced two years before his death in 1997. The print was made 'as a benefit to help retire the debt of Senator Ted Kennedy's 1994 senatorial campaign'<sup>6</sup> according to the catalogue raisonné of Lichtenstein's prints. Musical notes and warped music staves form the majority of the print. The Ben-Day dots are absent, however diagonal stripes, another signature



feature of Lichtenstein’s body of work, have been employed in the work. There is something quite playful about the print, as the curvature of the staves coincide with the vibrancy of the bright yellow and red, with a hint of blue.

Decades earlier in 1967, Lichtenstein spoke of his interest in making identifiable objects appear unreal, yet recognisable.<sup>7</sup> He succeeds in this venture in *Composition IV*, as the arched, colourful composition of the musical motifs strongly departs from the monochrome rigidity of the straight lines of actual musical staves. Despite this, the subject matter is still highly recognisable and can be clearly distinguished.

The recently acquired 1986 photograph of Roy Lichtenstein by Nancy Lee Katz, is part of a generous gift of multiple photographs donated to the NGV by Katz’s long-term partner Michael S. Sachs.

Before her death in 2018, Katz photographed more than 200 people of prominence to her, mostly from the artistic and musical fields.<sup>8</sup> The photograph of Lichtenstein shows him at work on a large painting. His palette rests on the rung of a triangular ladder, while his raised leg behind him complements the ladder’s triangular shape. These sloping lines appear somewhat in opposition with the other angular lines of the painting in the background. Additionally, the photograph situates Lichtenstein as an active participant in the process of creating his work. This is interestingly in contrast with Lichtenstein’s statements about how he ultimately prefers his work to appear to the viewer: ‘I want my painting to look as if it had been programmed. I want to hide the record of my hand’.<sup>9</sup>

While Roy Lichtenstein sadly and unexpectedly passed away due to complications from pneumonia in 1997, the legacy and impact of his contributions to Pop Art and art history more broadly are still deeply palpable. As what would be his 100th birthday approaches, his work continues to provide a blueprint for creativity and innovation in art and design.

CLARE McLEOD IS NGV PROJECT OFFICER, OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR.

SEE THESE WORKS ONLINE AT [NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/3867](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/artists/roy-lichtenstein/)  
AND [NGV.MELBOURNE/EXPLORE/COLLECTION/WORK/149320](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/149320)

(p. 91) **Nancy Lee Katz** *Roy Lichtenstein*  
1986, printed 2018–21. National Gallery of  
Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Michael S. Sachs,  
2023 © The Estate of Nancy Lee Katz

(pp. 92–93) **Roy Lichtenstein** *Stedelijk  
Museum poster* 1967. National Gallery  
of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1969  
© Roy Lichtenstein/LICHTENSTEIN,  
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Agency, Australia. A digital record of this  
artwork has been made available on NGV  
Collection Online through the generous  
support of the Joe White Bequest





## FROM THE CONSERVATION STUDIO

**A new approach to the  
conservation and care of**

# Lajamanu Paintings

With generous support from the Bank of America, the NGV is undertaking an important conservation project in collaboration with the descendants of the artists and the Warnayaka Art and Cultural Centre in Lajamanu, Northern Territory.

**BY** GENEVIEVE SULLIVAN

When caring for work by First Nations artists, the NGV conservators consider the role of the works as both art and cultural heritage. This is certainly true for paintings produced by Warlpiri people at Lajamanu, for whom the creation of art serves as an important method of teaching younger generations about their culture. The understanding that a conservator alone may not have the cultural knowledge or authority needed to determine how an artwork is be cared for, has typically led to an approach of minimal intervention when it comes to conserving such works. However, active collaboration with the communities whose cultural heritage is represented has become an increasingly important way of appropriately looking after these works now and for future generations.

The NGV's commitment to this approach has led to an important conservation project, generously funded by the Bank of America, to conserve a series of paintings on composite board, painted in 1986 by Warlpiri men of the Lajamanu community. The significant collection of Warlpiri works, which includes paintings by Freddy Jangala Patrick, Jack Jungarrayi Birrell and Tim Jupurrula Kennedy, were acquired by the NGV in 1989. While the majority of the artists whose work form this collection have now passed away, their relatives and communities can guide treatment decisions around appropriate methods of conservation. This includes how to approach cleaning or any areas of the works requiring other treatments so that they can be displayed in conditions that best represent the original intention of the artists.

The Lajamanu community was established in the late 1940s when several hundred Warlpiri people were forcibly removed by authorities, and taken north across 600 km of desert, to the area between Warlpiri and Gurindji Country. In the past, Warlpiri art was drawn in the sand and on the body, but after local adult educator John Quinn ran a course on painting in 1986 for which painting materials were supplied, the Lajamanu community did as other

communities in the region had done and began to produce artworks for a wider audience, displaying their designs across Australia and abroad. The early works created by this community are characterised by the use of recycled housing materials, such as Masonite® hardboard, cardboard, varied and vibrant commercial paints and a combination of lines, dots and figures, such as snakes. The subjects of the artworks are Jukurrpa, the Warlpiri word for what is widely referred to as 'Dreaming'. For Warlpiri, Jukurrpa is connected to Country, kinship and culture and the continued painting of Jukurrpa is a way of passing on knowledge between generations. Today, Warlpiri people at Lajamanu produce artworks on linen and canvas, featuring the same Jukurrpa that their parents and grandparents painted in the 1980s.

Conservation treatment on Lajamanu works in the NGV Collection began with the examination, documentation and research to understand the current condition of the paintings and assess the ongoing preservation and care required. In some cases, paint layers have changed over time due to the artists' innovative use of recycled and readily-available materials such as composite board and other housing materials. Also, the use of commercial house paint, as well as exposure of the works to the harsh environmental conditions of central Australia, has presented unique challenges, such as flexing of the composite board and lifting of paint.

To address areas of paint that have lifted from the boards over time, a conservation grade adhesive is applied with a fine brush behind the paint that had lifted. The lifting paint is then carefully laid down using gentle warmth and pressure, until secure.

This process of consolidation (or regluing) of the paint layer is necessary to stabilise the works. The outcome should not be visible to the viewer, but ensures there is no further loss to original material.





The paintings also have a thin layer of dust, from the desert environment in which they were painted, which over time may have dulled the original vibrancy of the paint. Community and family members of the artists are helping to inform what level of cleaning is desired. Their advice also helps determine, when appropriate, whether the layer of surface dirt is to be removed using modified pH water-based cleaning solutions. Various pH solutions with chelators (a molecule that bonds with metal atoms to make cleaning more effective) and conservation grade cleaning agents are tested on each paint type to determine their effectiveness in removing the dirt without affecting the paint layer. For some works, this is a short process where each paint can be cleaned using the same solution by carefully rolling a large swab dipped in the solution across the surface. For others, such as

Ronnie Jakamarra Lawson's *Yarla Jukurrpa (Bush Potato Dreaming)*, 1986, various paint types require different solutions, meaning that each dot is cleaned individually.

The cleaning process is designed to remove the layers of dust and deposits which have discoloured the surface of the works, while not disturbing embedded materials found within the paint; for example, twigs visible within the paint layers. These inclusions are important evidence of the environment in which the works were painted, likely on the ground and exposed to the elements.

The ongoing evaluation of the conservation treatments required to help stabilise the collection, and allow each work to tell its story as both an artwork and an object of cultural significance, will be carried into the next stage of the project: retouching areas of loss. This process is not designed to alter the nature of the works; for instance, the holes that once held nails won't be filled, nor will the indentations in the composite boards made prior to painting. Instead, under guidance from the Lajamanu community, reversible conservation grade paint will be applied to draw the eye away from, for example, surface scratches to the paint layer, allowing the artists' original compositions and intentions to remain.

Throughout this project it has been vital to consider each work individually, as well as part of a larger collection. While the same material concerns are generally present throughout the collection, any one member of the Warlpiri community at Lajamanu cannot speak for all the artworks. The treatment of each work must be guided by the individual cultural protocols of the families who can speak for that work. It has been important to ensure that those most closely connected to the artist or the Jukurrpa depicted are consulted and can determine how this part of their cultural heritage is cared for, and the project has been enriched by these rewarding conversations.

GENEVIEVE SULLIVAN IS NGV CONSERVATOR OF INDIGENOUS ART.

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS BANK OF AMERICA FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN ENABLING THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT.

(p. 91) **Ronnie Jakamarra Lawson** *Yarla Jukurrpa (Bush potato Dreaming)* 1986. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of CRA Limited, Fellow, 1989 © The Artist/Licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Limited. A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

(p. 92) NGV Conservator of Indigenous Art, Genevieve Sullivan performing treatment on Lajamanu and Papunya works. Photo: NGV



NGVWA

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THU 26 OCT, 10AM – 4PM

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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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MAKING NEWS

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF SUPPORT FROM THE HUGH D. T. WILLIAMSON FOUNDATION

Cara Becker

The NGV is sincerely grateful for an extraordinary ten years of support generously provided by The Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation, championing contemporary design and architecture at the NGV. Continuing the legacy of Hugh Williamson, the Foundation has enabled the NGV to continue to achieve outstanding milestones.

The Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation was the generous patron behind the establishment of the NGV Department of Contemporary Design and Architecture in 2014, the first Department of its kind in Australia. This transformed how the NGV could profile and celebrate local and international contemporary design and architecture.

The creation of the much-loved Architecture Commission series, Melbourne Design Week, Melbourne Design Fair and Melbourne Art Book Fair represent programming accomplishments that the NGV would like to acknowledge the Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation for supporting, alongside building the NGV’s Contemporary Design and Architecture collection.

The impact of the Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation on the NGV and the wider community has been extraordinary, and we are truly grateful for the Foundation’s dedication to the cultural sector. The NGV sincerely thanks the Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation Chairman, Stephen Newton AO, along with Trustees, James Garde and Susan Hughes, and former Chairman the late Martin Carlson OAM, for their steadfast commitment.

COMPLETION OF MAJOR TEXTILES CONSERVATION TREATMENT

Kate Douglas

The NGV Conservation department recently completed a major conservation treatment on the first of a pair of seventeenth-century Crewelwork bed curtains, generously donated to the NGV in 2018 by the Murdoch Foundation. Crewelwork uses two-ply worsted wool to embroider a dazzling variety of stitches on a typically linen ground. Like many historic crewelwork bedhangings, the two curtains were re-purposed to allow their continued use. These curtains hung for many decades as window furnishings in the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch’s sitting room at Cruden Farm in Langwarrin in Melbourne’s south-east. Due to their long life as practical items, the curtains required significant treatment before they could be displayed to the public.

The first curtain came into the NGV Collection with its wool embroidery intact but completely detached from its deteriorated linen backing. Conservation treatment involved stabilisation and securing the many crewelwork elements onto a new ground of historically accurate twill linen. This work was carried out by various members of the NGV Textiles Conservation team. The first panel has been transformed from a lattice of unsecured embroidery into a complete curtain, which can now be displayed hanging on a wall. The thick wool embroidery, which kept its owners comfortable as they slept in a four-poster bed almost 400 years ago, is still incredibly robust. The works will now be able to be enjoyed for many years into the future.

READ MORE ABOUT THE MAKING AND LIFE OF THE MURDOCH CREWELWORK CURTAINS HERE.



Installation view of 2022 NGV Architecture Commission: *Temple of Boom* by Adam Newman and Kelvin Tsang. Photo: Sean Fennessy



RON MUECK’S MASS, 2017, ON TOUR AT THE FONDATION CARTIER IN PARIS

NGV

Australian artist Ron Mueck’s *Mass*, 2017, is on display for the first time outside Australia in a major solo exhibition at the Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain in Paris. Originally commissioned by the NGV and acquired by the Felton Bequest for the 2017 *NGV Triennial* exhibition, the work, which features 100 large-scale resin sculptures of the human skull, will be on display in the French capital until 5 November.

This is Mueck’s third exhibition at the Fondation Cartier and also features a new work created especially for the occasion, which illustrates recent evolution in the artist’s practice

ANNOUNCING THE REMBRANDT WATERMARK DATABASE

Yvonne (Bonnie) Hearn

Available online for free, *Rembrandt’s Watermarked Papers at the National Gallery of Victoria* is a digital collection of fifty-eight individual watermarks relating to Rembrandt’s practice, including ten watermarks discovered only recently.

The database features an array of fanciful creatures, such as rampant lions, beastly basilisks and a sunning two-headed eagle, the head of a jester and a city’s arms, representing the many places that exported paper to the Netherlands during Rembrandt’s lifetime. These symbols were used by papermakers of the past as a way of permanently marking or branding their papers.

A papermaker’s chosen watermark design can often reveal where the paper was made and in some instances by whom, while also offering insight as to how Rembrandt used and favoured certain papers within his printmaking practice.

Watermarks are not always obvious; they are hidden and subtle marks within the paper structure. In the case of Rembrandt’s heavily etched and inked prints, beta-radiography (a form of low energy x-ray) is often the only method that will reveal a watermark. To learn more about the elusive watermarks found in Rembrandt’s papers and how NGV paper

conservators have studied and captured these watermarks.

On 9 September, NGV Conservation staff will hold a symposium presenting recent conservation research and treatment undertaken on Rembrandt’s works. For details and to book, scan the QR code below.



BOOK PUBLISHING AWARD WINS

Adele D’Souza

The NGV was recently awarded four first prize awards and several finalist places at the 2023 International Book Awards.

*The Picasso Century* by Didier Ottinger, assisted by Anna Hiddleston-Galloni with contributors (National Gallery of Victoria, Musée national d’art moderne-Centre de création industrielle, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Musée national Picasso-Paris) is the 2023 winner of the ‘Art’ category.

*Making Art: Imagine Everything Is Real* by Kate Ryan with Elizabeth Doan; illustrated by Symon McVilly (National Gallery of Victoria) received two awards, winning the ‘Children’s Nonfiction’ and ‘Children’s Novelty & Gift Book’ categories.

*Observations: Women in Art and Design History* is the 2023 winner of the ‘History: General’ category, and a finalist in the ‘Art’ category.

The following titles were finalists in the 2023 ‘Art’ category:

*Alexander McQueen: Mind, Mythos, Muse* by Clarissa M. Esguerra, Michaela Hansen, Katie Somerville, Danielle Whitfield and contributors; *Fred Williams: The London Drawings*, edited by Cathy Leahy and contributors; *Melbourne Now 2023*; and *New Australian Printmaking*, edited by Jessica Cole, Cathy Leahy and Anne Virgo OAM.

BOOK INTO NEW ADULT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Zoe Kirkby

Learn new skills and find creative inspiration with a range of adult learning opportunities at NGV this spring. Discover

the fascinating stories behind works of art with online and in-person courses and rewarding learning experiences. Inspired by the iridescent paintings of *Pierre Bonnard*, NGV hosts a one-day intensive course on Colour at NGV International on 16 September. This rich full-day program includes an exclusive before-hours tour of *Pierre Bonnard*, as well as guided tours of the NGV Collection and illustrated presentations by curators, conservators and guests that will explore the science behind colour and our relationship with it.

The annual online seminar series *Observations* continues, looking at key moments in design history inspired by the NGV’s leading collection of historical design and decorative arts. Seminar Two on 21 September considers the importance of traditional design and craftsmanship through daily life in India, Shaker communities in America and the Mingei movement in Japan before moving into the twentieth century introducing key movements including suffrage, the Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau. The final Seminar on 21 October introduces influential designers of the twentieth century including Isamu Noguchi, George Nakashima, Charlotte Perriand and Ray and Charles Eames, as well as the Bauhaus, Surrealism and Milan Memphis movements. Featuring in-depth presentations by world-leading historians, writers and curators these online seminars will examine the movements, materials and manufacturers that shaped global design across centuries.

The NGV’s final Scholars Series event for the year takes place on 18 October with University of Melbourne Associate Professor David McInnis presenting on *Shakespeare in Art*, marking the 400th anniversary of the book that gave us Shakespeare: the First Folio of 1623 and celebrating the recent acquisition of two works by German-born painter Philippe Mercier to join the NGV Collection thanks to the generous support of Wendy King through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2023.





## ACCIONA

# Ensuring a sustainable future for the NGV, one degree at a time

Conservation of the NGV Collection and works on loan from around the world requires a holistic approach – from the care of individual works to broader display environments, to enhance the longevity of all works on display. As artwork materials and media can vary widely – from furniture and frames with inlaid veneered decoration, to illuminated manuscripts on parchment, early colour photographs, silk textiles, wooden sculptures and bark paintings – works respond differently to levels of humidity and temperature and exposure to visible and ultraviolet light.

Michael Varcoe-Cocks, Associate Director, Conservation, sits down with Caroline Bommès, General Manager Brand and Marketing at ACCIONA Energía to discuss each organisation's approach to furthering sustainability. ACCIONA is NGV's Sustainability Partner and, together, the two organisations have collaborated on a lifecycle review of NGV's Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibitions, which has shaped some of the sustainability practices implemented throughout the Gallery, while ensuring maximum care of the NGV Collection.

BY MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS

**Michael Varcoe-Cocks** The NGV has been committed to achieving Victorian State Government sustainability targets, which has involved modest but impactful changes, such as reducing the use of single-use plastics, upgrading lighting systems and more energy-efficient LED technology. Caroline, can you tell us a little about what ACCIONA does and why small changes can lead to significant outcomes?

**Caroline Bommès** ACCIONA is a global leader in sustainable infrastructure solutions and the world's largest renewable energy developer without a fossil fuel legacy.

At the core of our mission is to create planet-positive solutions. What does this mean in practice, and for our engagement

with the NGV? Put simply, when we engage with organisations such as the NGV we look to going beyond purely sponsoring, and instead we're interested in also assisting the team on its sustainability journey.

**MVC** We've also installed 360-solar panels on the roof of NGV International and have sought to reduce energy use within our buildings by modifying one of the largest energy consumers in the building – the mechanical systems that control the environment within the Gallery. It is sustainable infrastructure solutions like these that have enabled the NGV to reach 100 percent renewable electricity use in our galleries.

The key and unique contribution that has helped achieve this is ACCIONA's specialist expertise in assisting the NGV to audit and review the sustainability performance of the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® series. We began in 2022 with *The Picasso Century* and now *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*. This partnership helps us understand how we can better optimise the NGV's sustainability performance.

**CB** That's right, ACCIONA conducted a lifecycle assessment for *The Picasso Century* that covered five main areas of impact, including waste, procurement, consumption (covering both energy and water), infrastructure and mobility, which has led to many positive outcomes.

**MVC** This year, the collaboration has evolved to a year-round sustainability partnership that supports the NGV's broader operational initiatives to reduce the carbon impact of its overall exhibition, building and collection operations and we're looking forward to seeing the results that come from this.

As a result of the partnership, the NGV's Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® series is now carbon neutral.

**CB** ACCIONA also has been carbon neutral since 2016. While carbon neutrality pledges and commitments are now common, to have a company not just pledge but also achieve carbon neutrality at this early stage is a demonstration of ACCIONA's pioneering position in the world's energy transition.

Meanwhile, arts and culture organisations are leading and innovating through their programming and curation of artworks. Through our partnership with the NGV it's been great to explore the opportunities to address the overall carbon footprint of an art organisation's programming and to address how this can be a contribution to innovation and sustainability leadership as well.

One of the best outcomes of the partnership has been the fact that we have been able to share learnings and knowledge with the NGV team that they can take forward and apply to the future exhibitions.

**'The NGV moves audiences with art, while ACCIONA tackles sustainability through innovative solutions. Our partnership blends pioneering spirit with engineering capabilities for planet-positive outcomes.'**

—CAROLINE BOMMÈS

THE NGV IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH ACCIONA ON THE MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES® 2023 EXHIBITION *PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI*. ON DISPLAY AT NGV INTERNATIONAL UNTIL 8 OCTOBER. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NGV'S SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES, VISIT: [NGV.VIC.GOV.AU/SUSTAINABILITY](https://ngv.vic.gov.au/sustainability)

MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS IS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION AT NGV.

ACCIONA IS A GLOBAL LEADER IN PROVIDING INNOVATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS. THE COMPANY IS LEADING THE TRANSITION TOWARDS A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY, LEVERAGING TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION TO DESIGN A BETTER PLANET.

# PARIS

## A JOURNEY THROUGH ART & HISTORY

**Paris puts on its best show in the winter months when the crowds thin, the light is soft and the atmosphere in the city's world-famous museums and restaurants is warm and inviting.**

This coming January, unpack your bags in the heart of the city and spend two weeks exploring the fine art, beautiful architecture, fascinating history, and sophisticated gastronomic tradition for which Paris is justifiably famous. Parisian guide, writer and

historian Patrick Bade leads this small-group tour through immersive walking tours, gallery visits and academic lectures, complemented by day trips to Reims in the heart of champagne country and the royal palace of Fontainebleau.

Extended visits to iconic art museums such as the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, along with visits to lesser-known sites such as the Musée des Années Trente and the Palais Galliera, make for an art lover's dream.

**Limited places remain on tour.**

**January 8-21, 2024 | 14 Day Tour**



[academytravel.com.au](https://academytravel.com.au)

Expert tour leaders | Maximum 16 in a group | Carefully planned itineraries





DESIGN STORE

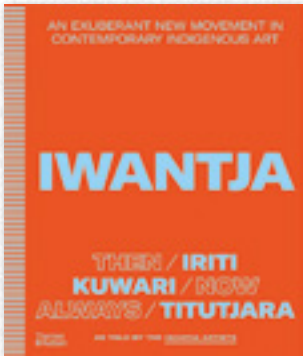
New books to add to your collection

Head into the summer with these great reads from NGV design store.



**THE WORLD OF MAB GRIMWADE** BY THEA GARDINER, \$45.00 M \$40.50

A beautifully presented hardback revealing the untold story of influential Australian philanthropist, Mabel Louise Kelly. Born into a genteel family of pastoralists and investors in colonial Victoria, 'Mab' to those who knew her, would grow up to make an enormous contribution to the arts, horticulture and early education in Australia.



**IWANTJA: AN EXUBERANT NEW MOVEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS ART**, \$79.99 M \$71.99

Located on a small ridge at the edge of the Indulkana Ranges, approximately 575 kilometres south of Alice Springs, Iwantja Arts art centre is home to some of Australia's most exciting Indigenous art.



**NEW MODERNIST HOUSE: MID-CENTURY HOMES RENEWED FOR CONTEMPORARY LIVING** BY PATRICIA CALLAN, \$79.99 M \$71.99

Can the intuitive design, sun-lit spaces and tranquil vibe of Modernist homes be updated for contemporary living while maintaining the integrity of the original architecture? *The New Modernist House* presents twenty-one mid-century homes respectfully restored and renewed for future generations to enjoy.



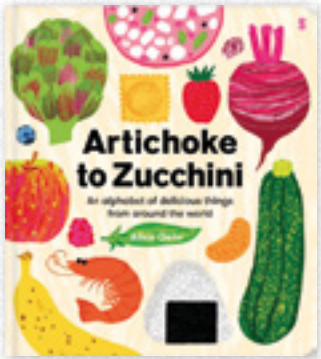
**WEAR NEXT: FASHIONING THE FUTURE** BY CLARE PRESS, \$34.99 M \$31.49

What will you be wearing tomorrow? Will your jacket have been grown in a lab, or your jeans coloured using bacteria? Will we still have shops? What does the future of work look like for the people who make our garments? This new publication by *Vogue's* first sustainability editor, Clare Press, is a crystal-ball look into tomorrow's wardrobe: conscious, fair, slow, upcycled, bio intelligent, digital.



**GARDEN AND METAPHOR: ESSAYS ON THE ESSENCE OF THE GARDEN**, \$99.50 M \$89.55

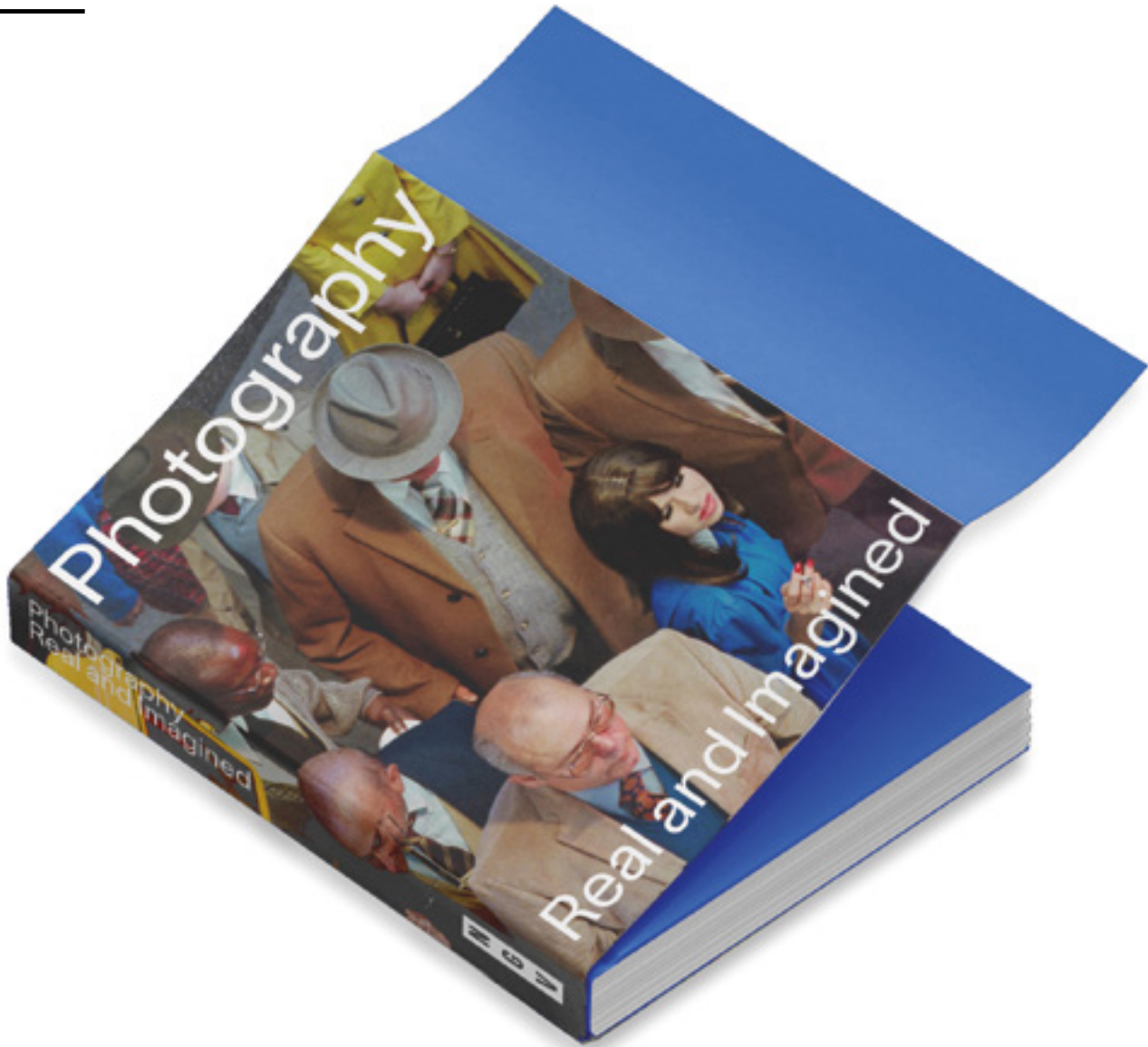
In this book, landscape architects, sociologists, architects, artists, philosophers and historians illuminate different aspects of the garden in the Anthropocene in six chapters: the garden as a place of community, garden as art, garden as a place of enchantment and rapture, opening up questions of what garden as a model could stand for.



**ARTICHOKE TO ZUCCHINI: AN ALPHABET OF DELICIOUS THINGS FROM AROUND THE WORLD** BY ALICE OEHR, \$24.99 M \$22.49

From apple pie to zeppole, and everything in between, *Artichoke to Zucchini* introduces young readers to fruit, vegetables, and dishes from around the globe. Full of tasty favourites and delicious new discoveries, it's sure to lead to inspiration in the kitchen!

BOOKS



*Photography: Real and Imagined*

*Photography: Real and Imagined* interrogates the proposition that photographs are either grounded in reality – a record, a document, a reflection of the world – or the product of imagination, storytelling and illusion. On occasion, they can be both.

In this publication, generously supported by the Bowness Family Foundation, 295 photographs from the NGV Collection, by Australian and international photographers, are richly illustrated and explored through 21 themes, including light, movement, narrative, conflict, work, play, and death. Spanning the 1840s to the current day, the works in *Photography: Real and Imagined* are an exploration of the past, present and future of photography, and a celebration of more than five decades of collecting photography at a major art museum.

The photos, selected from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, are divided into thematic groupings such as: environment; arrival and departure; built; science and the archive; war, protest and propaganda; work and recreation; selling the dream; storytelling and narrative; Surrealism; sensuality; Identity; and death.

Photographs are uniquely examined in short texts by NGV curators Susan van Wyk and Maggie Finch and local and international authors Kyla McFarlane, Astrida Neimanis, Charmaine Toh, Robert Zeller, Patrick Pound, Sophia Cai, Claire G. Coleman, Jennifer Higgie, Elsa deCourcy and Helen Ennis.

The book also includes three major essays including an introductory essay by Susan van Wyk; a text by Susan Bright examining the idea of the photograph as a document of the 'real'; and a piece by David Company exploring the imaginative capacity of photography.

***Photography: Real and Imagined***  
RRP: \$79.95

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

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE BOWNESS FAMILY FOUNDATION FOR THEIR SUPPORT.



## Closing Soon

Catch *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* before it closes on 8 October.



Pierre Bonnard is one of the most beloved painters of the twentieth century, celebrated for his use of colour to convey an exquisite sense of emotion. His close friend Henri Matisse declared that Bonnard was 'a great painter, for today and definitely also for the future'. A kaleidoscopic exhibition, *Pierre Bonnard* features more than 100 works by the celebrated French artist, spanning the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Paintings, drawings, photographs, folding screens and early cinema bring modern France to life with startling beauty and vivid colour. Developed in partnership with Musée d'Orsay, Paris, the exhibition is

largely drawn from the museum's impressive holdings of works by Bonnard alongside significant loans from other collections in France and beyond.

*PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI* CLOSES ON 8 OCTOBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION, VISIT [NGV.MELBOURNE](http://NGV.MELBOURNE)

NGV MEMBERS ENJOY DISCOUNTED ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION AND NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS RECEIVE UNLIMITED COMPLIMENTARY ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION.

*PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI* IS AN EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE NGV IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS. THE EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER VISIT MELBOURNE, PREMIUM PARTNER HSBC AND MAJOR PARTNERS EY, TELSTRA AND QANTAS.

## In The Next Issue

The November–December issue of *NGV Magazine* is your sneak peek into *NGV Triennial 2023*.

Bringing contemporary art, design and architecture into dialogue with one another and traversing all levels of NGV International, *NGV Triennial 2023* is a powerful and moving snapshot of the world today as captured through the work of 100 artists, designers and collectives at the forefront of global contemporary practice. Opening 3 December, the exhibition invites us to reflect on the world as it is, while also asking how we would like it to be.

In this special preview issue of *NGV Magazine*, we take you behind the scenes of the exhibition and introduce you to some of the artists and works set to be featured.

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

**FREE EXHIBITION**  
10am-4pm  
Sunday to Friday  
(Closed Saturday)



# LOST JOBS

## THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

### MUST CLOSE 12 NOVEMBER 2023



**OTB.ORG/AU/LOST-JOBS** | 9651 2233 | 20 Spring Street, Melbourne | [info@otb.org.au](mailto:info@otb.org.au)  
Image: 1948: MELBOURNE, VIC. A lamp cleaner on Princes Bridge in Melbourne, Victoria. Photo by News Ltd / Newsphotos

*Lost Jobs: The Changing World of Work* was researched and curated by the Old Treasury Building in partnership with Public Record Office Victoria

**OLD TREASURY BUILDING**

**Public Record Office Victoria**  
VICTORIA State Government





1. SBS journalist Manpreet Singh, MasterChef finalist Kishwar Chowdhury, filmmaker and producer Mitu Bhowmick Lange AM and Bushar Hasan speak at a panel discussion at Indian Community Day. Photo: Tim Carrafa. 2. NGV Supporter, Anne Robertson, representing the Tapestry Foundation of Australia, with artist Troy Emery at the *Melbourne Now* Supporters Viewing at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. 3. Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO reads her children's picture book *Welcome to Country* during NAIDOC Week Celebrations at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Martin Wurt. 4. Genevieve Sullivan, Conservator of Indigenous Art, MaryJo Lelyveld, Manager of Conservation, with Jonathan Denby, Managing Director of Bank of America and Misha Agzarian, Assistant Director of Fundraising and Events, celebrate the Lajamanu Conservation project generously supported by Bank of America. 5. Joel Bray performs with audience members at *Melbourne Now* Community Hall. Photo: Martin Wurt. 6. Anne Murphy Cruise, Division Director, Equity Capital Markets Legal Counsel, Macquarie Capital with guests at an NGV Business Council event in July 2023. 7. Shinya Takeda and Jenna Lee discuss their collaboration for *Melbourne Now* for NAIDOC Week Celebrations at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Martin Wurt. 8. Chairman of the NGV Foundation Board, Leigh Clifford AC, Kane Loxley and Alicia Loxley viewing Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit. 9. Jason Yeoh, Heuy Miin Lim, Dr Sara Yeoh, Eugene Tong and Shiori Tong viewing Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* at NGV International. Photo: Carmen Zammit.



## AROUND VICTORIA

### ZAHALKAWORLD – AN ARTIST’S ARCHIVE

Until 10 September  
**Venue** Museum of Australian Photography  
860 Ferntree Gully Road. Wheelers Hill  
[maph.org.au](http://maph.org.au)

Curated by Anouska Phizacklea, *ZAHALKAWORLD – an artist’s archive* is a major survey exhibition of work by photo-media artist Anne Zahalka. The exhibition centres around Zahalka’s archive and brings together key bodies of work that span her practice presented alongside collected treasures from her archive that inform and inspire her. Encompassing material that is both personal and professional, intellectual and physical, these archival components have been incorporated into a recreation of her house-studio within the gallery space.

### VOLUME: BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE

Until 22 October  
**Venue** Counihan Gallery  
233 Sydney Road, Brunswick  
[merri-bek.vic.gov.au/counihan-gallery](http://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/counihan-gallery)

*Volume: Bodies of Knowledge* features commissioned work by nine artists working in Australia, Hawai’i and New Zealand, including Denise Chapman, Ema Tavola, Emele Ugavule, Jane Chang Mi, Kelly Ka-Lai Chan, Laniyuk, Lia Pa’apa’a, Shivanjani Lal, and Stéphanie Kabanyana Kanyandekwe.

Through video, tapestry, photography, painting, printmaking and participatory installation, the artists shift the focus from the written word as the privileged material of the archive and invite us to instead consider the body as an archive.

Volume is the latest iteration of the Community Reading Room (CRR) project. Founded in 2013 by Fijian-Australian artist and educator, Torika Bolatagici, the CRR grew out of a community need for a collection and space for First Nations, Black, global Indigenous artists of colour.

**Anne Zahalka** *Exotic birds* 2017, from the *Wild Life* series 2006–17. Courtesy of the artist, represented by ARC ONE Gallery (Melbourne) and Dominik Mersch Gallery (Sydney)



### INCINERATOR ART AWARD 2023

6 October to 19 November  
**Venue** Incinerator Gallery  
180 Holmes Road, Aberfeldie  
[incineratorgallery.com.au](http://incineratorgallery.com.au)

Incinerator Art Award is a nationally recognised exhibition dedicated to the theme ‘Art for Social Change’. The Award pays homage to the visionary architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony, who collaboratively designed the Essendon Incinerator in 1929. Their belief in the ethical nature of art and architecture, as catalysts for positive social change, serves as inspiration for this award. Shortlisted artists will have their artworks displayed for the exhibition with the opening night and announcements on 6 October.

### KUNGKA KUNPU (STRONG WOMEN)

21 October to 25 February 2024  
**Venue** Geelong Gallery  
55 Little Malop Street, Geelong  
[geelonggallery.org.au](http://geelonggallery.org.au)

Drawn from Art Gallery of South Australia’s collection, *Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women)* showcases major contemporary works by celebrated women artists from the Apangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands – cultural custodians of an oral tradition that epitomises the art of storytelling. Working individually and collaboratively, these women leaders share an irrepressible desire to create groundbreaking works, deeply embedded with cultural knowledge and rich in ceremonial song and performance. An Art Gallery of South Australia touring exhibition.

WITH THANKS TO THE PUBLIC GALLERIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA. VISIT [PGAV.ORG.AU](http://PGAV.ORG.AU) FOR MORE EXHIBITIONS.

# RAMAK BAMZAR PRO FEMINA

26 August –  
5 November

# ART GALLERY OF BALLARAT



CITY OF  
BALLARAT

CREATIVE  
VICTORIA

BLUE PYRENEES  
— estate —

living

**Ramak Bamzar** *Leila* from the series *Moustachioed Women and Rhinoplastic Girls* 2022 (detail). Pigment inkjet print on paper. © Ramak Bamzar

Proudly part of the

**Ballarat  
International  
Foto  
Biennale**

26 August  
—  
22 October  
2023

[ballaratfoto.org](http://ballaratfoto.org)  
[@ballaratfoto](https://www.instagram.com/ballaratfoto)

[artgalleryofballarat.com.au](http://artgalleryofballarat.com.au)



## LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

(cover)  
**Todd McMillan**  
*Equivalent VIII* 2014 (detail)  
from the *Equivalent* series 2014  
cyanotype  
75.0 × 50.0 cm (image)  
82.5 × 57.0 cm (framed)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014  
2014.975  
© Todd McMillan, courtesy of Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 16  
**Zoë Croggon**  
*Fonteyn* 2012  
digital type C print  
102.8 × 99.9 cm (framed)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds arranged by Lotti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2013  
2013.699  
© Zoë Croggon  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 7  
**Polixeni Papapetrou**  
*Witness* 2006  
from the *Haunted Country* series 2006  
pigment ink print  
105.0 × 105.0 cm (image)  
ed. 2/6  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Robert Nelson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2015  
2015.115  
© Courtesy of the estate of Polixeni Papapetrou  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 7  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*The red blouse (Marthe Bonnard)*  
*(Le Corsage rouge [Marthe Bonnard])*  
1925 (detail)  
oil on canvas  
50.0 × 52.0 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
On deposit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased at auction, 1937 (RF 1977 66)  
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay)/image RMN-GP

p. 9  
**Mona Lisa Clements**  
*West McDonalds Ranges* 2016 (detail)  
watercolour, fibre-tipped pen  
and ink over pencil  
20.4 × 29.0 cm irreg. (image)  
21.5 × 30.0 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2018  
2017.14  
© Benita Clements

p. 16  
**Zoë Croggon**  
*Fonteyn* 2012  
digital type C print  
102.8 × 99.9 cm (framed)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds arranged by Lotti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2013  
2013.699  
© Zoë Croggon  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 19  
**Sarah Waiswa**  
*Finding solace* 2016  
from the *Stranger in a Familiar Land* series 2016  
inkjet print  
79.5 × 79.5 cm (image) 104.2 × 104.2 cm (framed)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2017  
2017.1025.8  
© Sarah Waiswa

p. 20  
**Cindy Sherman**  
*Untitled* 1988, printed 2003  
from the *History Portraits* series 1988–90  
type C photograph  
94.2 × 57.5 cm (image)  
ed. 5/6  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 2004  
2004.641  
© Cindy Sherman. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Bowness Family Foundation

p. 21  
**Alex Prager**  
*Crowd #11 (Cedar and Broad Street)* 2013  
inkjet print  
149.7 × 142.0 cm (image and sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Bowness Family Fund for Contemporary Photography, 2014  
2014.106  
© Alex Prager. Courtesy Alex Prager Studio and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, Seoul and London  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Bowness Family Foundation

p. 22  
**Hassan Hajjaj**  
*Master Cobra Mansa* 2013  
metallic inkjet print, timber frame, cans  
76.2 × 111.8 cm (image)  
95.0 × 135.0 × 7.0 cm (framed)  
ed. 3/5  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Orloff Family Charitable Trust, 2019  
2019.637  
© Hassan Hajjaj

p. 23  
**Max Dupain**  
*Impassioned clay* 1936  
gelatin silver photograph  
50.4 × 36.7 cm irreg. (image) 50.4 × 40.5 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
William Kimpton Bequest, 2016  
2016.396  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 24  
**Polixeni Papapetrou**  
*Witness* 2006  
from the *Haunted Country* series 2006  
pigment ink print  
105.0 × 105.0 cm (image)  
ed. 2/6  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Robert Nelson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2015  
2015.115  
© Courtesy of the estate of Polixeni Papapetrou  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 25  
**Elad Lassry**  
*Truffle goat cheese, Emmentaler, fork and spoon* 2010  
type C photograph, painted frame  
34.7 × 27.1 cm (image)  
36.8 × 29.2 × 3.8 cm (frame)  
edition of 5  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2015  
2015.396  
© Elad Lassry

p. 26 (clockwise from top left)  
**Michael Cook**  
*Civilised #11* 2012  
from the *Civilised* series 2012  
inkjet print  
100.0 × 87.5 cm (image)  
120.0 × 108.0 cm (sheet)  
ed. 3/8  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013  
2013.584  
© Courtesy of the artist, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

**Michael Cook**  
*Civilised #6* 2012  
from the *Civilised* series 2012  
inkjet print  
100.0 × 87.5 cm (image)  
120.0 × 108.0 cm (sheet)  
ed. 3/8  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013  
2013.582  
© Michael Cook and Michael Reid  
Sydney + Berlin  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

**Michael Cook**  
*Civilised #10* 2012  
from the *Civilised* series 2012  
inkjet print  
100.0 × 87.5 cm (image)  
120.0 × 108.0 cm (sheet)  
ed. 3/8  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013  
2013.583  
© Michael Cook and Michael Reid  
Sydney + Berlin  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

**Michael Cook**  
*Civilised #1* 2012  
from the *Civilised* series 2012  
inkjet print  
100.0 × 87.5 cm (image)  
120.0 × 108.0 cm (sheet)  
ed. 3/8  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013  
2013.579  
© Michael Cook and Michael Reid  
Sydney + Berlin  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

**Michael Cook**  
*Civilised #3* 2012  
from the *Civilised* series 2012  
inkjet print  
100.0 × 87.5 cm (image)  
120.0 × 108.0 cm (sheet)  
ed. 3/8  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013  
2013.580  
© Michael Cook and Michael Reid  
Sydney + Berlin  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

**Michael Cook**  
*Civilised #4* 2012  
from the *Civilised* series 2012  
inkjet print  
100.0 × 87.5 cm (image)  
120.0 × 108.0 cm (sheet)  
ed. 3/8  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2013  
2013.581  
© Michael Cook and Michael Reid  
Sydney + Berlin  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

p. 27  
**Jeff Wall**  
*Untangling* 1994, printed 2006  
colour Cibachrome transparency, light box  
207.1 × 241.0 × 26.2 cm  
artist's proof  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation and with the assistance of NGV Contemporary, 2006  
2006.426  
© Jeff Wall  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

p. 32  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*Dining room overlooking the garden (The breakfast room) (Salle a manger sur le jardin)* 1930–31  
oil on canvas  
159.6 × 113.8 cm  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Given anonymously, 1941 392.1941  
© 2023. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

p. 33  
**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. 36  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*Southern landscape: Le Cannet (Paysage méridional: Le Cannet [Paysage de montagnes, décor méridional])* 1929–30  
oil on canvas  
56.0 × 47.5 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
On deposit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Acquired from the artist by the State, 1933–RF 1977 69  
Photo © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Philippe Migeat

p. 38  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*La 628-E8* 1908, by Octave Mirbeau  
Illustrated book with 104 line block reproductions after drawings (including front cover)  
Page (each): 9 7/16 × 7 9/16 in. (24 × 19.2 cm);  
Overall (closed): 9 3/4 × 7 9/16 × 1 3/8 in. (24.7 × 19.2 × 3.5 cm).  
The Louis E. Stern Collection  
Acc. no.: 686.1944.1-104  
The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA  
Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

p. 39  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
*Corner of a table in the garden at Grands-Lemps* c. 1899  
Musée d'Orsay (original)  
Image courtesy Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet  
© Musée d'Orsay/Patrice Schmidt

p. 40  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*Nude crouching in a tub (Nu accroupi au tub)* 1918  
oil on canvas  
85.3 × 74.5 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
Gift of Zeineb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011 (RF 2011 20)  
RF 2011 23Photo © Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Patrice Schmid

p. 43  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*Nude with blue glove (Nu au gant bleu)* 1916  
oil on canvas  
102.5 × 53.5 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
Gift of Zeineb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011 (RF 2011 20)  
Photo © Musée d'Orsay, dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Patrice Schmidt

p. 45  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
*Siesta (La Siesta)* 1900  
oil on canvas  
109.0 × 132.0 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 19492053-4  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

p. 46  
**Pierre Bonnard**  
French 1867–1947  
*The red blouse (Marthe Bonnard) (Le Corsage rouge [Marthe Bonnard])* 1925  
oil on canvas  
50.0 × 52.0 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
On deposit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industriellePurchased at auction, 1937RF 1977 66Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay)/image RMN-GP

pp. 50–1  
**Liam Young**  
*Planet City* 2020 (render)  
colour digital video, sound, 15 min  
Visual effects supervisor: Alexey Marfin  
Original score: Matthew Barnes/  
Forest Swords  
Lead researcher: Case Miller  
Visual effects: Case Miller, Aman Sheth,Vivian Komati  
Main costume assistant: Courtney Mitchell  
Costume assistant: Ela Erdogan  
Costume artists: Holly McQuillan, Aneesa Shami, Janice Arnold, Yeohlee Teng  
Cinematography: Stewart Addison  
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Proposed acquisition with funds donated by Bagôt Gjergja Foundation, 2020  
© Liam Young

p. 55  
**Marie-Victoire Lemoine**  
*A young woman leaning on the edge of a window (Une jeune femme appuyée sur le bord d'une croisée)* c. 1798–99  
oil on canvas  
195.6 × 137.5 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022  
2022.1527

p. 58  
**Turkey** (manufacturer)  
*Fork and spoon* early 20th century  
wood, silver  
1.1 × 1.9 × 20.9 cm (fork)  
2.1 × 4.1 × 22.1 cm (spoon)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1932  
3373B.1-2-D3  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

pp. 59  
**Turkish**  
*Scimitar* 19th centurymetal, ivory, leather  
57.0 × 54.0 × 14.2 cm irreg.  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of John H. Connell, 1914  
1605-D3

p. 60  
**Turkish**  
*Dish* late 16th century (detail)  
earthenware (fritware Iznik ware)  
6.2 × 29.6 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1970  
AS2-1970  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

pp. 62–3  
**United States** (manufacturer)  
*Windsor bench* c. 1820  
painted hickory (*Carya*), pine (*Pinus*) and maple (*Acer*)  
100.1 × 201.1 × 57.1 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, NGV Supporters of Decorative Arts, 2023

p. 68  
**Marshall Claxton**  
*An emigrant's thoughts of home* 1859  
oil on cardboard  
60.7 × 47.0 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Presented by the National Gallery Women's Association, 1974  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

p. 69  
**Mary Mirdaburrrwa**  
*Sail* 1998  
natural dyes on pandanus (*Pandanus*)  
182.0 × 164.0 cm (variable)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1998  
1998.347  
© Mary Mirdaburwa/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia  
A digital record of this artwork has been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

pp. 72–3  
**Albert Namatjira**  
*Central Australia, MacDonnell Ranges* 1958  
watercolour over pencil  
28.7 × 38.9 cm irreg. (image and sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022  
2022.225  
© Namatjira Legacy Trust/Copyright Agency, Australia

p. 74  
**Albert Namatjira**  
*Finke River Gorge* c. 1956  
watercolour over pencil  
29.1 × 39.0 cm (image and sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022  
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p. 75  
**Ewald Namatjira**  
*Untitled* c. 1950  
watercolour and pen and ink over pencil  
19.7 × 27.4 cm irreg. (image and sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022  
2022.231  
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p. 76  
**Albert Namatjira**  
*Haast Bluff, Central Australia* 1940s  
watercolour and pen and ink over pencil  
26.6 × 37.4 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM  
through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2022  
2022.224  
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p. 77  
**Albert Namatjira**  
*MacDonnell Ranges at Heavitree Gap*  
early 1950s  
watercolour  
34.5 × 52.0 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Presented by Eссо Australia Pty Ltd, 2018  
2018.1129  
© Namatjira Legacy Trust/Copyright  
Agency, Australia

pp. 76–7  
**Mona Lisa Clements**  
*West McDonalds Ranges* 2016  
watercolour, fibre-tipped pen  
and ink over pencil  
20.4 × 29.0 cm irreg. (image)  
21.5 × 30.0 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2018  
2017.14  
© Benita Clements

p.78  
**Zoe Prudence**  
*An-gujechiya (Fish trap)* 2021  
jungle vine (*Malaisia scandens*),  
bush cane (*Flagellaria indica*), kurrayong  
(*Brachychiton diversifolius*), string  
40.2 × 184.5 × 40.2 cm (variable)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
Craig Semple, 2022  
2022.924  
© The Artist and Maningrida Arts and  
Culture

p. 80  
**Brook Andrew**  
*Polemics* 2000  
neon, mirror, transparent  
synthetic polymer resin  
172.5 × 102.3 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of the artist, 2002  
2002.39  
© Brook Andrew/Copyright Agency, 2023  
A digital record of this artwork has  
been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support  
of The Vizard Foundation

p. 80–1  
**Queenie McKenzie**  
*Texas country, other side* 1994  
earth pigments on linen  
102.8 × 211.8 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased through The Art Foundation of  
Victoria with the assistance of the Alcoa  
Foundation, Governor, 1994  
Dg102608.O.89-1994  
© The Estate of Queenie McKenzie  
A digital record of this artwork has  
been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support  
of The Vizard Foundation

pp. 82–3  
**Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran**  
*Bi Warrior Figure* 2022  
bronze, painted steel, motor,  
electrical components, shells,  
stoneware, wood, plastic, stone  
and metal (beads), silk (tassels)  
180.5 × 95.0 × 54.0 cm (overall)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated  
by the Rob Gould Foundation, 2023  
© Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

p. 85  
(top)  
**Howard Arkley**  
*Explosion* 1996  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
135.1 × 120.0 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Presented through The Art Foundation  
of Victoria in memory of Howard Arkley  
by Rob Gould, Governor, 2000  
2000.170  
© Courtesy of the artist's estate  
and Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art  
A digital record of this artwork has  
been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support  
of The Vizard Foundation

(bottom)  
**Tomo Koizumi, Tokyo** (fashion house)  
**Tomo Koizumi** (designer)  
*Look 27, top and skirt* autumn–winter  
2019–20  
polyester (organza), metal (fastenings)  
12.0 cm (centre back) 43.0 cm (waist, flat)  
(top); 182.0 cm (centre back) 33.0 cm  
(waist, flat) (skirt)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by Krystyna  
Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, Tania and  
Sam Brougham, Tommy Hilfiger Australia,  
PVH Brands, the Rob Gould Foundation,  
SIRAP Art Collective and donors to the  
2020 NGV Annual Appeal, 2020  
2020.761.a-b  
© Courtesy of the designer

p. 86  
**Nancy Lee Katz**  
*Roy Lichtenstein* 1986, printed 2018–21  
gelatin silver photograph  
25.4 × 25.3 cm (image)  
35.3 × 27.7 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Michael S. Sachs, 2023  
2023.40  
© The Estate of Nancy Lee Katz

pp. 88–90  
**Roy Lichtenstein**  
*Stedelijk Museum poster* 1967  
colour offset lithograph  
76.3 × 63.7 cm (image)  
79.4 × 64.7 cm (sheet)  
edition of 550 without text  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1969  
P54-1969  
© Roy Lichtenstein/LICHTENSTEIN,  
New York. Licensed by Copyright  
Agency, Australia  
A digital record of this artwork has  
been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support  
of the Joe White Bequest

p. 91  
**Ronnie Jakamarra Lawson**  
*Yarla Jukurrpa (Bush potato  
Dreaming)* 1986  
enamel paint on composition board  
132.4 × 88.0 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased through The Art Foundation  
of Victoria with the assistance of CRA  
Limited, Fellow, 1989  
O.41-1989  
© The Artist/Licensed by Aboriginal  
Artists Agency Limited  
A digital record of this artwork has  
been made available on NGV Collection  
Online through the generous support  
of The Vizard Foundation

p. 106  
**Anne Zahalka**  
*Exotic birds* 2017  
from the series *Wild Life* 2006–17  
chromogenic print  
80.0 × 80.0 cm  
Courtesy of the artist, represented by ARC  
ONE Gallery (Melbourne) and Dominik  
Mersch Gallery (Sydney)

## LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

### END NOTES

pp. 16–9

#### Photography: Real and Imagined

- Lucy Lippard, 'Brought to light: notes on babies, veils, war and flowers', in Olivia Lahs-Gonzales (ed.), *Defining Eye: Women Photographers of the 20th Century*, The Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, 1997, p. 131.
- The proposal that photographs can be either (or both) real and imagined is not a new idea. Debate about whether photographs are documents or artworks are as old as the medium, and this space continues to provide fertile ground for artists, historians and curators. Writers exploring these ideas include John Szarkowski, *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1978; Richard Bolton (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1989; Amos Morris Reich & Margaret Olin, *Photography and Imagination*, Routledge, New York, 2020; and Isobel Crombie, 'Between the real and the imagined: photography in Australia', in Christopher Allen (ed.), *A Companion to Australian Art*, John Wiley & Sons, Melbourne, 2021.
- For a history of the NGV's Photography department, see Isobel Crombie's introductory essay in Isobel Crombie & Susan van Wyk, *Second Sight: Australian Photography in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002, pp. 6–11.
- The first exhibition of photography at the NGV, *The Perceptive Eye*, was an exhibition of contemporary Australian documentary photography. In 1971 the exhibition *Frontiers* explored the work of creative photographers and was a decisive move away from the documentary tradition.

pp. 20–7

#### A selection of works from the exhibition

- Definition of camp from Susan Sontag's Notes on Camp: "Camp is a certain mode of aestheticism. It is one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon ... Camp, is not in terms of beauty but in terms of the degree of artifice, of stylization".
- Sherman said she bought most/all of the sets and props in op shops in Rome, as quoted in MoMa catalogue from 2012: ed. Eva Respini, Cindy Sherman (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2012), p. 74–75.
- Polixeni Papapetrou, 'Haunted Country', Polixeni Papapetrou, <https://www.polixenipapapetrou.net/essay/haunted-country>, accessed 7 Aug. 2023.
- Ibid.
- Artist's statement, *Civilised*, exhibition catalogue, Andrew Baker Gallery, Brisbane, 2012, unpaginated
- Kyla MacFarlane, 'Michael Cook' in Susan van Wyk (ed.), *Photography: Real and Imagined*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2023, p.40.

- Artist's statement, *Civilised*, exhibition catalogue, Andrew Baker Gallery, Brisbane, 2012, unpaginated

pp. 32–4

#### Slow Looking with Pierre Bonnard

- Bonnard communicated to the painter Jocelyne Seguin 1945 in Lucy Whelan, *Pierre Bonnard: Beyond Vision*, Yale University Press, New York/London, 2022, p. 8.
- Rebecca Chamberlain and Robert Pepperell, 'Slow Looking at Slow Art: the Work of Pierre Bonnard', *Leonardo*, vol. 54 issue 6, 2021, pp. 615–18.
- Whelan, p. 107.

pp. 36–9

#### Bonnard in Motion

- Pierre Bonnard, statement for his nephew Charles Terrasse, originally published in Terrasse's book *Bonnard*, Henry Floury, 1927. Quoted in 'Bonnard's Passivity', in Suzanne Pagé et al., *Bonnard. The Work of Art: Suspending Time*, London, Lund Humphries, 2006, p. 57.
- Mirbeau Octave, 1907, La 628-E8, Fasquelle, France.
- Octave Mirbeau and Pierre Bonnard, *Sketches of a Journey*, London, Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., 1989, pp. 17–18.
- Terrasse, Michel, 1988, *Bonnard at Le Cannet*, Pantheon Books, New York.
- Intime Welten: Das Interieur bei den Nabis; Bonnard, Vuillard, Vallotton aus der Sammlung Arthur und Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler*. Exh. cat., Villa Flora Winterthur, January 30, 1999–February 4, 2000. Catalogue by Ursula Perucchi-Petri. Bern: Benteli Verlag, 1999, p.100.
- 'La Peinture ou la transcription des aventures du nerf optique'. Diary note for 1 Feb. 1934, quoted in *Bonnard*, exh. Cat. (Paris Centre Georges Pompidou, 1984), p.190, trans. In *Bonnard*, exh. Cat. (Washington: The Phillips Collection, 1984), p.64

pp. 40–6

#### The woman behind the bather

- Waldemar Januszczak 'The wife of bath' *Sunday Times Magazine*, 25 Feb. 1998.
- Tom Lubbock, 'It Would All Come Out in the Wash' *The Independent* 17th February 1998
- Philippe Cornar 'The distant body', in '*Pierre Bonnard, Painting Arcadia*', Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, 2016 p. 145
- John Rewald, *Pierre Bonnard*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1948, pp. 31, 40.
- Pierre Bonnard: A Love Exposed*, Omnibus, BBC, 3 Feb. 1998.
- Lucy Whelan, *Pierre Bonnard, Beyond Vision*, Yale University Press, London, 2002, p. 91.
- ibid. p. 90.
- ibid. p. 77.

- Pierre Bonnard: A Love Exposed*.
- Andrew Graham-Dixon 'Bonnard', *The Independent Saturday Magazine*, 31 Feb. 1998.
- 'The distant body' in *Pierre Bonnard: Painting Arcadia*
- Margrit Hahnloser-Ingold, 'An insider's view: Arthur and Hedy Hahnloser encounter Pierre Bonnard and his work', in *Pierre Bonnard, Painting Arcadia*, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, 2016, p. 283.
- Paul H. Maison et al., 'Social, historical and cultural dimensions of tuberculosis', *Journal of Biosocial Science*, vol. 48, issue 2, 2016, pp. 206–32.
- Hahnloser-Ingold, p. 284.

pp. 54–7

#### Portrait of a lady

- Adolphe Jullien, *Histoire du Costume au Théâtre depuis les origines du théâtre en France jusqu'à nos jours*, G. Charpentier, Paris, 1880, p. 307.
- J. N. Palette, *Éloge de la coiffure à la Titus pour les dames, contenant quelques observations sur les coiffures modernes dites à la grecques, romaines*, Chez Palette, Paris, 1810; cited in Karine Huguenaud, 'Portrait de Madame Fouler', in *Trésors de la Fondation Napoléon dans l'intimité de la Cour impériale*, Nouveau Monde Éditions, Paris 2004, p. 28.
- Susan L. Siegfried, 'The Visual Culture of Fashion and the Classical Ideal in Post-Revolutionary France', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 97, no. 1, March 2015, pp. 92–3.
- Belzébuth, *Lettre du diable à la plus grande Putain de Paris*, L'Imprimerie de Jean Rouge, Paris, undated (late 1790s). Cited in Jean-Marie Bruson and Anne Forray-Carlier, *Au Temps des Merveilleuses. La Société parisienne sous le Directoire et le Consulat*, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, 2005, p. 128.
- Karine Huguenaud, 'Madame Tallien', <https://www.napoleon.org/histoire-des-2-empires/tableaux/madame-tallien/>, date accessed 01 July 2023.
- Le Moniteur, 5 Nivôse Year 8 (26 December 1799); cited in Jean-Marie Bruson and Anne Forray-Carlier, *Au Temps des Merveilleuses*, 2005, pp. 128–9.

pp. 62–4

#### All American chair

- J. Stogdell Stokes, 'The American Windsor Chair', *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum*, vol. 21, no. 98, 1925, pp. 47–58.
- Harrold E. Gillingham, 'The Philadelphia Windsor Chair and its Journeynings', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 55, no. 4, 1931, pp. 301–32.
- Stokes, pp. 47–58.
- Stokes, pp. 47–58.

pp. 72–7

#### A walk through Watercolour Country

- Jillian Namatjira, cited by Alison French, *Seeing the Centre*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p. 35.
- Mona Lisa Clements, *Ilitja Ntjarra*, <https://manyhandsart.com.au/artist/benita-clements/>, date accessed 12 July 2023

pp. 84

#### A journey of giving

- Author, in conversation with donor, 26 July 2023.

pp. 86–8

#### 100 years of Roy Lichtenstein

- Avis Berman, 'Biography', *Roy Lichtenstein Foundation*, <https://lichtensteinfoundation.org/biography/>, accessed 5 Jul. 2023.
- John Coplans, 'Talking with Roy Lichtenstein', May 1967, *Artforum*, <https://www.artforum.com/print/196705/talking-with-roy-lichtenstein-36726>, accessed 5 Jul. 2023.
- Diane Waldman, *Roy Lichtenstein*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1971, p. 14.
- Diane Waldman, *Roy Lichtenstein*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1993, p. 167.
- ibid. p. 171.
- Mary Lee Corlett, *The prints of Roy Lichtenstein : a catalogue raisonné 1948-1997*, 2nd ed., Hudson Hills Press in association with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., New York, 2002, p. 263.
- Coplans.
- Malcolm Daniel, 'Nancy Lee Katz's "Pantheon"', *The Museum of Fine Arts Houston*, <https://www.mfah.org/collection/nancy-lee-katz>, accessed 5 Jul. 2023.
- Coplans.




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John Wolseley, *The life of inland waters - Durabudboi river* (detail) 2015-18, watercolour, graphite, woodcut on paper. Courtesy of the artist  
Brodie Ellis, *Quartz* (detail) 2023, digital print. Courtesy of the artist





**N**

**G**

**V**