

FEATURING

State of Zen:  
Morita Shiryū

REKOSPECTIVE:

The Art of Reko Rennie

The genesis of

*Yayoi Kusama*

ISSUE 49  
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NGV  
MAGAZINE



The Legendary Designs  
of Jean Schlumberger

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The Deity of Daily Needs.

November 2024



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# Neva Hosking

Behind the wheel,  
in front of the storm.

December 2024



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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) *Untitled* 1967, ink on photograph by Harrie Verstappen. Private collection © YAYOI KUSAMA / Harrie Verstappen

(p. 6, above) Yayoi Kusama in her New York studio, c.1960 © YAYOI KUSAMA

(p. 6, below) James Ward *Shepherd boy and sheep dog*. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

(p. 7) Maria Pergay (designer) Uguine Gueugnon, Gueugnon (manufacturer) *Ring chair*, 1968. Proposed Acquisition

From the NGV

*Yayoi Kusama*

# KUSAMA

15 DEC 2024 – 21 APR 2025

Born 1929, Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama has built a formidable artistic career over almost eighty years, emerging early on as one of the world's most radical, impactful and important artists – a position she sustains to this day. This summer, we launch the exhibition *Yayoi Kusama* – an immense celebration of the incredible achievements and spectrum of work created by Kusama, and the largest ever exhibition of the artist's work in Australia. *Yayoi Kusama* is curated by the NGV in close collaboration with the artist, and with more than 180 works on display, it is also one of the most comprehensive showings of Kusama's work ever presented globally.

*NGV Magazine* covers the exhibition and the artist's story across two issues, beginning within this issue, where we share an extract by author Akira Shibutami from the exhibition publication *Yayoi Kusama*, and visit key moments in Kusama's creative trajectory. I hope you will find insights from these stories, from page 26, which will enhance your next visit to NGV. We thank Presenting Partner Visit Victoria; Principal Partner Mercedes-Benz; Major Partners Telstra, Macquarie Group, Qantas and Schweppes; Learning Partner The University of Melbourne; and Timepiece Partner Rolex. We also thank all of the donors to date who have generously supported the NGV Annual Appeal to acquire the iconic installation *Narcissus Garden* 1966-present, for the NGV Collection, including leadership gifts from Decjuba Foundation, Shirley Hsieh and Susan Lin, Paula Fox AO & the Fox Family, The Neilson Foundation, Gwenneth Nancy Head Foundation, Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC, John Higgins AO & Jodie Maunder, King Family Foundation, The Neumann Auster Family, Chris Thomas AM & Cheryl Thomas.

Also this summer, the 2024 Architecture Commission celebrates the work of Melbourne studio Breathe with its project *Home Truth*, and we interview the studio on page 78. With thanks to Design Partner RMIT University for its support of this important series. We also share an interview with contemporary Australian artist Natalya Hughes on page 90, who is this year's featured artist in the annual MECCA x NGV Holiday Collaboration. The initiative, now in its ninth year, has become an important part of the NGV and MECCA partnership, and enables Australian artists and designers incredible visibility across broad audiences.

*Cats & Dogs*, a dynamic exhibition now open at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, features some of the most prominent names in art history. From page 72, enjoy the perspectives from NGV curators and conservators. This summer, the NGV Kids Summer Festival and Kids on Tour program are inspired by the exhibition. Find out more in Making News on page 12 and please visit our website for full details.

Thank you for all of your support throughout the year. Wishing you happy holidays and happy reading, from all of us at NGV.

Tony Ellwood AM  
Director

Welcome to the final issue of *NGV Magazine* for 2024. As the year comes to an end, we highlight some new works to the Collection. Thanks to the generosity of the Felton Bequest, *Kanzan*, 1969, by Morita Shiryū is a significant acquisition of mid-twentieth century Japanese art and the first work by Shiryū to join the NGV Collection. As Wayne Crothers writes on page 18, Shiryū revolutionised 'Japanese calligraphy into a global avant-garde aesthetic' with *Kanzan*.

*Kanzan* joins a new display of art and design icons from the 1960s–90s drawn from the NGV Collection this summer on Level 3, NGV International. In this display, also see the work of couturiers Martin Margiela, Jean Paul Gaultier and John Galliano, and read more about their careers and legacy from page 22. Clare McLeod writes from page 48 about the postwar design of Maria Pergay and her *Ring chair*, 1968, also on display. The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for supporting the acquisition of works by Pergay, as well as those by Margiela, Gaultier and Galliano.

From page 44, Amanda Dunsmore shares the legacy of Patricia Begg OAM, who over her lifetime built a leading collection of porcelain. Over three hundred and fifty works from the Patricia Begg OAM Collection join the NGV, a selection of which will be on display from early 2025. We sincerely acknowledge Patricia Begg OAM and her husband Christopher Begg for their incredible support of the NGV Collection over many years.

At The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, we rediscover the contribution of Australian artist Robert Klippel through his most prolific works in steel and on paper. Read more about the artist regarded as one of Australia's leading modern sculptors on page 84. The NGV warmly thanks and recognises the late James Mollison AO for acquiring works by Klippel now on display.

Happy holidays and thank you to all of our readers, supporters and collaborators for sharing in a passion for art and design throughout 2024 through the NGV Collection, exhibitions and *NGV Magazine*.

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



## Contributors

AKIRA SHIBUTAMI  
*Nagano, Japan*

Akira Shibutami is a curator at the Matsumoto City Museum of Art Nagano, Japan. Shibutami completed graduate studies at Tokyo Zokei University in 2001 and was involved in preparations for the opening of Matsumoto City Museum of Art while still a student. He has overseen the permanent exhibition of Yayoi Kusama since the museum opened in 2002, as well as many special exhibitions, such as *Yayoi Kusama: The Place for My Soul*, 2005; *Yayoi Kusama: Eternity of Eternal Eternity*, 2012; *Yayoi Kusama: All About My Love*, 2018; and *Yayoi Kusama: Print Works*, 2022.

YAYOI KUSAMA  
*Tokyo, Japan*

Born in Japan in 1929, Yayoi Kusama is one of the world's most important and recognised artists. Kusama is renowned for her singular and idiosyncratic use of pattern, colour and symbols to create immersive, thought-provoking and intensely personal works of art that transcend language and borders. The artist has made indelible contributions to key art movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including Minimalism, Pop Art, performance and feminist art, and is celebrated today for her instantly recognisable works incorporating pumpkin and polka-dot motifs.

SISTER AND PROFESSOR EMERITA MARGARET MANION IBVM AO  
*Melbourne, Australia*

The late Loreto Sister and Professor Margaret Manion IBVM AO was one of Australia's pre-eminent art historian and an internationally acclaimed scholar of Medieval and Renaissance art, in particular of illuminated manuscripts. Sister Manion was an NGV Life Member, Trustee for fifteen years and an honorary curator of its Early Medieval and Renaissance collection. In 1989 she was awarded the Order of Australia for her contribution to the arts and education; in 2001, she received the Centenary Medal and an Honorary doctorate from the University of Melbourne in 2007.

JONAS NUTTER  
*Melbourne, Australia*

Jonas Nutter completed a Master of Architecture at RMIT and joined Breathe's Melbourne studio in mid 2021. He describes his approach to design as having a sensibility towards incorporating outdoor spaces as an extension of interior experiences, celebrating the Australian environment that characterises our unique identity and permits outdoor living.

REKO RENNIE  
*Melbourne, Australia*

Reko Rennie is an interdisciplinary artist who explores his Aboriginal identity through contemporary media. Through his art, Rennie provokes discussion surrounding Indigenous culture and identity in contemporary urban environments. Largely autobiographical, his commanding works combine the iconography of his Kamilaroi heritage with stylistic elements of graffiti and merge traditional diamond-shaped designs, hand-drawn symbols and repetitive patterning to subvert romantic ideologies of Aboriginal identity.

NATALYA HUGHES  
*Brisbane, Australia*

Natalya Hughes creates paintings, textiles, sculptures and installations informed by decorative and ornamental traditions. A way in which she does this is to create immersive interiors that draw on art history. Her practice is concerned with decorative and ornamental traditions and their associations with the feminine, the body and excess.

## OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Dunsmore  
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Sophie Prince  
Stephanie Pohlman  
Wayne Crothers



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**Making News**



**FROM THE CONSERVATION STUDIO**

**SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT**  
Robyn McPherson

*The Crow Cheers for the Crows*, 2024, by Western Arrarnta artist Rona Panangka Rubuntja joined the NGV Collection in August, just in time for AFL Grand Final fever. Rubuntja's football-inspired pot colourfully depicts the Adelaide Crow mascot and is emblematic of the famous Hermannsburg footy pots. Rubuntja's work is the winner of the recent *AFL Footy in Aranda Country Award 2024*. The NGV warmly thanks Beverly Knight for donating this work to the Collection and congratulates the artist on her award-winning submission.

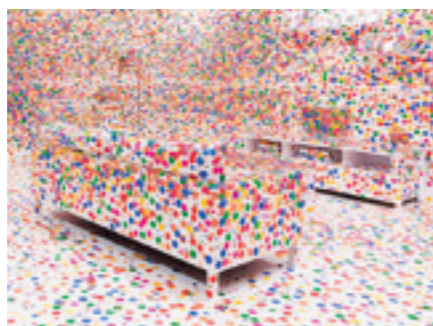
**NGV PUBLISHING**

**YAYOI KUSAMA AND LOTS OF DOTS**

Siân Scott-Clash

The NGV is thrilled to be publishing two new titles to accompany this summer's major Yayoi Kusama exhibition. *Yayoi Kusama* explores eighty years of the artist's life and work, from her early works on paper and avant-garde performances to her immersive infinity rooms and large-scale paintings and sculptures. It features a cover designed by the artist and four newly commissioned

texts from esteemed Kusama experts Akira Shibutami, Marie Laurberg, Akira Tatehata and Lynn Zelevansky. *Lots of dots* is a little book introducing 0–5-year-olds to the work of Yayoi Kusama. Produced in the shape of one of Kusama's famous pumpkins and featuring a selection of the artist's reflections, polka dot patterns, textured surfaces and colour combinations, this book is the perfect Christmas gift for little dots and big dots alike!



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**LEARN ABOUT THE LIFE AND ART OF YAYOI KUSAMA**  
Monica Do and Stephanie Poblman

In celebration of *Yayoi Kusama*, delve into the incredible life and career of the artist on 15 December with a series of free drop-by talks, and hear from NGV curators and visiting guests as they share insights into the artist's life, recurring motifs from pumpkins and flowers to polka dots, and Kusama's rise to the global icon she is today.

NGV Friday Nights kicks off on 20 December and runs weekly throughout summer, providing an opportunity to see the exhibition after-hours. Spend summer evenings at the NGV with DJs, bars and dining and experience the immersive world of Kusama into the night.

As part of the *Yayoi Kusama* experience, young audiences and families visiting the free NGV children's gallery can also enjoy Yayoi Kusama's kaleidoscopic installation, *The obliteration room 2002*, where everyone takes part in 'obliterating' a white domestic interior by sticking colourful dots on every surface.

*Kusama for Kids* is generously supported by Officeworks and City of Melbourne.

**SUMMER FOR FAMILIES AT NGV**  
Stephanie Poblman

In January, the NGV Kids Summer Festival returns with activities at NGV International on St Kilda Road, and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square. Come along for a week of free artist-led workshops, storytime sessions and drop-by festivities from 8 January.

Extending across Victoria, NGV Kids On Tour arrives at more than 150 community venues in January, inviting local children and their families to join in creative activities at libraries, galleries and community hubs.

Find out more at [ngv.melbourne/kids](http://ngv.melbourne/kids). The NGV Kids Summer Festival is supported by Major Partner Mercedes-Benz.



**NGV ANNUAL APPEAL**

**SEE YOURSELF IN NARCISSUS GARDEN**  
Cara Becker

In summer 2024, the NGV celebrates one of the world's most exciting contemporary artists, Yayoi Kusama, and presents an exciting opportunity to grow the NGV Collection with the acquisition of Kusama's *Narcissus Garden 1966*-. A highlight of the exhibition, *Narcissus Garden* will greet all visitors entering through the NGV waterwall. A visual landscape of 1400 stainless steel spheres will give audiences the power to be captivated by their own reflection. We are seeking to acquire this large-scale installation, an iconic work that embodies Kusama's playful spirit, for our Collection and warmly welcome donations of any amount to make this possible. We thank all those who have already

supported this major acquisition through the 2024 NGV Annual Appeal.

The NGV warmly thanks the following leadership supporters of Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden*: Decjuba Foundation, Shirley Hsieh and Susan Lin, Paula Fox AO & the Fox Family, The Neilson Foundation, Gwenneth Nancy Head Foundation, Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC, John Higgins AO & Jodie Maunder, King Family Foundation, The Neumann Auster Family, Chris Thomas AM & Cheryl Thomas, along with Donors to the 2024 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner, and Donors to the 2024 NGV Annual Appeal.

**NGV ART ON TOUR**

**REGIONAL ROUNDUP**  
Carla Dusevic

Works from the NGV Collection are set to take their own summer road trips on loan across Victoria's regional galleries. Open from October at the Art Gallery of Ballarat, *Medieval to Metal: The Art and Evolution of the Guitar* celebrates the history of the world's most popular instrument, tracing classical to contemporary works from artists such as Albrecht Dürer and Pablo Picasso. Also from October, Koorie Heritage Trust opens *JXSH MVIR – FOREVER I LIVE*, a retrospective of the late Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Barkindji artist Josh Muir, which is set to travel to further regional venues over the coming year.

Works by Alan Constable and Lisa Reid from the NGV Collection will feature in the major group show, *Intimate Imaginaries*, opening in November at Tarrra Warra Museum of Art. The show highlights the vast creative output of Melbourne-based studio Arts Project Australia.

(p. 12, above) Rona Panangka Rubuntja *The crow cheers for crows 2024*. Gift of Beverly Knight, 2024

Yayoi Kusama *The Obliteration Room 2002*-. Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art

Installation view of Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden 1966* at the 33rd Venice Biennale. Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Victoria Miro and David Zwirner © YAYOI KUSAMA



Faig Ahmed *Hal* 2016. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Sarah Morgan and Andrew Cook 2017. Courtesy Faig Ahmed © Faig Ahmed. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

Over at Bunjil Place, find *Pacific Sisters* showcasing the multidisciplinary Tāgata Moana art collective and explore *Elves & Gumnuts: Australian Children's Book Illustrators of the Early 20th Century* at Gippsland Art Gallery Adventure, with both exhibitions opening 7 December.

**INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS**

The largest exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and design ever presented internationally, *The Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art*, will make its global premiere in October 2025 at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and tour venues across the United States and Canada. Featuring undisputed masterpieces from the NGV Collection and curated by the NGV especially for North American

audiences, the exhibition features over 200 works by more than 130 artists.

The NGV sincerely thanks AWM Electrical for its incredible support towards numerous Australian galleries, and we warmly acknowledge its outstanding leadership in enhancing Australia's cultural landscape.

[ngv.melbourne](http://ngv.melbourne)

From December, visitors to the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth, Aotearoa New Zealand can encounter the work of surrealist weaver Faig Ahmed in *Interlaced: Animation and Textile Art*. A featured work in the 2017 NGV Triennial, *Hal* 2016 reimagines the traditional woven woollen Azerbaijani carpet through digital distortion to evoke a handwoven puddle.

[govettbrewster.com](http://govettbrewster.com)



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Pumpkin  
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Winter view over Salzburg Old Town



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Old Town of Riga in sunset light, Latvia. ID 77275115 © Xantana, Dreamstime.com

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landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

– Marcel Proust



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Monasteries & Thracian Treasures**

7 – 21 May 2025 (also in 2026)  
Led by Prof. Ivan Vasilev and Russell Casey



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Minoans to Crusaders**

28 May – 15 June 2025  
Led by Christopher A. Tuttle



**Shetland & Orkney:  
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Led by Gillian Hovell

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# A STATE OF ZEN

Combining a time honoured philosophical art form with a strong intent to innovate, Morita Shiryū introduced postwar Japanese calligraphy to the world. Generously acquired by the Felton Bequest, his *Kanzan*, 1969, recently joined the NGV Collection.

*Words by* Wayne Crothers

Morita Shiryū (1912–98) was a postwar Japanese artist who revolutionised Japanese calligraphy into a global avant-garde aesthetic. During the 1960s Morita's work was fundamental to the introduction of Japanese artistic ideas to the Americas and Europe, and was central to the postwar international New Zen Boom and Zen's influence on international abstract art.

Born Morita Kiyoshi in Toyooka, Hyōgo Prefecture, Japan, the artist adopted the artist name Shiryū, meaning 'dragon child' in around 1925. In the late 1930s he moved to Tokyo to study under the avant-garde

calligrapher Ueda Sōkyū. In 1943 he returned to his hometown and in 1948 moved to Kyoto to immerse himself in its artistic community. He was a founding member of Bokujinkai ('Group of People of the Ink'), an association of artists that strove to bring the art of calligraphy to a position of international prominence. He edited the monthly journal *Bokubi (Beauty of ink)* from 1951 to 1981 and participated in meetings and exhibitions of the cross-genre study and discussion group Gendai Bijutsu Kondankai (Contemporary Art Discussion Group, Genbi).

In 1963, the year of his first international solo exhibition, Shiryū travelled through the United States and four European countries where he lectured on the 'Appeal of a Japanese Calligrapher', gave calligraphy demonstrations and presented a movie that showed Japan's avant-garde calligraphers at work. These activities were well received among the American and European abstract expressionists. Shortly after the war, Shiryū succeeded in elevating Japanese calligraphy, a traditional art form embedded in East Asian culture, to the world stage by transforming his words and body



Pierre Soulages *Peinture, 202 x 143, 6 novembre 1967* (Painting, 202 x 143, 6 novembre 1967) 1967. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of The Eugénie Crawford Bequest, Founder Benefactor, 1998 © Pierre Soulages/ADAGP, Paris. Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited



Morita Shiryū (left) and Pierre Soulages (middle) in Paris, 1963

movements into artistic expression. This coincided with a global interest in Zen philosophy, the international activities of the respected Japanese Zen essayist, philosopher and religious scholar DT Suzuki, and the publication of popular literature like *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Maynard Pirsig. Meanwhile, the activities of the Bokujinkai and Shiryū launched artistic and intellectual exchanges with many prominent international abstract artists including Pierre Soulages, Franz Kline and Pierre Alechinsky.

The great artistic and philosophical exchange between Shiryū and Soulages is a notable twentieth-century association that resonates to the present day, and earlier this year was celebrated by an exhibition of the two artists' work at the Tadao Ando designed Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art.

*Kanzan* 1969 is one of Shiryū's largest and most powerful works. Its giant expressive brushstrokes are an abstracted representation of the character 'Kanzan', a legendary monk-poet who is considered in Zen Buddhism to be the embodiment of free spirit and the path to enlightenment. Experimenting with new and originally conceived materials for calligraphy, during the 1960s Shiryū broke away from the traditions of black ink on white paper and used a huge calligraphy brush with a pigment made from aluminium flakes to create works on black paper that were coated with lacquer or varnish. After meditative preparation, Shiryū would walk barefoot across the paper executing brush strokes with speed and vigour often in less than a minute, loading the brush with the aluminium flake pigment only once. The order and direction of the brush's movement

can be followed in the finished painting, starting from the bright dot at the top, then the large stroke from left to right, and a series of smaller strokes from left to right at the bottom.

Mounted into a four-panel screen, this work is one of Shiryū's most impressive and has been exhibited in North America, Europe and Japan.

Wayne Crothers is NGV Senior Curator, Asian Art.

See Morita Shiryū's *Kanzan*, 1969, on Level 3, NGV International from 22 November. The NGV warmly thanks the Felton Bequest for acquiring this work for the Collection.

(pp. 18–19) Morita Shiryū *Kanzan* 1969. Forthcoming gift from Felton Bequest

# The Makers

In a new display at NGV International, a selection of works by designers Martin Margiela, Jean Paul Gaultier and John Galliano are testament to the trailblazers of the turn-of-the-twentieth century.

Words by **Charlotte Botica**

anonymity and transgression has been central to his work. Margiela chose to hide his personal identity from the public and became known for obscuring models' faces. Nondescript white cotton tape and numbered labels secured by four white hand-stitches visible on the exterior of the garment were also born from the designer's desire for anonymity and have now become an iconic signifier of a Margiela garment.

In fashion, the year 1997 is known as the 'big bang'. At this time, haute couture was rejuvenated by the appointment of emerging designers at several heritage houses such as Alexander McQueen at Givenchy and John Galliano at Christian Dior. Simultaneously, the emblematic collections of provocateurs such as Margiela, Thierry Mugler, Rei Kawakubo and Jean Paul Gaultier became the catalyst for the fashion of the new millennium.

From Margiela's 1997 spring-summer collection (purchased by the NGV Foundation), *Bodice* is numbered and lettered in reference to the traditional dressmaker form. Printed at the bottom are the words 'semi couture' – a reminder of the hands involved throughout the entire process of creating any garment, from its tailoring to hand-stitched finishes. Here, Margiela uses the iconography of the tailors' atelier while dressing the woman in the shape of the fetishised femininity constructed by the fashion industry.

Margiela redefined the parameters of fashion both as an artistic and commercial entity. He chose to retire from fashion in 2009, as he 'felt that [he] could not cope anymore with the worldwide increasing pressure and the overgrowing demands of trade'.

Prior to establishing his own fashion house, Margiela was mentored by Jean Paul Gaultier. A tour de force of the fashion world, Paris-born Gaultier began his career in 1970 working with Pierre Cardin. In 1976 he established his own house and staged his first show in Paris. Critical and commercial success followed quickly, and by the early eighties, he had become one of the most prolific young designers, launching a menswear line in 1984 and a haute couture line in 1997. Gaultier was also a designer for Hermès women's ready-to-wear from 2004 to 2011 and, throughout his career, worked across dance, music and cinema. Among his most recognisable contributions are the Breton striped top and the iconic cone bra (a recurring motif that dates back to the beginning of his career).

A new display opening on Level 3, NGV International from 22 November features thirty works generously donated by Fashion Champion Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, eight of which exemplify Gaultier's deliberate exercises in bad taste and mastery of kitsch and camp culminating in his formidable imprint and influence on Parisian fashion.

*Singlet, loincloth and hat* 1993 typifies Gaultier's continual reworking of the classic Breton stripe in endless widths, materials and embellishments. Gaultier has identified with the figure of the sailor since childhood, from a

**F**ashion designer Martin Margiela was born in Louvain, Belgium in 1957. After completing his studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Art in Antwerp in 1979, he began his career as a freelance fashion stylist. In 1982, Margiela moved to Paris to work as a design assistant for Jean Paul Gaultier and remained there until 1987 when he founded his own company, Maison Martin Margiela, with Jenny Meirens.

In 1988, the house presented its first women's ready-to-wear collection in Paris. This was also the year Margiela established his artisanal collection, which presented new designs reconstructed using existing garments and accessories to infer ideas of rebirth. These pieces came to exemplify Maison Martin Margiela's deconstructive design approach, which integrated references to fashion history with documentation of the passage of time. Margiela's interest in



‘In fashion, the year 1997 is known as the ‘big bang’. At this time, haute couture was rejuvenated by the appointment of emerging designers at several heritage houses.’

Charlotte Botica

fascination with Popeye to those who appear as rebellious outsiders. In this work, Gaultier playfully questions gender and eroticism, drawing on the masculine sailor archetype as the hyper-sexualised queer symbol.

Works from Gaultier’s *Andro Jeans* collection, 1993; *Tattoos/Raw and Refined* collection, 1994; and *Modern Man* collection, 1996, epitomise Gaultier’s interrogation of gendered binaries, sexual conventions and power through his recurrent materialisation of clothing as a second skin. Like Gaultier, Margiela too returned to the body and garment archetypes as a foundation for deconstruction in his designs.

In 2014, Margiela named John Galliano as his successor. Galliano has continued the house’s legacy while enmeshing the house codes with his own design sensibility. Galliano was born in Gibraltar in 1960 and moved to London with his family as a child. He studied fashion design at Central Saint Martins, where his 1984 showcase, the

*Le Incroyables* collection, garnered instant recognition, with an attendee exclaiming that his ‘talent was just obvious’.

In what would become a hallmark within the designer’s career, the collection took its name from post-revolutionary France, after ‘The Reign of Terror’ in 1794, when a new decadence emerged and young men and women, known as *Incroyables* and *Les Merveilleuses*, respectively, began sporting opulent, exaggerated fashions.

In 1984, after completing his studies, Galliano established his own label. Only a few years later, he received the Designer of the Year award for the first time at the 1987 British Fashion Awards. In the early 1990s, Galliano relocated his studio to Paris and in 1993 presented his career-making 1994 autumn–winter collection following a meeting with *Vogue*’s editor-in-chief Anna Wintour and creative director Andre Leon Talley. In addition to designing for his own label, Galliano has held creative director roles at Givenchy (1995) and Christian Dior (1996–2011) as well as the aforementioned Maison Margiela (2014–).

Although Galliano was at the helm of Givenchy for only a year before moving to Dior, he designed four collections: two ready-to-wear and two couture. His second couture collection was an ode to nineteenth-century French Empress Josephine, first wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, with a runway set that emulated Malmaison, the chateau Napoleon built for the empress. Other references included Madonna, *Les Merveilleuses* again and winter at Royal Ascot. *Coat*, 1996, typifies the opulence of the collection, featuring elaborate *passementerie* (braided trimmings) and sumptuous brocade and velvet.

From Galliano’s 2015 spring–summer *Artisanal* collection, *Coat*, (gifted to the NGV by Virginia Dowzer), was inspired by the ragged and rehabilitated aesthetics of a threadbare doll and his shared interest with founding designer Martin Margiela in the aesthetics and techniques of deconstruction. Galliano imitates seventeenth-century Venetian lace, eighteenth-century frock coat pockets and, with ruffled antiqued tulle, traverses the bustle into the twenty-first century. This work is emblematic of the designer’s enduring interest in the incongruous coupling of historical and contemporary materials and aesthetics.

Charlotte Botica is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Fashion and Textiles.

See works by Martin Margiela, Jean Paul Gaultier and John Galliano and more on Level 3, NGV International from 22 November.

The NGV warmly thanks Fashion Champion Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, Virginia Dowzer and the NGV Foundation for their generous support towards acquiring these works on display.



(p. 23) Maison Martin Margiela, Paris (couture house) John Galliano (designer) *Coat* 2015 [spring-summer 2015] National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

(left) Givenchy, Paris (couture house) John Galliano (designer) *Coat* 1996 {Empress Josephine collection, autumn-winter 1996–97} National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

Tanel Bedrossiantz wearing *loincloth* 1993 in a blue colourway to the Theatre des Champs Elysees in Paris, France with Jean Paul Gaultier in March 1993 (Getty Images)

# THE GENESIS OF

*Yayoi Kusama*



# KUSAMA, THE CHILD ARTIST



Curated by the NGV in collaboration with the artist, the exhibition *Yayoi Kusama* includes many works never-before-seen by Australian audiences. In this extract from the forthcoming exhibition publication of the same name, Akira Shibutami takes us back to the very beginning to discover the making of one of the world's most important and recognised artists.

Words by **Akira Shibutami**

**Y**ayoi Kusama was born in 1929 in the provincial city of Matsumoto, in Japan's Nagano Prefecture. Situated roughly in the centre of Japan's main island, Honshu, Matsumoto is characterised by an abundance of nature and views of mountain peaks. Kusama was the fourth child born into a family that operated a nursery business and employed many workers. The family owned both a farm on a large piece of land, where seeds were collected, and a greenhouse, which was a rarity at the time.

Kusama's girlhood was spent amid fields of flowers, and sketching them was a daily activity. Although she had a keen eye and exceptional drawing ability, hers was a normal, everyday childhood. There came a moment, however, when Kusama realised her feelings differed from those of people around her:

'One day, after gazing at a pattern of red flowers on the tablecloth, I looked up to see that the ceiling, the windows, and the

columns seemed to be plastered with the same red floral pattern. I saw the entire room, my entire body, and the entire universe covered with red flowers, and in that instant my soul was obliterated.'

The space before her eyes would become covered in polka dots or nets (although, at the time, she didn't understand the forms as such) and animals would speak to her with human voices. These sensations would assail Kusama unexpectedly and, despite being products of her own mind, troubled the young girl. Because no one else sensed these things, it was difficult for people around Kusama to understand her, and consequently she became frightened by the gap between the real and the imagined.

In order to escape the terror of these hallucinations, Kusama captured their images on paper. This act not only saved her from plunging into the dark depths of her mind, but it also made it possible for others to recognise 'something' in Kusama's spiritual world.

In the portrait Kusama drew of her mother at about age ten, on display as part of *Yayoi Kusama*, we catch a glimpse of the girl's world of internal images. Kusama's mother is depicted wearing a kimono, facing downwards, eyes closed and brimming with a gentle smile. In contrast to her expression, however, the background is filled completely with vigorous lines. Mixing these two different expressions in the same scene produced a sense of discord. It is also worth noting that countless polka dot-like things fill the scene. I intentionally say 'polka dot-like things' because, at this early stage, Kusama was simply drawing what she saw and felt with her own eyes, before she could understand the shapes. It is the difference between 'what was seen' and 'what was found'. The 'polka dots' that are emblematic of Kusama's work today represent one of the answers she arrived at after spending a long time coming to terms with her hallucinations and repeatedly analysing herself. Although they undoubtedly have their origin in her childhood, there is a distinction between the polka dot-like things that were the object of her childhood terror and Kusama's

present-day, self-described 'polka dots' that condense the themes of love, peace and eternity.

Unconsciously, through the act of creation, Kusama had gained the means to suppress the terror within herself. At the same time, she must have become aware that these visions were inseparable from her being. She could have attempted to forget or escape from the terror; however, Kusama's response was not to reject it, but rather to coexist with it.

Given her psychological predisposition and will to harness her visions, the young Kusama's decision to dedicate her life to art may, in retrospect, seem almost inevitable. However, her family were opposed to her becoming an artist. Her mother, in particular, did not want her daughter to know the same hardship she experienced managing the family business, passed down through her side of the family for generations. She hoped the girl would someday marry into a wealthy family. That Kusama's mother repeatedly tried to convince her daughter to reconsider her path was only natural as a loving parent. However, to Kusama it felt like a rejection of the life she aspired to and, by extension, a rejection of herself. Furthermore, Kusama has reminisced on many occasions how the personal differences between her parents had a tremendous effect on her. Her father was a libertine, which enraged her hard-working mother, and seeing their disconnect cast a shadow on Kusama's heart during childhood.



Yayoi Kusama before departing for the United States, c.1957 © YAYOI KUSAMA

Another influence on Kusama's time in Matsumoto was the Second World War. As many young men went off to fight in the Pacific War, Kusama worked producing fabric for parachutes at a munitions factory, as part of the student mobilisation. As the war intensified, more than four thousand students evacuated Tokyo for the inland city of Matsumoto. With materials and food in short supply, Kusama was unable to continue drawing pictures.

Kusama's immediate environment became central to her artistic development. At this time, most of Kusama's works had plant themes or some element suggesting them. Created when she was about sixteen, *Untitled (Flower Sketches)*, c.1945, is a detailed study of a plant's petals and stem, and is closer to an exercise in observation than a sketch.

After graduating from primary school, Kusama entered Nagano Prefecture Matsumoto Girls' High School, where she met a valuable artistic sympathiser in Nihonga painter Kakei Hibino, who was teaching art there.<sup>2</sup> Hibino recognised Kusama's talent – so much so that he personally instructed her in drawing after school and visited Kusama's home on a number of occasions to beg her parents to let her follow the path of art.

When Kusama graduated from high school in November 1945, just after the end of the war, a public-entry exhibition was held in Nagano Prefecture. She submitted work in the exhibition's Nihonga

painting category and it was selected for inclusion. *Harvest*, c.1945, also on display as a part of *Yayoi Kusama*, is a Japanese-style painting depicting harvested grain. The work is rendered with precise strokes, displaying advanced technique, and is thoroughly true to its subject. The sketching Kusama had worked on since childhood, as well as Hibino's instruction in the fundamentals of painting, had borne fruit.

Unsurprisingly, the following year Kusama again submitted a work, titled *Pumpkin*, 1946, in the exhibition's Nihonga painting category. Pumpkins would become one of her principal motifs, so it is fascinating that she was already incorporating them in her art as a teenager. Kusama became acquainted with pumpkins when she was in primary school, among the profusion of flowers in her family's seed field:

'I parted a row of zinnias and reached in to pluck the pumpkin from its vine. It immediately began speaking to me in a most animated manner. What appealed to me most was the pumpkin's generous unpretentiousness. That and its solid spiritual balance.'<sup>3</sup>

Ever since, pumpkins have been an important artistic theme for Kusama. Not as objects of terror, but as precious things sympathetic to her sensibility.

In 1948, Kusama transferred to the senior class of the Kyoto Municipal School of Arts and Crafts. While she wanted to study art, Kusama was even more enamoured with the idea of living away from her parents. Her valued teacher Hibino encouraged Kusama to make the move, and her parents, opposed as they were to her becoming an artist, seem to have agreed to let her go to Kyoto as an extension of her studies. She enrolled in the Nihonga painting program, but the school was not what Kusama desired. To her, Kyoto's traditional apprenticeship system and art circles seemed archaic and constrained. However, it was here that she learnt how to sketch and paint in earnest, providing the foundation for her later expressions. In *Untitled (Monkey Sketches/Zoo Drawings)*, c.1948, where realistic sketches of monkeys in the zoo fill the page, there is a sense of Kusama extending herself in trying to capture the monkeys' expressions and gestures.

'Unconsciously, through the act of creation, Kusama had gained the means to suppress the terror within herself. At the same time, she must have become aware that these visions were inseparable from her being.'

Akira Shibutami

After returning to Matsumoto, Kusama's manner of expression started to shift from traditional techniques and materials towards something uniquely her own. Her negative experiences and impatience with her time in Kyoto may have pushed her even more towards personalised creation. Staying in her room, Kusama continued to draw, day and night. Naturally, things did not go well with her family.

Making a complete turnaround in technique from Nihonga painting, Kusama started using oil paints, watercolours and pastels, allowing her to capture the images flowing from her mind with spontaneity. She managed to purchase painting materials without her parents' knowledge; no matter how many canvases she purchased, however, it was never enough. After some consideration, Kusama cut open a grain sack used for holding milkvetch seeds and nailed it to a wooden frame. Because paint wouldn't stick to the rough hemp cloth, she put gelatin adhesive on her hand, thrust it in a bucket of sand and spread it on the cloth. She then painted layers of plaster on top to create her own canvas. *Accumulation of the Corpses (Prisoner Surrounded by the Curtain of Depersonalization)*, 1950, is likely one of the rare surviving works made using this method. The sand mixed into the canvas gives this painting a uniquely grainy, matte texture. Undulations receding into the depths of the picture give a sense of plant roots and pulsating veins. Is there a withered tree visible in the centre

of the whirlpool? Is it a coincidence that the sand and pebbles incorporated in the canvas align with the work's subject, or is it part of how Kusama intuitively expresses herself? At the very least, the work displays an instinctive choice of materials and theme. Withered plants with undulating stems often appear in works made by Kusama in her early twenties, before she started expressing herself with nets and polka dots. Before arriving at her present-day motifs, Kusama expressed her mind impulsively on paper and canvas in the form of familiar plant imagery.

In 1952, she held her first solo exhibition at the age of twenty-two. Her second exhibition, held a mere six months after her first, featured works by conceptual artist Yutaka Matsuzawa and two other guest artists. Respected art critic Shūzō Takiguchi contributed to the exhibition leaflet.<sup>4</sup> This level of recognition was unprecedented for a solo exhibition by an artist so young. Through interactions with not only Matsuzawa but also other artists and cultural figures, Kusama managed to understand the special position she occupied, and became keenly aware of what she should do next.

Despite increasing opportunities to present her work in Japan, and her growing local reputation, Kusama's desire to travel overseas didn't fade. And then, the fateful moment unexpectedly occurred. In an art volume she picked up at a used bookstore in Matsumoto, paintings by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe leapt out at her.<sup>5</sup> Kusama anticipated that if she asked O'Keeffe for help directly, something might come of it. Searching out her address at the American embassy, Kusama sent a letter along with a few watercolour paintings and was fortunate enough to receive a letter of encouragement back from O'Keeffe. Communicating with O'Keeffe turned Kusama's tentative desire to go to America into firm resolve.

In contrast to Kusama's determination to travel, her mother was still vehemently opposed to her becoming an artist, and there was no way she would allow her to go to the United States. For years, mother and daughter argued for days on end. Eventually, the mother's opposition was overcome by her daughter's stubbornness, and she gave in. There was a mountain of issues to be resolved before Kusama could emigrate – travel permits,

travel expenses, a guarantor overseas, and so on. Aided by her parents, relatives, Dr Shihō Nishimaru, Shinshu University's inaugural professor of psychiatry whom she met at her solo exhibition, and others, Kusama persistently cleared the numerous hurdles and made it a reality.

Before leaving, Kusama destroyed almost all works she had created to date. Confident that she would create better works in a distant land, and concerned about leaving work where she wasn't accepted, Kusama burned hundreds of drawings on the riverbank near her home. This was a rite of leaving her hometown and the version of herself who had lived there. On 18 November 1957, Kusama set off for America alone.

Akira Shibutami is a curator at the Matsumoto City Museum of Art Nagano, Japan.

This is an extract of an essay from *Yayoi Kusama*. With a cover designed by the artist herself, the publication features over two hundred images alongside four newly commissioned essays by esteemed Kusama experts. Available for purchase online and at NGV International design store from 15 December.

The exhibition *Yayoi Kusama* opens at NGV International on 15 December. NGV Members enjoy discounted entry and NGV Premium Members receive unlimited complimentary entry.

This exhibition is supported by Presenting Partner Visit Victoria, Principal Partner Mercedes-Benz Australia, Major Partners Telstra, Macquarie Group, Qantas, Schweppes and Timepiece Partner Rolex.

For more information and to buy tickets, scan the code.



(p. 27) Kusama with one of her paintings on Park Avenue South near East 19th Street, New York, c.1963. Courtesy Ota Fine Arts © YAYOI KUSAMA

(p. 28) Yayoi Kusama aged around ten, c.1939. Courtesy Ota Fine Arts © YAYOI KUSAMA

# Untitled (Flower Sketches) c. 1945

Words by Meg Slater



Yayoi Kusama *Untitled (Flower Sketches)* c.1945. Collection of the artist © YAYOI KUSAMA

Before departing for the United States, Kusama took many of her artworks produced to date down to the edge of the Susuki River, in her hometown of Matsumoto, and burnt them. In her autobiography, she describes what motivated this decision:

As soon as it was officially decided that I was to go to America, I took an axe to hundreds of works ... I did not want to leave those paintings and drawings behind for my mother to give away; but more importantly, I was determined to make better works when I got to New York.<sup>1</sup>

The works destroyed that day included examples of her brief engagement with Nihonga, a Japanese painting style that emphasises the precise, linear rendering of subject matter. Kusama

studied and practised this formal style in private classes with Nihonga painter Kakei Hibino in the early 1940s, as well as at the Kyoto City Senior High School of Art in 1948. Upon graduating in 1949, Kusama abandoned much of what she had been taught, instead favouring abstract motifs painted with Western-style oils on makeshift canvases.

Despite the destruction of many of her earlier works, the artist did preserve some from this formative period, including this sketchbook dated June 1945, in which a sixteen-year-old Kusama meticulously recorded the flowers, foliage and stems of peonies at different phases in their growth cycle.

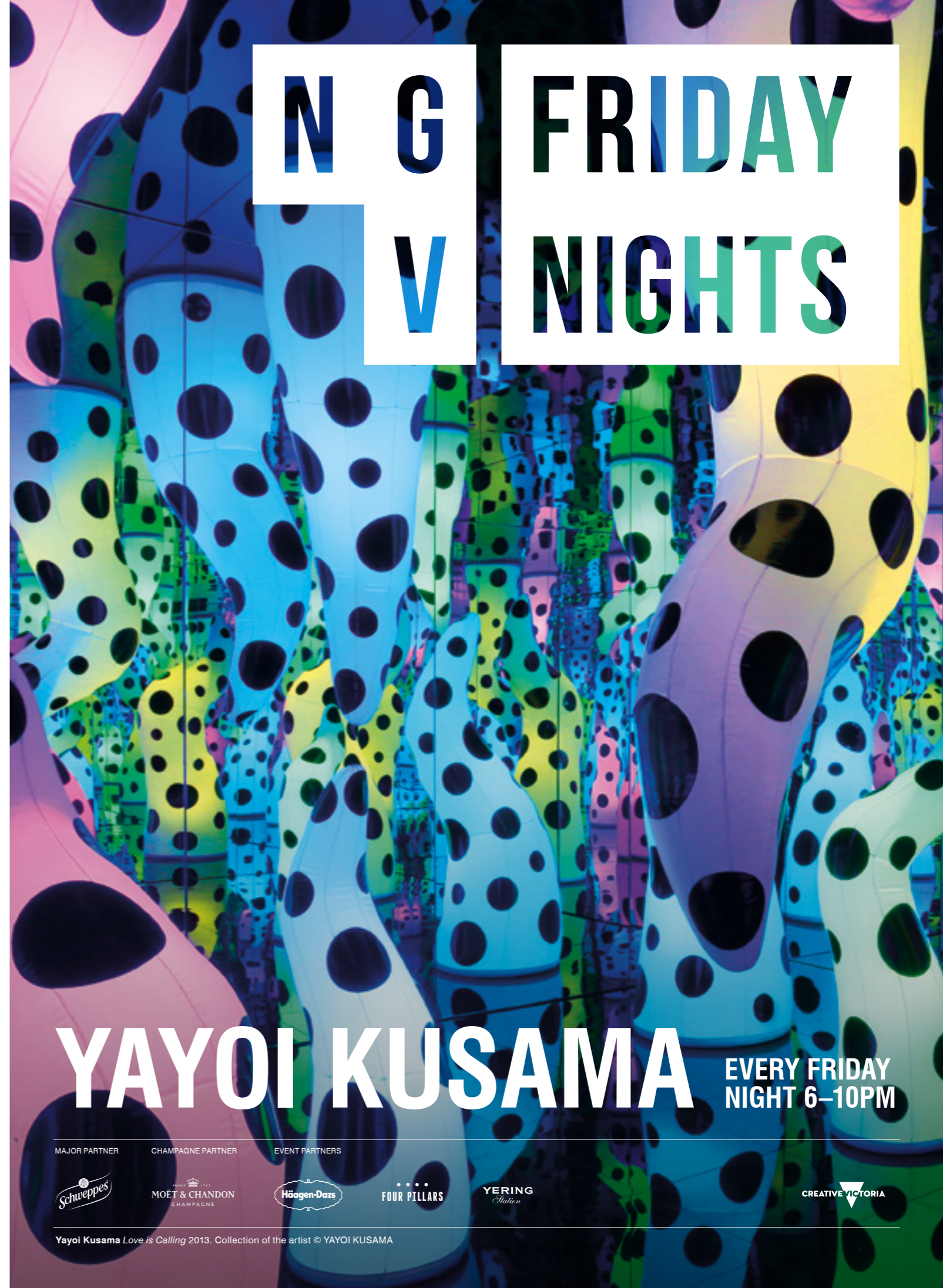
Kusama's knowledge of the peony's physiology is attributed to her childhood spent surrounded by plants and flowers in the greenhouses and growing fields of her family's nursery and seed farm. Some of the sketches record malformed, damaged

and decayed sections of flowers, reflecting the postwar reality in Kusama's regional area, where many residents could not access nutritious food and worked under extremely poor conditions.

Kusama herself contracted pneumonia in 1941 in the cold factory where she worked sewing parachutes. During her rest and recuperation, Kusama filled this sketchbook with her daily observations. Beyond the very specific context in which they were made, these drawings also represent some of the artist's earliest uses of natural forms to explore the universal themes that continue to guide her practice: life and death, abundance and decay, the singular and the infinite.

Meg Slater is NGV Curator, International Exhibition Projects. See *Untitled (Flower Sketches)* c. 1945 as part of Yayoi Kusama at NGV International from 15 December.

# NGV FRIDAY NIGHTS



# YAYOI KUSAMA

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT 6-10PM

MAJOR PARTNER: Schweppes  
 CHAMPAGNE PARTNER: MOËT & CHANDON CHAMPAGNE  
 EVENT PARTNERS: Häagen-Dazs, FOUR PILLARS, YERING Italian, CREATIVE VICTORIA

Yayoi Kusama Love is Calling 2013. Collection of the artist © YAYOI KUSAMA

# KUSAMA, THE SHAPESHIFTER



From the singular, microscopic particle inside every cell of every flower, to the expansive, infinite space of the universe, Yayoi Kusama shifts our perception through her work. Kusama's experiences in 1960s New York are fundamental to understanding how she developed as an artist and observer of the world.

Words by **Dr Miranda Wallace**

**'...the spell of the dots and the mesh enfolded me in a magical curtain of mysterious power.'**  
Yayoi Kusama<sup>1</sup>

**H**aving abandoned formal artistic training in the late 1940s in favour of her own direct study of the world around her, Yayoi Kusama's work of the mid-1950s reveal an artist with an idiosyncratic vision of nature and its complex forms. Above all, Kusama's early watercolours show the development of personal imagery inspired by the hallucinations she had experienced since childhood, manifest as biomorphic and botanical forms glowing with dots of colour, emerging from deep, black voids.

She wrote in 1955, aged 26, of a desire to make art that engages with 'the tempests, buds, wounds, and genitalia that provoked my anxiety'.<sup>2</sup> This fusion of sexuality and natural growth cycles, and obsession with the life-force, was already fundamental to her creative vision. Her works contained, in nascent form, the core elements to feed Kusama's lifelong search for hope in the face of existential finitude. It would, however, take the artist's shift to the United States of America for

these elements to evolve fully into the practice for which Kusama has become renowned and celebrated.

The success of her initial exhibitions in Matsumoto and Tokyo led to an invitation to exhibit at Dusanne Gallery in Seattle in late 1957. Having dreamt of America for some years, Kusama left Japan for Seattle one month prior to her exhibition opening. Her American debut exhibition was a success, but Kusama felt she had only reached the foot of the mountain. A few months later, in early 1958, she reached the summit of her initial ambition, arriving in New York.

The period from 1958 to 1973 is an extraordinarily important period within Kusama's life, and one that truly can be claimed as career defining. It was during these years in New York that Kusama established herself within an international art world by forging her unique visual language in multiple forms and visual media. It created the blueprint by which Kusama's subsequent work, over decades, would continue to evolve.



Kusama with 'Love Forever' buttons, which she distributed at the opening of *Peep Show/Endless Love Show*, 1966 at Castellane Gallery, New York. Courtesy Ota Fine Arts © YAYOI KUSAMA. Photo: Hal Reif

It is not surprising that many art historians have focused on Kusama's work of the 1960s, for this is the period in which she is at the centre of the Zeitgeist, helping to define it while standing alongside famous figures of the period. Her circle of friends and acquaintances was wide, and biographical accounts mention her encounters with the likes of Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Donald Judd, Frank Stella, Larry Rivers, Claes Oldenburg, On Kawara, Andy Warhol, Joseph Cornell, Lucio Fontana, Salvador Dalí – the list goes on.

Yet Kusama also remained a kind of outsider figure, appearing at times ahead of the avant-garde curve of Pop Art, Minimalism and Conceptualism, and at others on a non-intersecting path. Her

indefinability, despite her permanence, within the New York art world of the 1960s, could be partly related to her status as an Asian woman in a very white-male dominated context. This was a status Kusama herself played up to by dressing in traditional kimono for art-world events such as the opening of the Alexander Calder retrospective at the Guggenheim in 1964, where she was photographed next to formally besuited greats like Newman and Rothko. Kusama was not naïve in her 'performance to type' – it helped her to establish an impressive network – and her achievements are no less remarkable for this. Her indefinability also relates to the ways in which her work evolved so dramatically in a relatively short time.

In New York, Kusama's work quickly became all 'about' repetition and reproduction. Within her *Infinity Net* paintings from this period, a singular looping brush-stroke was repeated endlessly, eventually covering canvases the size of a gallery wall. It was only a matter of time before Kusama found a way to extend her vision beyond the canvas and into space. In the early 1960s, she began to make her *Accumulations*. Often called sculptures, this medium specific term doesn't really do justice to their creeping radicality. The *Accumulations* are the fabric of Kusama's multiplying world. Furniture, clothing, kitchen utensils were all covered in a multitude of small, elongated sacs of fabric stuffed with cloth and painted with gesso.

The genesis of the *Accumulations* is central to much of Kusama's work and part of the trauma that drives her art. She explains:

'The reason my first soft sculptures were shaped like penises is that I had a fear of sex as something dirty. People often assume that I must be mad about sex, because I make so many such objects, but that's a complete misunderstanding. It's quite the opposite – I make the objects because they horrify me.'<sup>3</sup>

Explaining this horror as arising from her education and the environment in which she grew up, Kusama's fear of sex, and specifically of the penis, ultimately led her to confront her fear directly. 'By continuously reproducing the forms of things that terrify me, I am able to suppress the fear.'<sup>4</sup> These fabric phalli cluster together across chairs, tables, ladders and more, becoming absurd. The power of the phallus is defused, and Kusama further reduces it by posing among them, photographed lying naked on an *Accumulation* sofa for example, drawing all power to her, their creator. The *Accumulations* can be understood as a stage in Kusama's larger 'environmental' project, in which she increasingly absorbed surrounding space into her creative web.

In 1963, Kusama presented her first room-sized installation at Gertrude Stein Gallery in New York with an installation titled *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats*

Show. A wooden rowboat, which Kusama's friend Donald Judd reputedly dragged across many Manhattan city blocks to her studio, was covered with phallic stuffed-fabric shapes and painted white. The gallery walls were papered with nine hundred and ninety-nine images of the rowboat, replicating and transforming the sculpture into an immersive environment.

In 1965, Kusama's work took another definitive turn with her first 'infinity mirror room', *Phalli's Field*, debuted at New York's Castellane Gallery. This was a small room with mirrored walls that visitors could enter via a small path and from which they were surrounded by a floor of white-and-red polka-dotted fabric phalli. These replicated in reflection to become an endless field of phalli, the polka-dots asserting themselves like her looped brushstrokes, covering the visual field in a web of dots. Within this mirror room, reflected bodies became part of a fantastical landscape, the phallic structures like stalactites in a lunar cave.

The introduction of the mirror was initially a technical solution to Kusama's problem of not being able physically to produce enough accumulations or 'phallic fields' to entirely fill large galleries. The labour was too exhausting, and she was too busy, with too many projects on the go, for this to be possible. But the mirror quickly became a philosophical tool as well, perfectly suited to Kusama's project.

In the mirror's multiplied reflection is an infinite regress, a loss of the self; for the artist. This is a way of forgetting herself – *obliterating* is her preferred term – and finding consolation in the empty reaches of space. This gesture of violence against the self comes from a place of anguish. But from the



Kusama's fashion happening in her studio in New York, 1968. Courtesy Ota Fine Arts © YAYOI KUSAMA

transformative creative process emerges a new sense of collective belonging. We are, in Kusama's words, 'one polka dot: a single particle among billions'.<sup>5</sup>

In 1965, Kusama took some of her work to Amsterdam, thus beginning three years of regular exhibitions in Europe that saw her travelling back and forth across the Atlantic. Although critically successful, Kusama's experimental work did not bring great financial gain, and Kusama faced mounting financial pressures. By 1967 she was also increasingly preoccupied with two of the political causes that motivated many at this time – the Vietnam War and sexual liberation.

Between 1967 and 1969, Kusama presented roughly seventy-five happenings, most of which took place at prominent public locations throughout New

York. Participants in these public interventions were often naked or dressed in clothes of Kusama's design, and Kusama – the self-professed High Priestess of Polka Dots – would use her paintbrush to 'obliterate' their bodies with polka dots. These events drew great press attention and public notoriety, but also distanced Kusama from the art world for a period. Although based in performance, Kusama's energies were focused on – and received as – countercultural actions.

Kusama's creative production, particularly between 1958 and 1966, was so prolific that in retrospect it seems as if the artist divides and multiplies, becoming a number of 'Kusamas'. There is Kusama, the painter, Kusama, the sculptor, Kusama, the installation artist. After 1966, she transitions again, initiating Kusama, the performance artist; the political activist; the fashion designer; the entrepreneur.

The frenetic energy expended on

creation during these years took its toll on the artist, physically and mentally, and in 1973 she returned permanently to Japan, withdrawing and rebuilding her strength so that she could once again create the work that was fundamental to her ongoing survival.

Dr Miranda Wallace is NGV Senior Curator, International Exhibitions.

See these works as part of *Yayoi Kusama* at NGV International from 15 December. *NGV Magazine* will conclude its series on Yayoi Kusama's life and work, charting her return to Japan, her fashion designs and her meteoric rise to global icon, in the January/February 2025 issue.

(p. 34) Kusama in her New York studio, c.1965, with her 1962 sculpture *My Flower Bed*. Courtesy Ota Fine Arts © YAYOI KUSAMA. Photo by Peter Moore

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# Yayoi Kusama

## *Infinity Nets (2) 1958*

Words by **Wayne Crothers**

Shortly after Yayoi Kusama arrived in New York in 1958, she recalls going to the top of the Empire State Building and looking down on a busy Manhattan. In that moment she realised that in order to be recognised in New York, she had to do something truly spectacular.

Immersing herself in the New York art scene, where the large canvases of the Abstract Expressionists had led the way in contemporary art since the early 1950s, Kusama embarked on her first large-scale works. Memories of not only the repetitive and seemingly infinite landscape of white pebbles along the seasonal riverbed near her childhood home in Matsumoto, Japan, but also the rippling surface of the Pacific Ocean viewed from the plane window during her trans-Pacific journey from Japan to America provided stimuli for new white paintings she felt would be 'like a bomb'!

In her loft studio, Kusama started layering a veil of small, looping white brushstrokes over a flat black or grey background, in small sections at a time, to create expansive dotted or netlike motifs that came to be known as her *Infinity Net* paintings. One of the earliest surviving *Infinity Net* works, *The Pacific Ocean*, 1958, presents a soft, semi-transparent application of paint and randomness in the repetitive mark-making process resulting from Kusama's movement across the canvas. While some sections display pronounced circular brushstrokes, others have a more delicate and fluffy effect, and scattered across the work's entire surface are black dots that reveal the darker undercoat.

Produced slightly later, one of the earliest surviving large-scale *Infinity Net* paintings, *Untitled (No. White A.Z.)*, 1958–59, displays a more developed and consistent application of looping brushstrokes of white paint that is thicker and more opaque. Small sections Kusama worked on as she moved across the canvas subtly morph into each other, creating an irregular surface swirling like a fishing net on an undulating ocean beneath the sky.

Kusama's first New York exhibition, at the small artist-run Brata Gallery, consisted of five of her newly conceived *Infinity Net* paintings and was celebrated by her recently established circle of New York friends. Recognition of her groundbreaking efforts is evidenced by purchases of works made by the yet-to-be famous American artists Donald Judd and Frank Stella. Attention gained from this first exhibition led to Kusama joining Manhattan's Stephen Radich Gallery the following year and an escalation in the scale and ambition of her *Infinity Net* paintings.

To create an experience of obliterating oneself in infinity, in 1961, Kusama embarked on creating a fully immersive environment for her first exhibition at Stephen Radich Gallery, with massive paintings covering almost the entirety of its two spaces, as well as the corridor and staircase that joined them. This presentation featured Kusama's largest canvas ever, a painting more than ten metres long that obliterated the presence of the artist and all visitors. This monumental *Infinity Net* was so large that it could not fit in the gallery until a narrow, 30-centimetre strip was cut from its bottom edge. Sadly, this remarkable painting has not survived. However, the cut fragment still exists as a testament to the scale of Kusama's ambition, which soon evolved beyond the confines of painting on canvas to the creation of sculptures, mirror rooms and the sensory experiences that have defined her career.

Wayne Crothers is NGV Senior Curator, Asian Art. See *Infinity Nets (2) 1958* as part of *Yayoi Kusama* at NGV International from 15 December.





## ON PUMPKINS, a poem by Yayoi Kusama 2010

Pumpkins are lovable and their  
wonderfully wild and humorous atmosphere  
never ceases to capture the hearts of people.  
I adore pumpkins.

As my spiritual home since childhood,  
and with their infinite spirituality,  
they contribute to the peace of mankind across the world  
and to the celebration of humanity. And by doing so,  
they make me feel at peace.

Pumpkins bring about poetic peace in my mind.

Pumpkins talk to me.

Pumpkins, Pumpkins, Pumpkins.

Giving off an aura of my sacred mental state,  
they embody a base for the joy of living,  
a living shared by all of humankind on the earth.  
It is for the pumpkins that I keep on going.

Born in Japan in 1929, Yayoi Kusama is one of the world's  
most important and recognised artists.

See *Yayoi Kusama* at NGV International from 15 December.  
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Yayoi Kusama *The Spirits of the  
Pumpkins Descended into the Heavens 2017*.  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
© YAYOI KUSAMA

# When East meets West

Patricia Begg OAM was a passionate collector of porcelain. She delighted in its charm and refinement, but most of all, the stories it could tell. It was around these stories that she developed her distinguished collection. The NGV was recently bequeathed over three hundred and fifty works from the Patricia Begg OAM Collection, along with a number of works generously gifted by her husband Christopher Begg.

*Words by Amanda Dunsmore*

**A** scholar of porcelain and glass, Patricia Begg developed her collection over a period of more than forty years. Her passion was the eighteenth century, the great age of porcelain manufacture in Europe when the medium took on enormous artistic and symbolic significance. Porcelain had been produced in China since the third century CE, but it was not until the early eighteenth century that the secret of making porcelain was first mastered in Europe at Meissen in 1709. Referred to as 'white gold' it was the most important technical and cultural achievement of the eighteenth century. The Begg Collection encompassed all the major factories of Europe and England and was equally rich in works from China and Japan that were the models and inspiration

for so many early works by European manufacturers, and from which Patricia was able to draw so many fascinating dialogues.

These works, which were recently bequeathed to the NGV, celebrate the breadth of what was undoubtedly one of the finest private collections in Australia. The works build upon and form a major compliment to the Gallery's holdings of eighteenth-century ceramics, which are recognised as one of the great strengths of the NGV decorative arts collection.

A significant aspect of the Begg Collection was its white porcelain, reflecting Patricia's love of the medium in its pure state, unadulterated by enamelled decoration. Chinese blanc de Chine tea bowls from the kilns at Dehua were complemented by examples from many of the leading European factories, all sprigged





(ornamented with applied decoration) with branches of plum blossom, inspired by their Chinese originals while also revealing a level of interpretation and adaptation by each manufactory.

In more recent years, Patricia's interests turned towards Japanese porcelain, in particular works decorated in the kakiemon style, along with their European counterparts. The term kakiemon comes from a Japanese family of decorators in Arita who are credited with having introduced overglaze enamel decoration during the mid seventeenth century. Kakiemon enamelling encompasses a number of decorative motifs, characterised by a palette of iron red, green, brown and

touches of gold, often added over a base of underglaze blue decoration. Kakiemon porcelains were the most sought after of all Japanese ceramics that were exported to Europe, and their forms and decoration were widely copied by European manufacturers.

A particular highlight of the Begg collection is a Japanese lobed dish in the form of a chrysanthemum, dating to 1690–1710 and marked on the underside with a Johanneum number. This number identifies the dish as having come from Augustus II (the Strong)'s famous collections of Chinese and Japanese porcelain which, along with thousands of pieces of Meissen from the factory he founded, were presented over two floors in a magnificent baroque display at his Japanese Palace in Dresden. This dish and many other Asian works from Augustus's collection were copied at Meissen, and again later by the English factories of Bow, Chelsea and Worcester.

Alongside porcelain, Patricia's collection encompassed eighteenth-century earthenware and stoneware, in particular works by Wedgwood, Leeds Pottery and other leading Staffordshire potteries. Examples of creamware by Wedgwood and Leeds Pottery represent the best of this fine earthenware body, which was used for tea and table wares that adorned the dining rooms and pleasure dairies of the nobility during the later decades of the eighteenth-century.

The Begg Collection contains numerous examples of porcelain figures. Two of the most sophisticated works are the allegorical figures of taste and smell by the Derby Porcelain Manufactory (c. 1748–1848). Allegory was a popular subject in eighteenth-century porcelain figures as the ability of the viewer to recognise and understand the references representing a mark of their education. Along with the four seasons and the continents, the five senses were a common theme. These two figures have been left in the white, which may be a reference to ancient classical marble sculpture or they may be imitative of sugar paste sculpture,

which was created for grand theatrical display on the dessert tables of court banquets. Their animated poses, particularly that of the gentleman who is wearing a fashionable banyan, or informal robe inspired by Asian costume, contribute greatly to their charm and engagement.

While steadily building her collection over the years, Patricia was passionate about sharing it and passing on her knowledge and enthusiasm for the stories and insights it offered. Her generosity in opening her house and sharing her collection with so many is reflected in her exceptional gift to the NGV, the people of Victoria and audiences from near and far for generations to come.

## THE FELTON SOCIETY: NGV BEQUESTS PROGRAM

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A bequest to the NGV allows individuals to create a lasting legacy in their own name, which can be enjoyed by visitors for generations to follow. Whether supporting programs and exhibitions or the NGV Collection, your impact will live on.

Bequests can support the immediate acquisition of works for the NGV Collection or be invested in their own named fund, allowing for perpetual growth of the bequest to support ongoing collection development or other areas of support at the NGV.

We thank all of our community for their generous support. Anna Kopinski is NGV Head of Bequests and Planned Giving. To learn more about the Bequests and Planned Giving program, please email at [anna.kopinski@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:anna.kopinski@ngv.vic.gov.au) or call 03 8620 2400.

Amanda Dunsmore is NGV Senior Curator, International Decorative Arts & Antiquities

See works mentioned in this article on Level 2, NGV International from February 2025. The NGV warmly thanks Christopher Begg and Patricia Begg OAM for donating over 350 works from the Patricia Begg OAM Collection to the NGV.

(pp. 44–45, left to right) Chinese (manufacturer) James Giles (decorator) *Pair of vases* c.1755. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024. Leeds Pottery, Hunslet (manufacturer) *Sauce boat and stand* c.1780. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024. Derby Porcelain, Derby (manufacturer) Agostino Carlini (modeller) *Figures of taste and smell* 1750–1755. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

(clockwise) Meissen Porcelain Factory, Meissen (manufacturer) *Dish* c.1750. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024. Japanese *Dish* 1690–1710. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024. Chelsea Porcelain Factory, London (manufacturer) *Octagonal dish* 1752–1755. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024. Japanese *Plate with VOC monogram* 1690–1710. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Christopher Begg in honour of Patricia Begg OAM, 2024

ISSUE 49

# A FORCE OF NATURE



Born with a sensitivity to luxury, Maria Pergay's early designs came to life in a post-war modernist Europe fixated on function over classical decoration, fulfilling curiosities far from the norms of the time. With the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, the NGV welcomes three examples of furniture by this important designer into the Collection.

Words by **Clare McLeod**

Maria Pergay (designer) Uguine Gueugnon, Gueugnon (manufacturer) *Ring chair* 1968. National Gallery of Victoria. Proposed acquisition. Photo: Narelle Wilson / NGV

Maria Pergay did not describe herself as a designer or an artist: 'I'm just a worker; I get an idea and I work on it!' Born in Moldavia (now Moldova) in 1930 to Russian parents, Pergay moved to France at an early age with her mother to escape Stalinism, an experience she described as giving her 'strength of character'.<sup>2</sup> Despite her formal education in costume and set design, she also studied sculpture as a side venture with Russian-French artist, Ossip Zadkine. In this space, more palpable talents came to the forefront, with her designs for furniture and other objects in metal becoming that for which she is most recognised today.

Pergay found initial success with small silver objects created for shopfront window displays. This eventually led to commissions from luxury fashion houses Dior and Hermès. These silver designs of the 1950s and early 1960s were often whimsical in nature, featuring motifs like bows, belt buckles and animals. Pergay eventually turned to steel as her primary material when she was approached by the head of French stainless-steel manufacturer Uguine-Gueugnon, who encouraged

her to use its steel in the fabrication of her smaller objects. Keen to try something new, Pergay expressed interest in creating larger objects in steel, such as furniture, instead. The brand strongly supported this decision as a way to promote its product.

The NGV recently acquired (with the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family) three stainless steel furniture works by Pergay, including her *Ring chair* of 1968. This iconic design was shown at Pergay's own boutique in Paris and in the first major exhibition of her work at the Galerie Maison et Jardin in 1967, an exhibition that propelled Pergay's status in the design industry and beyond. While the design of *Ring chair* is often likened to a bullseye or target,<sup>3</sup> Pergay stated the idea came to her while peeling an orange for her children.<sup>4</sup> Produced in a limited run of approximately fifty, the curved seat and pedestal of the chair are arranged with a delicate precision that contrasts steel's innate properties of strength and rigidity. These opposing concepts are brought together in a single design symbolising



Maria Pergay at Demisch Danant Gallery, in New York, May 2010. (Robert Wright/*The New York Times*)

tension between material, aesthetics, function and form. Pergay was known for expanding the limitations of stainless steel as a material, with many of her designs requiring fabricators to develop special tools to achieve her ambitious visions, as their existing tools were too fragile and prone to wear.<sup>5</sup> Pergay was even known to guide the hands of her steel cutters, demonstrating her deep involvement in the production of her work. Despite being a fully functional chair with the strength and stability to support the weight of its sitter, *Ring chair* is, as Pergay once noted, 'not meant for lingering', suggesting that it may not have been designed with comfort front of mind.<sup>6</sup>

Pergay's *Wave bench*, *Goéland variant*, c. 1969, which also recently joined the Collection (with the support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family), is made from enamelled steel with the lower middle portion of the bench featuring an elegant arch-like appearance. Like so many of Pergay's works, the undulating, fluid shape of this piece acts in opposition to its rigid materiality. Although stainless steel was not necessarily a new material, its use by Pergay and her contemporaries in interior furniture in the late 1960s was a novel undertaking. The semi-bemused tone of a 1970 *New York Times* headline for an article on Pergay indicates this shift in thinking: 'Now when you buy stainless steel, it may be a bed or a desk'.

Suzanne Demisch, a New York

gallerist who was instrumental in promoting Pergay's work later in her career, has commented on Pergay's innovations in steel and their place in time:

'Maria's work, in large part, established stainless steel as a principal component of furniture design and interior decoration during the 1970s and retrospectively has become one of the cornerstones of that history'.<sup>7</sup>

Although redolent of the time of its creation, the popularity of Pergay's *Wave bench* has persisted decades after its inception, even appearing in a collaborative installation between Pergay and luxury brand FENDI at Design Miami in 2013, solidifying itself as a true classic.<sup>8</sup>

Pergay died in 2023 at the age of ninety-three. She left behind a rich and varied body of work, with a late career resurgence in 2010 resulting in new works inspired by trees and the natural world. Pergay was a pioneer of her craft in metal, particularly as a woman in furniture design. She did not belong to a particular design movement, group or formal ideology; instead, she allowed her designs to speak for themselves through their breadth, creativity and dynamism.

Clare McLeod is NGV Project Officer, Office of the Deputy Director.

See Maria Pergay's *Ring chair*, 1968, on Level 3, NGV International. The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for supporting the acquisition of the works mentioned in this article.

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# The Not So Forbidden *Fruit*



The most humble of fruits can represent almost anything, from temptation and sin to knowledge, hearth and home. Here, Elisa Scarton writes on the surprising abundance of apples in the NGV Collection.

Words by Elisa Scarton

If you've ever been asked to draw an apple in art class, blame Paul Cézanne. The French artist and post-impressionist painter made capturing the fruit's likeness a lifelong pursuit. He once famously declared 'With an apple, I want to astonish Paris'.<sup>1</sup> He commanded his sitters to 'be an apple!'<sup>2</sup> and in *Self-portrait and apple*, 1882, (Cincinnati Art Museum) he even rendered a sketch of his own head in direct comparison to an apple.

The choice of subject was deliberate. Throughout centuries and across continents, apples have adopted myriad meanings and cultural significance. They're universally grown and universally recognisable. 'Be a banana' just wouldn't have resonated the same with the French *mesdames et messieurs* who sat before Cézanne's exacting easel.

Cézanne inspired a generation of artists and art teachers alike to put paintbrushes to canvas in the name of the apple. Fellow French artist Paul Sérusier went as far as to decry: 'Of an ordinary painter's apple you say, "I could take a bite out of it" ... Of an apple by Cézanne one says: "How beautiful!"'<sup>3</sup>

Cézanne's goal was to radically reshape how three-dimensional objects were captured in paint. By painting apples, he was goading his fellow artists to incorporate multiple viewpoints instead of a one-point perspective, but he was by no means the first to turn his attention to the fruit.

As early as the fifth century BCE, the ancient Greeks sculpted small to life-size terracotta model apples. To them, the fruit was a devotion to Aphrodite, the goddess of love and fertility, and Dionysus, the god of fruit and frivolity. The golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides granted immortality to anyone who savoured them, while those that grew in Cupid's Garden proved all too irresistible to Psyche, the goddess of the soul.

The latter is depicted in a nineteenth century wood engraving in the NGV Collection (a gift of Dr Colin Holden), attributed to the English textile designer and artist William Morris and George Campfield, his foreman at Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. In it, we see Psyche with a crown of flowers in her hair, gathering her robes in one hand as she reaches for an apple. Apple and apple blossoms were a common motif in the Arts and Crafts Movement.<sup>4</sup> Morris's own Red House was said to have been built so close to its orchard that ripe apples fell through open windows on hot summer evenings.<sup>5</sup> A few years after completing *Psyche in the garden*, 1877, Morris would design his iconic apple wallpaper.

In 1860, across the seas in Europe, Irish-born Australian painter George Frederick Folingsby was finishing *Study for panel picture apple*

*blossom*. For artists and writers, the apple blossom signified the arrival of spring, regeneration and the wonder of nature. In Folingsby's oil on canvas, the branches are just beginning to bloom, their blossoms muted pastel pinks and white against a background of burnt orange. Fellow Australian artist Arthur Loureiro would also choose warm tones for his *Boy with an apple*, 1891. In this coloured pastel, a child wears a bright red sash around his waist with a hat in the same shade covering his ears. The colour is so alluring that, at first, you miss the Granny Smith, a cultivar that originated in Australia in 1868, hidden behind the child's back.

A century earlier, apples in portraiture were seen as signifiers of wealth. Europe's aristocracy were often depicted with the fruit, which was grown in hothouses throughout the seventeenth century. French painting in particular would feature an apple or two as a nod to the sitter's opulence.<sup>6</sup> In a child's hand, like the boy in Loureiro's pastel, an apple could also represent care and protection. The adage 'an apple a day, keeps the doctor away' is thought to stem from Norse mythology, where Idun would give golden apples to her fellow gods to keep them young, fit and immortal.<sup>7</sup>

A child painted with an apple was a child loved and





Françoise Gilot *Still life* 1946. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020 © Françoise Gilot

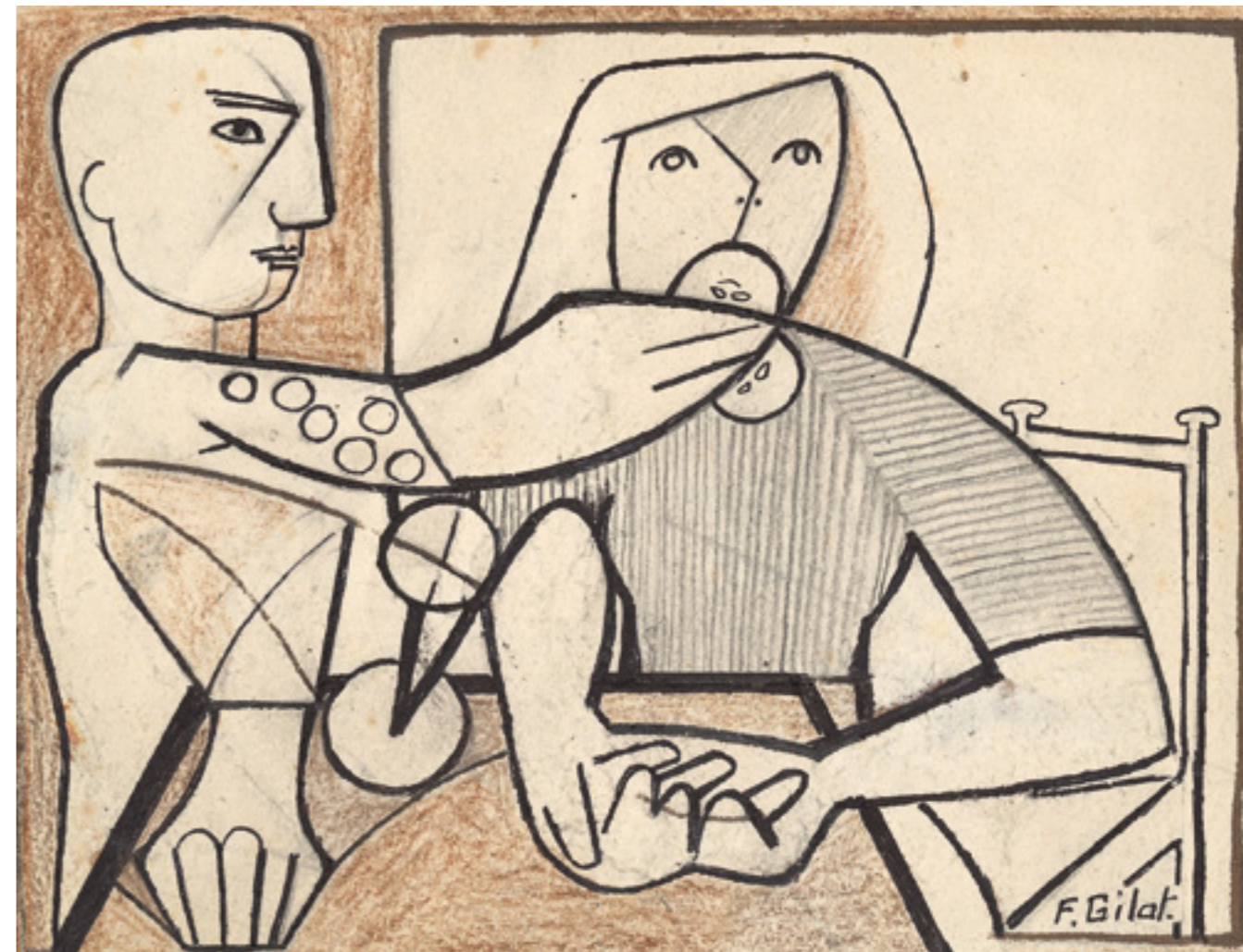
'If you've ever been asked to draw an apple in art class, blame Paul Cézanne. The French artist and post-impressionist painter made capturing the fruit's likeness a lifelong pursuit.'

well nurtured. A woman holding the same – as in Mark Gertler's *The apple woman and her husband*, 1912 – is contented in her role as a hardy homemaker, Madonna-like in her purity. Or, ironically, she is the polar opposite.

There is some debate as to whether Eve's forbidden fruit was actually an apple. Some scholars have suggested it may have been a fig, pear or pomegranate.

In Albrecht Dürer's engraving of *Adam and Eve*, 1504, (Felton Bequest), of which the NGV has two heliogravure representations (a process of reproductive intaglio print-making), Eve holds a broken fig branch taken from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. In an 1878 etching by William Bell Scott after the style of William Blake (a gift of Judith and Graham Ryles OAM in memory of Dr Ursula Hoff AO OBE), Eve appears to be kissing the serpent while Adam marvels at a tree laden with pear (or fig) shaped fruit.

In other early engravings in the NGV Collection by Lucas van Leyden (*The Fall of Man*, 1508, Felton Bequest) and Crispijn de Passe the elder (*The Fall of Man*, 1580–1600,



Françoise Gilot *Adam forcing Eve to eat an apple I* 1946. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020 © Françoise Gilot

Felton Bequest) the fruit is more clearly an apple. The word *mālum*, a native Latin noun that means evil, and *mālum*, another Latin noun borrowed from Greek, which means apple, are deceptively similar. This literary confusion (or pun) could help explain why European artists so often paired apples with evil.<sup>8</sup>

But what of Eve herself? In Richard Lewer's *Eve takes the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and shares the fruit with Adam*, 2022 (purchased through the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists), there is no hint of the temptress we see depicted in the sixteenth century engravings. In Lewer's work, the ghostly figure of Adam digs enthusiastically into his apples, while his partner appears more reticent.

For centuries, through its association with Eve, the apple has stood as a totem of sensual desire, a symbol of humanity's – of women's – inability to resist sin and temptation. But more recently, women artists have sought to cast Eve and the apple in a different light. In Françoise Gilot's

work *Adam forcing Eve to eat an apple I*, 1946 (a gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family), the roles are reversed. Adam pushes the apple into Eve's mouth as she clasps her hands tightly on the tabletop. In the summer of 1946, Gilot ran away from her partner, Pablo Picasso, during a trip to Menerbes, France. Upon her reluctant return, she created this work as a reflection of their living situation in Picasso's atelier. In response, Picasso proposed they have a child, offering up this idea as the solution to Gilot's malaise. Less than a year later, their son Claude was born.<sup>9</sup> The couple went on to separate permanently in 1953.

But *Adam forcing Eve to eat an apple I* is double-sided. Flip the work over and there is *Still life*, 1946: an apple rendered alongside a vase of flowers in Gilot's cubist style. Just like Cézanne, artists in the NGV Collection – from Russian-born Nicolas de Staël to Australia's Dale Hickey – have placed apples at the heart of their still lifes. In sculpture too, the fruit appears whole and luscious, an alluring orb without markings or decay.



Richard Lewer *Eve takes the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and shares the fruit with Adam* 2022. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2024 © Richard Lewer, Hugo Michell Gallery, Jan Murphy Gallery and Suite Gallery

Inspired by the work of Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk, Chinese artist Yining Fei replaces the head of her monstrous creature in *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette*, 2020 (purchased with funds donated by Rob Gould), with a rosy, red apple. Leaning back into the shape of an armchair, the work challenges us, tempts us like the witch in the classic *Snow White* tale, asking if we would like to sit in such a peculiar and unsettling piece.

The apple is thought to have originated from the rose in central and southern China some forty million years ago, with more than half of the nearly sixty species of wild apple across the world found in the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan.<sup>10</sup> Of the sculptures of apples in the NGV Collection, only fellow Chinese artist Li Lihong deviates from depicting the fruit whole and untouched. In his 2011 work *Apple* (purchased with funds donated by Connie Kimberley and Craig Kimberley OAM), a section of the

fruit's flesh is missing, as if someone has taken a bite. The shape of the work, the style of which is drawn from the traditions of Jingdezhen ceramics, is instantly recognisable as the logo of computer and electronics company Apple Inc., which entered the Chinese market in 1993. *Apple* is a criticism of present-day globalisation, mass production and consumerism, and in this example, at least, we see yet another layer of symbolism attributed to humblest of fruits, the apple.

Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator.

The NGV warmly thanks all those who supported the acquisition of the works discussed. See more images of these works online at [ngv.melbourne/collection](http://ngv.melbourne/collection).

(p. 52) Grant Jorgensen *Apple core* 1980. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Michell Endowment, 1981 © Grant Jorgensen

(p. 53) Mark Gertler *The apple woman and her husband* 1912. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1953. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited



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**ROLEX**

A vibrant pink classic car, likely a Ford Mustang, is parked in a parking lot at dusk. The car is shown in profile, facing right. Its reflection is clearly visible in a large puddle on the wet pavement in the foreground. The background features several tall, black light poles with rectangular signs, one of which has the letter 'D' on it. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting the time is either dawn or dusk. The overall mood is artistic and evocative.

*REKOSPECTIVE* charts the bold and dynamic work of Kamilaroi artist, Reko Rennie. In this exclusive interview, Rennie sits down with NGV curator Sophie Prince to discuss culture, politics and identity in contemporary Australia.

Words by **Sophie Prince**

# ***REKOSPECTIVE***

**‘I’VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BREAK DOWN THE ROMANTICISED NOTION OF ABORIGINAL IDENTITY. IN PARTICULAR, THERE ARE AMAZING FIRST NATIONS EXHIBITIONS OPENING ALL OVER THE WORLD. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I’VE HAD CURATORS TELL ME THAT MY WORK IS TOO ABSTRACT OR CONTEMPORARY TO REPRESENT FIRST PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCE AND CULTURE. WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?’**

REKO RENNIE



Portrait of Reko Rennie. Photographer Joe Duck

Spanning paintings on canvas, installation, sculpture, video and light works, *REKOSPECTIVE: The Art of Reko Rennie* is the the Kamilaroi artist’s first retrospective, marking what Rennie describes as ‘a full-circle moment’. Growing up in the urban environment of Melbourne’s western suburbs, Rennie recalls formative days in his youth spent at the NGV with his mother, who sought out free and publicly accessible spaces to take her children as a reprieve from the pressures of daily life. Rennie reflects:

‘I grew up in the western suburbs and I hardly saw my mum because she worked so much, up to six and seven days a week to put food on the table. My grandmother lived with us, so she took care of a lot of the domestic duties and my mother, when she did have the time off, used to take my sister and I on excursions to the city. Primarily because there wasn’t a lot of money, so we had to go to places that were free.’

Rennie’s fond memories of his gallery visits developed into an active curiosity for art, informing his ever-expanding and deepening familiarity with local and international artists and allowing him to discover affinities with the places, people and histories the art represented. ‘I was very mesmerised,’ he says. ‘I have a kind of photographic memory and even after the visit I would be deconstructing the different works, sculptures and the cultures I was seeing. These visits gave me a snapshot of the world and history via art.’

Rennie’s upbringing was rooted within Melbourne’s western suburbs like Footscray and Yarraville. Despite experiencing a childhood marked by systemic racism, he grew up in a multicultural and hardworking community that was not conducive to interpersonal expressions of discrimination or exclusion:

‘Footscray in the 70s and 80s was primarily immigrants, a lot of working people and the Aussie battler. I suppose people making a new life for themselves having fled their homelands for various reasons – such as places that were war-torn or devastated by extremist governments. I met a lot of wonderful people and parents. There was a connection between these people

and the aboriginal experience of being displaced from your homelands. There was a real sense of community. And because families worked really hard, kids were left to their own devices a lot of the time.’

In 1984, at the age of ten, Rennie wrote his first tag. He painted his name ‘REKO’ on the back of a dilapidated shed near his school, marking the beginning of his connection to graffiti culture. This would soon become his platform to claim space, share his voice and advocate against systemic racial injustice, and began the evolution of expressing himself through art.

Presented at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, *REKOSPECTIVE* brings together over one hundred works, from the early 2000s through to new, never-before-seen works. Resisting a chronological approach, the exhibition charts Rennie’s shift from the clandestine culture of Melbourne’s graffiti scene in the mid 1980s and 1990s then into the formal art world by the early 2000s.

The exhibition comprises distinct bodies of work and immersive environments, which illustrate how Rennie’s experiences have been shaped by his identity as a Kamilaroi man growing up in the city. The accumulation of Rennie’s inspirations, interests and advocacy can be seen in repeated symbols, patination and colour across various works. *Regalia*, 2013, a neon held in the NGV Collection, and kindly supported by Esther and David Frenkiel, is a pertinent example of the artist’s translation of the power of graffiti, as a visual art, to assert agency and claim space. Of this work, Rennie says:

‘I think the emblematic symbols of the hand drawn tags of a crown, a Kamilaroi diamond and the aboriginal flag assert First Nations sovereignty. There are a lot of artists now that reference the term “Original Royalty”, but back then I was one of the first. We may not have the crown of the monarchy, but we have the Original Royalty. It’s a very important emblematic statement, we don’t need a crown to be king.’

The work shares its title with four others in the exhibition offering insight into the enduring message of First Peoples sovereignty in Australia. Its message also links to the neon *I wear my own*

crown, 2013, (RMIT University Melbourne Collection) as well as the major new acquisition to the NGV Collection, *REMEMBER ME*, 2020, gifted by the Eva, Mila and Reko Collection. First exhibited in 2020, the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook’s first landfall at Botany Bay, *REMEMBER ME* is a present-day memorial in recognition of the Frontier Wars, the massacres and the survival of the original sovereigns of this country. It invites reflection on the personal impact of our past and how history is made today.

A self-trained artist, Rennie committed to art full-time in 2008, translating his graffiti onto canvas. He initially considered a career in journalism, where he thought he would be able to contribute to raising awareness of Aboriginal affairs, but he found the media to be too regulated by the political viewpoints of those who run the press and the focus on stories that sell. Inspired by trailblazing artists like Andy Warhol, Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring, who layered subcultures and public discourse into their works, Rennie perceived that ‘Art offered a course towards making something of myself’ and being able to unapologetically follow his own style and voice. He was also influenced by the global reach of hip-hop culture and graffiti art, which he encountered through films like *Beat Street* (1984) and *Breakdance* (1984). ‘There was this whole evolution that connected me to what was happening in New York and Harlem’, he notes, emphasising that these cultural movements provided him with a voice amid the challenges he faced. Rennie’s video work, *What do we want? 2022*, commissioned by ACMI and Artbank, Melbourne, distinctly explores themes of resilience and strategy. It draws from his experiences in Jujitsu, a martial art he learned in his youth. The discipline highlights the importance of leveraging technique over brute strength, which is a principle Rennie extends through the video work to the endurance and technique required by First Peoples in confronting colonial injustices.

Rennie’s artistic journey began to gain traction in 2008 when he won the prestigious Koorie Heritage Trust Acquisition Award for *Big Red*, 2008, (Koorie Heritage Trust collection) an almost two-meter-tall acrylic work that utilised stencil techniques reminiscent of his graffiti roots. This method allowed for quick and abundant expressions of social and political messages. *Big Red*,



Portrait of Reko Rennie with *REMEMBER ME* 2020 inside *REKOSPECTIVE: The Art of Reko Rennie* on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Eugene Hyland

features a confident kangaroo, symbolising his connection to Country and community and marking his transition from graffiti to contemporary art. Soon after, in 2009, Rennie secured a residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, where he immersed himself in the international contemporary art scene. Upon his return to Australia he reached out to key industry figures and contemporaries. His tenacity paid off when, in the same year, he became the first Aboriginal artist represented by the prominent Fitzroy gallery This Is No Fantasy, going on to exhibit regularly across Australia and internationally, including in Ecuador in 2014 for the XII Bienal de Cuenca, and the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.

Rennie's unapologetic style resists the stereotypes often associated with First Peoples art, addressing critical issues such as inequality within the justice system, education, and colonisation. He challenges the romanticised notions of Aboriginal identity that can limit representation in the art world:

'I've always wanted to break down the romanticised notion of aboriginal identity. In particular, there are amazing First Nations exhibitions opening all over the world. But at the same time, I've had curators tell me that my work is too abstract or contemporary to represent First People's experience and culture. What does that even mean?'

Through his very being and making, Rennie's work expands the representation of First Nations experiences by asserting that contemporary aesthetics can coexist with the enduring nature of tradition and culture.

This duality is exemplified in *Horse and cart* and *Untitled (Fixie bike)*, 2010, from Reko Rennie's private collection, a two-part work that pairs a painting featuring Kamilaroi symbols with a customised fixed-gear bike. 'The horse and cart reference the fact that my grandmother, Julia, a Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay woman, was taken away at gunpoint by horse and cart at the age of eight,' he shares. This painful history of forced removal underscores the trauma of the Stolen Generations and emphasises the legacy of colonisation. He says of this history:

'It is a sinister mode of transport to remove children and force them into domestic enslavement for decades... so for me this transport which I stenciled on to the canvas, is in dialogue with the mode of transport that I was commonly using at the time of making the work, a fixed gear bike... It's a bike that doesn't have brakes, and it's kind of a metaphor for my outlook on my life and my art career, there are no brakes. It's about being connected to that history and my community while acknowledging the time in the urban environment, with an attitude of nothing can stop me.'

Reflecting on his journey, Rennie acknowledges that his success is a collective experience. 'I've got to thank my mum, and all the strong women who supported me in those early days,' he says, recognising their role in supporting him and fostering his appreciation for culture. He emphasises the importance of institutions, like the NGV, that provide access to artistic experiences for individuals from diverse backgrounds. 'I have a great respect for institutions like this because they give people like me – a kid from the West – the opportunity to become an international artist.'

*REKOSPECTIVE: The art of Reko Rennie* challenges viewers to engage critically with the histories and narratives that shape our understanding of art and identity, and may hopefully inspire future generations to assert their voices and individuality, in the same way Rennie was inspired by the art of other trail-blazing artists.

Sophie Prince is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Australian and First Nations Art.

See *REKOSPECTIVE: The Art of Reko Rennie* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. This exhibition is supported by Principal Partner Deakin University and Tourism Partner Sofitel. For more information about this free exhibition, scan the code.



(pp. 58–59) *Reko Rennie Initiation\_OA\_RR 2021* (detail) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2023© Reko Rennie



# REKOSPECTIVE THE ART OF REKO RENNIE

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# Illuminating words

Medievalist, art historian, curator and teacher Loreto Sister and Professor Emerita Margaret Manion IBVM, AO passed away in September, aged 89. As a Life Member and NGV Trustee for over a decade and honorary curator of the NGV's Early Medieval and Renaissance collection, Sister Manion made an enormous contribution to the development of art history and scholarship in Australia and abroad. In this Deep Read, originally published in the NGV's *Art Journal* in 2014, she explores the connection between the visual and literary arts through manuscripts from the Collection.

Words by Sister Margaret Manion  
IBVM AO

Modern scholarship has increasingly focused attention on the interrelationship of the arts, on the ways in which, for example, the visual arts may complement or inform literary discourse. In this context, a study of the ancient craft of book illumination offers fresh perspectives on the ways in which word, image and decoration may interact imaginatively and intellectually. Books serve no simple or clearly defined static function, unchanging from age to age; on the contrary, their uses are almost as varied as their owners, and

the force of the written word, whether it is read silently, solemnly proclaimed, or received as meditative nourishment, lies in its capacity to penetrate with fresh relevance a changing milieu. Similarly, familiar images and systems of decoration, ordering and design, can be charged with a new vitality when they become part of a different literary or social context.

Seven illuminated manuscripts from the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria demonstrate how a series of texts all of which are based on scriptural and liturgical sources reflect in their contents, ordering and decoration, the varied interests of their original owners and the specific purpose for which they were made.

The *Byzantine Gospels* is the most ancient manuscript in the Gallery's collection.<sup>1</sup> Its text consists of the four gospels written in Greek. They are prefaced, according to long-established custom, by an introductory letter of the fourth-century bishop Eusebius to Carpianus, together with a set of Canon Tables devised by Eusebius as a guide to the common passages in each gospel. Tables of lections on the last two folios which have been added in a later hand, and marginal reading guides scattered throughout, indicate that the book was regularly used in the liturgy, and, although now divested of some of its decorative elements, it was obviously illuminated in such a way as to emphasise its solemn ritualistic function.

Although written for the most part in brown ink, the text of the first page of each gospel and the lists of chapters which precede them are in gold. The titles to each gospel are also in gold, and gold initials mark divisions in the text throughout. Large ornamental initials in gold and colours introduce the gospels. These are of complex figurative, interlaced and zoomorphic shapes and designs. The *A* at the beginning of St Mark, for example, forms the pillar of the stylite saint with a ladder resting against it. A man clambers up the ladder, while the saint lowers a

basket which rests in its descent on the bar of the letter.

The detailed and elaborate attention given to these initials might lead one to expect that the rich imagery of the gospel texts themselves would be amply exploited. The illumination of the manuscript, however, is confined for the most part to a few long-established elements, namely finely-patterned architectural framing devices of pillars and arches which enclose the letter and Canon Tables of Eusebius, an author portrait of the appropriate evangelist before each gospel, now alas torn out, and splendid ornamental headpieces, with individual patterns of *rinceaux* or foliated ornament organised on geometric lines at the top of the Canon Tables and the introductory gospel pages. The rich blues, reds and greens of this decoration, set against a gold ground, evoke on the vellum's surface the monumental splendour of large-scale mosaics. Apart from standing prophet figures in the margins of the introductory pages – heralds of the new dispensation revealed by the gospels – the sacred text is allowed to speak for itself within an ambience of colour and formal patterning.

Two distinctive illustrative features, however, occur in the pages prefacing the gospels. On the decorative columns of the architectural frames perch a series of figures. Some are simple Atlantes supporting the arches above them, but most bear attributes or are engaged in symbolic activities. They represent the labours of the months and a group of Christian-monastic virtues. Hugo Buchthal has shown that this decorative programme is reflected in two later Byzantine Gospel Books, one now in San Marco, Venice (Marciana gr. Z.540), and another in Tiflis. All three books were probably the product of the one scriptorium, and these special features were not absorbed into the mainstream of Byzantine gospel book illumination.

Still more singular is the elaborate frontispiece to the manuscript in



which a tall, dignified monk presents the gospels to a majestic image of the Virgin and Child. An accompanying gold-lettered inscription provides identification: 'O Queen of all as mother of the Divine Word, the donor and writer of the book and painter of the pictures in it is your servant the consecrated Theophanes.' Scribes, both Eastern and Western, not infrequently signed their manuscripts, but it is rare indeed to find explicit reference to the author of the illumination, and it is still more unusual for the scribe-illuminator to be depicted in a full-scale composition. This frontispiece, moreover, is a fine piece of painting in its own right. The Virgin, with regal stance supporting a blessing Christ Child, is of the Hodegetria type, which occurs in both icons and mosaics as a symbol of the majesty of the church and of its important mission as the guide to Christ. In the miniature the only modification of the traditional iconographical format is the gesture of the Virgin's right hand, which stretches out to receive the gold and jewelled-studded book presented by Theophanes.

This composition is of both personal and public significance. The dedication to the Virgin Hodegetria, it has been suggested, may indicate that the manuscript was written for the monastery of the Hodegon in Constantinople, known to have had an active scriptorium from the mid-eleventh century. Theophanes must surely have had a more authoritative and representative role in such a community than simply that of craftsman-scribe and illuminator. His formal presentation to the Virgin parallels the dedication theme in early mosaics, where the local bishop offers an image of the church as a symbol of its dedication. It should be noted, too, that the title 'donor' is linked in the inscription with those of writer and painter. Presumably, then, Theophanes was in an authoritative position such as abbot to be able so to influence this composition and to symbolise in his person the communal significance of a book designed for use in the solemn celebration of the liturgy.

As accomplished scribe and illuminator, he also exercised a certain freedom in the decoration of the Canon

Tables with the labours of the months and virtues. Both these sets of images follow established Byzantine patterns to be found in other types of manuscripts and artistic media. Transposed to the Canon Tables they acquire a sharpened allusive edge. The calendar figures attest to the pervasive presence of the gospels through the passage of time, and their appropriateness for all seasons. The virtues are personal in emphasis: prudence, courage, thoughtfulness, alms-giving, well-doing, kindness of heart, exhortation, repentance, love, wisdom, contemplation and action. Juxtaposed with the calendar figures, they call for the living-out of the gospel ideal within the monastic environment.

Along with the gospels, the psalter was one of the biblical books most frequently copied and illuminated in the Middle Ages. In the West it was widely used, not only in the liturgy but also as a personal prayer-book. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, saw a new devotional manual replace it in popularity: the Book of Hours. Two manuscripts in the Gallery's collection document the transitional phase from psalter to Book of Hours. The first of these is a psalter-hours, executed in Liège c.1275.<sup>2</sup> It was acquired through the Felton Bequest in 1933, and is now on deposit with the State Library of Victoria. The second work, the *Aspremont Psalter-Hours*, or *Offices*, probably produced in Verdun in the first decade of the fourteenth century, is divided into two parts.<sup>3</sup> Its psalter is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Douce 118, and the *Offices* were acquired for the National Gallery of Victoria in 1922 through the Felton Bequest; the sections are treated here as a single entity.

When fully developed the Book of Hours contained the Little Office of the Virgin, as well as other popular supplements to the breviary, such as the penitential psalms, the litany of the saints and the Office or Vigils of the Dead. These supplements were first attached to psalters, before forming an independent prayer-book. In addition to the psalter, a liturgical calendar and Easter table with verses in honour of St Lambert-le-Bègue and a series of

canticles drawn from the Old Testament, the Liège manuscript contains an Office which is a mixture of the breviary Office for the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin and elements of the Little Office, abbreviated Offices for three other feasts of the Virgin – the Purification, Annunciation and Assumption – a litany of the saints and the Vigils of the Dead. There are also more local prayers and devotions: a 150-stanza composition in Latin called the *Aves* or psalter of the Virgin, and a poem in Walloon French dedicated to the Passion. The book, as it comes to us today in a sixteenth-century binding, is supplemented by texts from three fourteenth-century Books of Hours. This provides further evidence of the shift in emphasis from its use as a psalter to that of a Book of Hours.

The Aspremont manuscript, in addition to a psalter, liturgical calendar, canticles and litany (Oxford section), contains five full Offices for the feasts of Christmas, the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity of the Virgin. Unlike the Liège book it does not have a version of the Little Office, nor does it include any other supplements or local devotions. Indeed, although produced some thirty years later than the Liège book it has closer links with the breviary than with a Book of Hours.

The format and illumination of these manuscripts combine traditional systems with more modern adaptations. They help to localise the works and provide us with information about their owners.

The calendar pages of the Liège and Aspremont manuscripts are illustrated by small miniatures of the labours of the months and the signs of the zodiac, in conformity with a widespread convention throughout France and the Netherlands, which was to continue into Books of Hours. In the Liège book, the labour of sowing the seed, which in manuscripts produced further south takes place in October, is depicted in September in keeping with a Germanic model.

Three full pages of illustration preface the psalter section in the Liège manuscript. Within small roundels, whose shapes and colours reflect stained

glass design, two scenes from the life of Christ, from the Annunciation up to the Ascension, are depicted on each page. The last page actually introduces the psalter, and here the roundels are skilfully translated into the upper and lower sections of a large initial *B* which announces the first psalm: 'Beatus Vir'. The prefacing of the psalter with a series of pages devoted to cyclical illustration, often dedicated to Christ, was a deep-seated tradition appearing in the West as early as the eleventh century. The Aspremont book has no such introductory cycle.

In the Divine Office the psalter was divided so as to provide for the recitation of the complete sequence within the course of one week. These liturgical divisions are reflected in the series of historiated initials which introduce certain psalms in both the Liège and Aspremont psalters. In the Liège psalter, however, two visual traditions are combined: a literal interpretation of the first words of the psalm, together with references to David as the received author of the psalter, with scenes from the life of Christ; in the Aspremont psalter the literal-Davidic pattern is adhered to throughout.

While an image of the Virgin and Child introduces matins for the Little Office of the Virgin in the Liège manuscript, the historiated initials for the remaining hours of this Office are devoted to the Passion. This tradition of associating the canonical hours for prayer with the sufferings of Christ was to remain influential in the illumination of Books of Hours, with the Little Office being usually illustrated by either a Passion cycle or a series of scenes in honour of the Virgin.

Apart from the three full-page illustrations, historiated initials of modest dimensions with simple border extensions comprise the decorative vocabulary of the Liège manuscript. By contrast, in the *Aspremont Psalter-Hours*, splendidly illuminated pages mark the beginning of all the major sections. Here the historiated initials are enlarged to hold compositions which dominate the page, while side panels of gold letters on coloured grounds, versal initials in gold, blue and red, elaborately cusped bar borders

'A distinctive feature of *Aspremont Psalter-Hours* is its wealth of marginal decoration. The reader is accompanied throughout the book by a multitude of drolleries: lively figures act out proverbs, animals and hybrids lampoon the professions and clergy, while birds and animals evoke bestiary tales.'

Sister and Professor Emerita Margaret Manion IBVM AO

with small miniature insets, and a wealth of marginal drolleries, provide a setting, distinguished by verve and variety rather than systematic precision; and, although the illustration of the psalter follows an established pattern, there is an element of improvisation in the illumination of the Offices section. This is especially evident in the treatment of the lesser hours within each Office, where smaller historiated initials repeat a few basic narrative themes or else resort to images of Christ, the Virgin, and saints, often with portraits of the donors at prayer before them.

A distinctive feature of this manuscript is its wealth of marginal decoration. The reader is accompanied throughout the book by a multitude of drolleries: lively figures act out proverbs, animals and hybrids lampoon the professions and clergy, while birds and animals evoke bestiary tales. Perhaps most interesting of all are the numerous references to the original patron family – Joffroy d'Aspremont and his

wife Isabelle de Kievraing. The knight, whose arms, together with those of Isabelle, are also displayed in numerous line-endings and small initials, is presented not only at prayer but as actively engaged in jousting or associated activities.

What do we know about the first owners of these psalter-hours and how were these books used? Despite the mix of texts in the Liège book and its distinctive combination of visual themes and patterns it is not an isolated production. Judith Oliver has identified some forty books produced in the diocese of Liège between c.1250 and the opening decades of the fourteenth century, all of which share a common textual and visual tradition. Several of these manuscripts were made for the Beguines, dedicated women who shared a communal life and many of whom lived in Liège at this time. Not all the manuscripts, however, can be directly associated with the Beguines, and these books give us an insight into the devotional practices of an extensive group



Monte Di Giovanni Del Fora (illuminator) Gherardo Di Giovanni Del Fora (illuminator) Sigismondo De' Sigismondi (scribe) *The Strozzi-Acciaiuoli Hours* 1495–96. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1961

of people. Local workshops must have been practised in turning out these prayer-books. The script is neat and careful, the illumination of good quality, and expensive gold leaf is used with a limited colour range. Presumably the manuscripts were reasonably expensive, but not beyond the range of the Beguine communities and members of the literate upper-middle class, both clerical and lay.

The *Aspremont Psalter-Hours* is a more personal commission. Textually, it seems to have been custom-made. I know of no other manuscript which duplicates its contents. Its illumination also, we have seen, makes many specific references to the original patrons. Joffroy d'Aspremont belonged to a noble family who owned lands in Namur and the Lorraine. They were related through marriage to the de Bar family, prominent in the history of Church and State at this time. Joffroy d'Aspremont's son Gobert married Mary de

Bar, the sister of Renaud, canon of Verdun and later bishop of Metz, and of Marguerite, Abbess of the Benedictine Convent, Saint-Maur, in Verdun. These family links are relevant, since the *Aspremont Psalter-Hours* is closely related stylistically to a breviary, which was probably executed for Marguerite de Bar when she was Abbess of Saint-Maur. A Book of Hours in a private collection also belongs to the same workshop.<sup>4</sup> This style has some links with a well-established school of illumination at Metz which produced several fine liturgical manuscripts for Renaud de Bar. It is none the less distinctive and probably issues from a workshop in Verdun with more entrenched local elements. On f.142 of the psalter section of the *Aspremont* book, the illuminator has left his signature. A tiny figure, held in the beak of a marginal grotesque, holds out a scroll on which are written the words: '*Nicolaus me fecit qui illuminat librum*'. Clearly Nicolaus

and his fellow illuminators were called on to produce a variety of manuscripts, ranging from strictly liturgical manuals through to individually tailored breviary-extracts and the more modern Book of Hours, for a clientele which embraced clerical, monastic and lay members of the local nobility.

Two French fifteenth-century manuscripts in the National Gallery's collection are illustrative of the Book of Hours at the peak of its development. The so-called *Vigils of the Dead*, now on deposit in the State Library of Victoria, are in fact a fragment of a Book of Hours.<sup>5</sup> Acquired through the Felton Bequest in 1933, it contains a calendar, the four gospel sequences, a prayer in honour of the crucifixion, the penitential psalms and litany, and the *Vigils of the Dead*. Originally it probably included the Little Office of the Virgin, shorter Hours of the Cross and the Holy Spirit, and memorial prayers for particular saints. Information in its

calendar and litany, together with the style of the illumination, indicates a provenance in Eastern France, probably Dijon, for this manuscript. Furthermore, certain local workshop practices, which the book reveals, are common to a group of manuscripts produced in Dijon around this time. Some of these suggest that the books were more awkwardly compiled from the activities of individual craftsmen than were their counterparts in Parisian workshops. The first leaf of the fourth quire of the Melbourne work, for example, is an independent insertion, and the border decoration for the rest of this gathering and on the three pages which contain miniatures, is by a different hand from that of the rest of the book. The pages with miniatures and their conjoint leaves are on finer vellum, and one of the miniatures is of markedly inferior workmanship compared to the other two.

The miniatures of the *Wharnclyffe Hours*, so called after its nineteenth-century owner, are the work of the illuminator Maître François, who was active in Paris from at least the 1460s through to the 1490s.<sup>6</sup> He seems also to have worked in the Loire region, for patrons in centres such as Angers and Le Mans.

The text and programme of illustration of the *Wharnclyffe Hours* exemplifies the French Book of Hours in its most popular phase. Its illumination, however, is of the highest quality, and comparison with the Dijon fragment demonstrates how Maître François exercised independence and originality in rendering certain themes and compositions.

The gospel sequences in these books were regularly introduced by portraits of the evangelists – a continuation of a tradition, which as we noted with the *Byzantine Gospels*, stretches back to early Christian times. In the Dijon Hours, the image of a standing St John heads the sequences. He holds a cup from which issue snakes. This is an allusion to a story from the apocrypha, and the representation is based on a type frequently used for medieval depictions of the saint. The *Wharnclyffe Hours* enlivens its corresponding introductory page by presenting a dramatic

enactment of the apocryphal legend. St John appears blessing the cup, as in the Dijon version, but he also confronts Aristodemus, the high priest of Diane at Ephesus who had challenged the saint to drink poison, having first tested its effectiveness on two malefactors, who died forthwith. The latter lie prostrate at St John's feet, while the background is filled with spectators.

The penitential psalms were regularly illustrated by a composition of David. He is often shown kneeling in prayer with harp or lyre beside him, and in the Dijon book, we see him thus. Again, Maître François injects a more lively and unusual narrative element into the corresponding Wharnclyffe miniature. The scene depicted is that of David encountering Abigail, as he struts aggressively in front of his troops. This is an exceedingly rare, though appropriate, choice of theme for this section of a Book of Hours. Abigail went forth to placate David's anger against her husband Nabal. She was consequently interpreted as a symbol of mediation and a pre-figuration of the Virgin, averting the divine wrath by her pleading. This is an apt illustration, therefore, for the penitential psalms whose central theme is a plea for mercy and forgiveness.

The Dijon *Vigils of the Dead* are introduced by a Funeral Service, again a well-established illustration for this text. The corresponding Wharnclyffe page is more dynamically oriented. Its main miniature presents the dramatic encounter of the Three Living and the Three Dead – a popular legend which had already been used by the French painter and miniaturist Jean Fouquet. The total decoration of the Wharnclyffe page includes more unusual elements: a border of gold, leafless branches replace the regular floral acanthus pattern, and in a subsidiary scene along the lower margin a kneeling figure ponders his mortality beside a grave which is being freshly dug.

Elsewhere in the Wharnclyffe Hours, Maître François further demonstrates his ability to infuse traditional themes with fresh narrative verve or contemporary commentary. By this time, it had become a customary practice in many French workshops

for the miniature of the Annunciation which introduced the Hours of the Virgin at matins to be highlighted as the most important composition of the entire book. Maître François presents the Annunciation within a contemporary dramatic context. He draws directly on the Mystery Play of the French theologian Arnoul Gréban and shows the virtues Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace, reconciled in the Court of Heaven as a result of the Incarnation, life, death and the Resurrection of Christ. The opening and closing scenes of Gréban's play are telescoped in this introduction. Gabriel is shown in Heaven, kneeling to receive his commission, and in the scene below announcing the Incarnation to Mary. The Virtues are already reconciled – something which takes place in the play at the conclusion of Christ's life after his triumphant Ascension into Heaven. This scene appears in several late fifteenth-century French manuscripts, all of which are associated with the school of Maître François, who was clearly responsible for devising the composition and applying it to the Book of Hours.

(continued online, scan the below qr code to read on)

Loreto Sister and Professor Emerita Margaret Manion IBVM AO was a medievalist, art historian, curator and teacher.

This extract originally appeared in the June 2014 issue of *Art Journal*. To read the full article and see images of all the works discussed, scan the code.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY SISTER MANION  
Dr Ursula Hoff AO OBE FAHA introduced me to the world of the illuminated manuscript some thirty years ago. This article is written in appreciation of the riches that introduction opened to me for later research and enjoyment.



(p. 67) Maître François (illuminator) Jean Dubrueil (scribe) *The Penitential Psalms: David and Abigail* c.1475–80 folio 61 recto in *The Wharnclyffe Hours* c.1475–80. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1920

# The secret lives of CATS & DOGS



## Black sheep dog

NGV exhibition *Cats & Dogs* explores humanity's deep connection to its domesticated companions through more than 250 works of art and design drawn from the NGV Collection. Here, NGV Curator of Contemporary Art Amita Kirpalani shines a light on the humble working dog through its very own puppy eyes.

Words by **Amita Kirpalani**

I wouldn't call myself an anarcho-pup. I'm just a regular dog who is work weary and travel-stained. Orwell radicalised many of us, and ever since reading *Animal Farm* I've decided to stop sleeping in houses, or, worse, a so-called 'doghouse'. I won't be fenced in. I'm currently collarless and un-microchipped. I'm missing and unwanted across state lines.

Maybe I've escaped with some scars and trust issues. I used to be a good boy, the best. I've got all the tricks down pat. I've worked for farmers, trackers and hunters – the cruel, distant, loving and mixed-up. You can always tell a working dog by the head tilt. Up, alert and at an angle, seeking the broadest view, not just eye contact and a view to Farmer or Hunter's body language, but tilting for



James Ward *Shepherd boy and sheep dog*. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

mutual foci: the hares, the flock, the enemy, the inclement weather or sunlight as it cleaves to horizon. Twelve hours on, no hours off; one eye open, just in case.

The contemporary art world is not so different from the farm. I reneged on playing Human, Pierre Huyghe's dog-in-residence, and I declined a meeting with Maurizio Cattelan's studio on the basis that I know how he works with horses. I no longer audition.

The commute is the only thing I've retained from my working life. I've always been on the go, so 'go with it' I thought, and keep moving. Why stay? Sure, I've had lovers, and I've had my snout in all sorts of nefarious Spots, but there is nothing like the love of the work. When you're in sync with the horse hooves, herding or hunting, it's all smell-geometry; it's pace and paw and pursuit.

It's only since I followed my nose to Moscow that I'm loosely affiliating with this pack. My dogs introduced me to Karl Marx and I've been reading a much-pawed copy of *Capital*:

'Treats are the alienated essence of dog's labour and life; and this alien essence dominates him as he worships it.'

On those long, cold nights huddling for warmth and shelter, we discuss the futility of a sit for sit's sake and how, at least for the dogs of our generation, we will always be working for the man. So, I've sniffed out what they call an 'alternative lifestyle'. I stray. These days I enjoy the blur, the lack of focus and the library of smells I take in from the train. I'm moving, still. Hunger is often my only companion.

Occasionally, when I miss a pat on the head, I'll detour to a metro station and deploy my soft eyes. Mostly though, the wind in my coat is all the comfort I need.

Amita Kirpalani and her partner Tim cohabit with Bee, a 'Singapore special'. These mixed-breed mongrels are known for their skittishness, 'affection at a distance' and intense desire for chicken. Kirpalani is NGV Curator of Contemporary Art.

See these works and more when *Cats & Dogs* opens at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia on 1 November. *Cats & Dogs* is supported by Major Partners DINE® and MY DOG®, Learning Partner Deakin University, Media Partner S&J Media Group, and Collaborating Partner ACMI.

To find out more about the exhibition and to purchase tickets, scan the code.



England (manufacturer) *Doorstop* (19th century). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1971. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

## Look what the cat dragged in

Louis Wain's dynamic drawing *We won't go home till morning*, 1900–10, depicts a cat swinging around a lamppost with a walking cane and monocle. A key work in *Cats & Dogs*, the drawing makes its debut on the walls of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, but first, a short stop at the Gallery's conservation labs.

Words by Louise Wilson



One of the great benefits of preparing for a rich and diverse exhibition such as *Cats & Dogs*, is the opportunity to delve deeply into the NGV Collection and examine artworks before they go on display.

English artist Louis Wain is best known for his depictions of anthropomorphised cats, which were highly popular from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. His drawings were reproduced in popular magazines of the day, on postcards, in children's books and his own publication *The Louis Wain Annual*.

*We won't go home till morning*, 1900–10, acquired by the NGV in 1935, is the Gallery's only drawing by Louis Wain. To prepare the work to be displayed at its best in the *Cats & Dogs* exhibition, NGV conservators planned to address a range of issues typical to works on paper, including staining and discolouration.

Typically, discolouration is caused by the presence of metals such as copper and iron and the plant materials used to make paper. Wood pulp, for example, is particularly vulnerable to chemical degradation due to the presence of lignin – a substance that provides trees with structural integrity. When incorporated into paper and exposed to light, lignin is vulnerable to a destructive chemical change that produces acidity and yellow-coloured compounds.

If materials are in proximity, the acidic products that cause discolouration can migrate from one to the other. This causes localised staining that mirrors the shape of the acidic material. It is common to see works on paper with brown staining on all edges. Referred to as 'mount burn', this is caused by the window mount being cut from poor quality, non-archival board. The pattern of staining on *We won't go home till morning* indicates that the discolouration is not caused by the paper Wain chose or the window mount, but by a poor-quality board that once sat behind the drawing.

In recent decades, much research has been undertaken in the conservation field to develop efficient and safe methods



Louis Wain at his drawing board. Museum: Bethlem Royal Archives. Alamy Stock Photo

Louis Wain (1860–1939) was a well-known Edwardian period illustrator who lived and worked in London. A prolific sketcher since his boyhood, he is best known for his anthropomorphic cat drawings, like the one discussed in this article. These cats were often clothed and walking upright, framed by coincidental hi-jinx, catastrophe, and wry humour. Their charades betray some of the best and worst of Edwardian society in playfully mocking gestures that stylistically were emblematic of the press-art of the period. Wain would produce as many as 1,500 works a year or 150,000 drawings, book covers, comics, advertising, ceramics and sketches over his artistic lifetime.

to remove discolouration from paper. Fortunately, most of the compounds that cause staining and embrittlement are soluble in aqueous solutions, presenting the opportunity to remove them by washing. When considering washing a work on paper, it is important to understand an artist's intent, because the tone and hue of the paper will shift, often dramatically. While in most cases, the paper has discoloured over time and it is not the colour the artist chose, some artists, such as James McNeill Whistler, sought out stained paper, enjoying its aged appearance.

Across the top of *We won't go home till morning*, there is a lighter coloured band with a diagonal edge that probably represents the colour of the paper when Wain completed the drawing. Between 1900–10 when Wain was working on the drawing, and 1935, when it was acquired by the NGV, the storage or mounting materials adjacent to this area of the drawing isolated it from acid migration. This area resembling the original colour of the work provided reassurance that the paper was not brown when Wain chose it, indicating that treatment to address the discolouration would help reinstate his artistic intent for the work.

All methods of washing carry considerable risk and should only be undertaken by a qualified conservator who can monitor the work carefully throughout the process. In preparation for this major treatment, a risk assessment and extensive testing regime were undertaken, including solubility testing of all media and the measuring of chemical degradation at various locations on the drawing. A washing solution targeting stain-inducing metals and acidic products was tailored for the work. Although paper is a porous material, it is often difficult to penetrate deep into the fibrous structure with a washing solution. Various washing methods have been developed by conservators to enhance penetration, improving the efficacy of washing while also accommodating the specific needs of different media and paper types.

While washing *We won't go home till morning*, a considerable amount of discolouration flowed out of the drawing. This indicated the successful removal of soluble acidic products. To prevent future acidity and damage from metals, the work was rinsed in a solution containing calcium. While all condition issues were addressed, washing was the most com-

plex aspect of the treatment. Sometimes washing delivers a dramatic colour change, with significant reduction in staining. In this case, the visual results are more subtle; however, post-treatment testing confirms the drawing is more chemically stable than prior to treatment, and thus ensures the work can be enjoyed by audiences well into the future.

Louise Wilson is NGV Conservator of Paper.

See Louis Wain's *We won't go home till morning* 1900–10 as part of *Cats & Dogs* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia from 1 November. To find out more about the exhibition and to purchase tickets, scan the code.



(left) Louis Wain *We won't go home till morning* 1900–1910. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1935. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

# DINNER THAT DOES MORE

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(AND SUSTAINABLY-SOURCED)



Treat them **Love** them



# HOME, SWEET HOME



The 2024 NGV Architecture Commission offers a compelling vision for alternative homebuilding in Australia. Designed by architecture and design studio Breathe, *Home Truth* is an installation that prompts reflection on how small-scale architecture can foster a new way of living.

Words by **Elisa Scarton**

*'Home Truth* is not simply a proposition of scale. It's also a proposition of community. It takes the generousities and the intimacies of a beautiful house on the beach and transposes them into a small and compact apartment building.'

Jonas Nutter

It all started with a bright pink jumping castle.

When Melbourne-based architecture and design studio Breathe sat down to enter the 2024 NGV Architecture Commission, the initial design had been lighthearted, featuring a jumping castle as a statement on the reality in which current – and future – Australian homeowners find themselves.

'Our housing market is laughable. It's a joke,' Breathe's Jonas Nutter tells me.

Australian homes are among the largest in the world, with the average property dwarfing those in the United States, the UK, France and Canada.<sup>1</sup> We consistently have some of the world's most expensive prices per square metre, while our salaries struggle to keep up.<sup>2</sup>

After a few trips back to the drawing board, the jumping castle was out, replaced by an unfinished house that towers above the garden at NGV International.

Breathe was still keen for a critique of the current Australian housing model that is seemingly blind to housing equity and a climate crisis, but it also wanted to ask the question: 'What do we really need to live well?'

'What does it look like if housing is delivered more as a right and necessity?', asks Nutter. 'How do we get out of the headspace of quantity over quality and seek sustainability through material reduction?'

The graduate of architecture is part of the team behind *Home Truth*, which opens on 13 November. The project doesn't have all the answers, but it is a striking contrast of scales from the moment you step through the NGV Great Hall's glass doors and into the garden.

'Immediately you're confronted by this giant facade beckoning from across the water. I always refer to it as a nude building, which probably isn't the best terminology, but it's an unfinished, post-

humous icon to a forgotten suburb – all timber studs, no external cladding, no windows or ceiling; a seemingly abandoned structure.'

But the house is not abandoned. A gleaming real estate sign welcomes the curious. A heading reads 'More space than you'll ever need!!' Beyond it, a shuddering garage door blinks and gleams.

At first, Nutter explains, the studio worried about sending the wrong message. In earlier iterations, the big looming facade felt too beautiful. Too appealing.

'A double garage?' he jokes. 'Sign me up!'

Breathe redesigned the project's interiors to seed discomfort. Walls get higher and spaces tighter in a maze that grows in its oddity with every step you take.

'Beyond the garage, the skeletal structure unfurls and casts ominous shadows. You notice its strange skin. These sparkling walls are made of some weird material. The label of your soy and



oat milk Tetra Pak begin to shine through, begin to tell a story about material choice and the limitless waste produced by the construction industry.'

*Home Truth* is not admonishing anyone for the size of their house. There is no criticism or judgment, just contrast. At its core is an investigation of material and lifestyle quality.

'There is this heartless pandemic on our horizon. A pandemic of social isolation where a lot of people live alone in these giant houses and the moment of connection, the sense of community, where you know your neighbour and wave, is lost in scale; lost in the clear division of what's mine and what's yours.'

And it's not as if Breathe's proposition is new or, frankly, revolutionary. Small scale architecture that does away with plasterboard and unnecessary flooring, exposes surfaces and structural materials, or responds to site and longevity, has all been practised in Australia before.

Carlton's Cairo Flats apartment complex, built in 1936 and designed by Acheson Best Overend, provided small-scale apartments on Melbourne's doorsteps for working single men. The mid-century Small Homes Services, directed by famed architect Robin Boyd, delivered affordable, architect-designed houses to the same city in under one hundred square metres. The twentieth-century terrace homes that line so many inner-city suburbs offered both density and community.

'*Home Truth* is not simply a proposition of scale. It's also a proposition of community,' explains Nutter.

'There's still that richness. Those moments of unique occupation, but its compact scale invites you to spend more time in communal spaces, more time outdoors, more time in nature, more time fostering connections with neighbours and more time building community.'

But where is this beautiful, small space? This perfect contrast to *Home Truth's* sprawling facade?

At the end of the project's maze of high walls and closed spaces is a refuge. Warm, textural and woody, it offers a moment of calmness after the intimidating and odd experience before it.

This 'refuge' is Breathe's glimpse into an alternative housing future.

It's constructed with the same materials as the rest of the house – timber studs packed tightly together – but here, the space is deliberately smaller in scale, simplified, far nicer and more generous in the qualities that it can provide.

At its centre, a stacked rock speaks to the presence and celebration of Wurundjeri Country, on which *Home Truth* stands. Before the visitor is swept back out into the NGV Garden, Nutter hopes there is an opportunity to contemplate a housing future different from the past:

'A housing future where we build what we need, we build sustainably, we build within our means. A housing future that connects us, a housing future that brings us joy.'

Jonas Nutter is a graduate of architecture at Melbourne-based architecture and design studio Breathe. Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator.

See the 2024 Architecture Commission, *Home Truth* by Breathe, in the NGV Garden at NGV International from 13 November. This exhibition is supported by Design Partner RMIT University.

For more information about this free exhibition, scan the code.



(p. 78) Some of the Breathe Architecture team, photographed in 2023 outside the Brunswick studio. Photo: Tom Ross

(above) Render of NGV Architecture Commission 2024: *Home Truth* by Breathe. Image: Courtesy of Breathe

# Mother & Child

Artist Marc Chagall brought his magical imagery to life in everything from large-scale canvases to brilliantly coloured stained glass windows, theatre sets and costumes. His *Mère et enfant* (*Mother and child*) 1948–53 joins the NGV Collection as a gift of Marc Besen AC and Eva Besen AO.

Words by **Ted Gott**

‘Without love an art is not art, and a life is not life’, Marc Chagall wrote in the late 1940s.<sup>1</sup> Love had come back into his world, which had been shattered when his first wife Bella had died in September 1944 after a sudden illness. After months of mourning, Chagall’s heart reopened in the spring of 1945, when he met Virginia Haggard, whom his daughter Ida had hired to take care of her father in their New York apartment. Aged 29, Virginia was almost thirty years younger than Chagall, and only one year older than Ida herself. Despite this age difference, love blossomed between Haggard and Chagall, fueling the artist’s creativity at a time when he was designing his remarkable sets and costumes for George Balanchine’s production of Stravinsky’s *Firebird* (1910) at the Metropolitan Opera. Haggard later recalled how ‘dominating everything, the *Firebird* designs grew in intensity with our love’.<sup>2</sup>

The relationship was not without its tensions, first occasioned by guilt and secrecy – the affair having started while Haggard was still married to artist John McNeill; leading to their subsequent separation and the couple’s daughter being sent to a boarding school; and then Chagall and Haggard conceiving a child together, although ‘the traditional one-year period of celibacy after the death of a wife (which Jewish custom prescribes) had not yet elapsed’.<sup>3</sup> Chagall was passionately proud of his Jewish heritage, which also contrasted with Haggard’s Christian upbringings. He believed, however, that his deceased wife Bella approved

of their union, telling Haggard that ‘it was Bella who sent you to look after me. Rembrandt had his Hendrickje Stoffels to console him after Saskia’s death; I have you’.<sup>4</sup> Haggard became the center of Chagall’s world. ‘For me, you are – my life’, he wrote to her in June 1946, when separated from her during a three-month trip to Paris. ‘I can’t live anymore without you. Fate wanted me to meet you after dear Bella (whom you love too)’.<sup>5</sup>

When the *Firebird* production was launched in October 1945, the couple’s affair became public knowledge. According to Haggard:

When the Yiddish novelist, Joseph Opatoshu, saw the ballet he exclaimed, ‘Marc, you must be in love!’ Marc chuckled and kept his secret, but a month or two later, we took Oppen, as he was called, and his wife Adele, into our confidence.

She also recalled how ‘Marc was astonishingly youthful and energetic, and we felt like the pair of exuberant young lovers he was painting in the *One Thousand and One Nights*’, a reference to the gouaches Chagall was then creating in preparation for his colour lithographs for the publication *Four Tales from the Arabian Nights* (1948).<sup>6</sup>

On 22 June 1946 Haggard gave birth to the couple’s child, David. Chagall had been living in exile in the United States since fleeing from Nazi-occupied France in 1941. He was to return to France in the summer of 1948, settling first with Haggard and

David at Orgeval, near Saint-Germain-en-Laye northwest of Paris; and then, in 1950, relocating south to Venice in the French Riviera. During this period, he painted a number of Madonna and Child compositions featuring Haggard cradling their infant son.<sup>7</sup> In *Mère et enfant* (*Mother and child*) 1948–53, Haggard and David occupy the painting’s upper left corner, watched over by an angel in dialogue with a blackbird. The maternal couple are seated on a grassy bank above a stream, in which a female goat stands gazing at a reflection of the moon. Above this nanny goat a hand holds a celebratory floral bouquet. The whole composition is buoyant and joyful, expressive of Chagall’s contentment with his new young family.

This happy situation was not to last. In 1952, Haggard left Chagall for another man, who was also roughly Chagall’s age, causing Chagall to lament that ‘now, dark life has opened for me a grave more bitter than Bella’s grave’.<sup>8</sup> *Mère et enfant* (*Mother and child*) remains, however, as a memory of one of the happiest periods in Chagall’s life.

Dr Ted Gott is NGV Senior Curator, International Art.

The NGV would like to warmly thank the Besen family for their generous support of the NGV Collection and acknowledge the philanthropic legacy of Marc Besen AC and Eva Besen AO. See *Mère et enfant* on display on Level 2, NGV International.



Marc Chagall *Mère et enfant* (*Mother and child*) 1948–53. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Marc Besen AC and Eva Besen AO through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2015 © Marc Chagall/ADAGP, Paris. Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

# One man's treasure

Robert Klippel is regarded as one of Australia's most significant postwar sculptors. A new display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia explores the artist's evolving creative process, showcasing how Klippel's drawings and collages served as testing grounds for technical innovation and imaginative experimentation.

Words by **Eva Christoff**

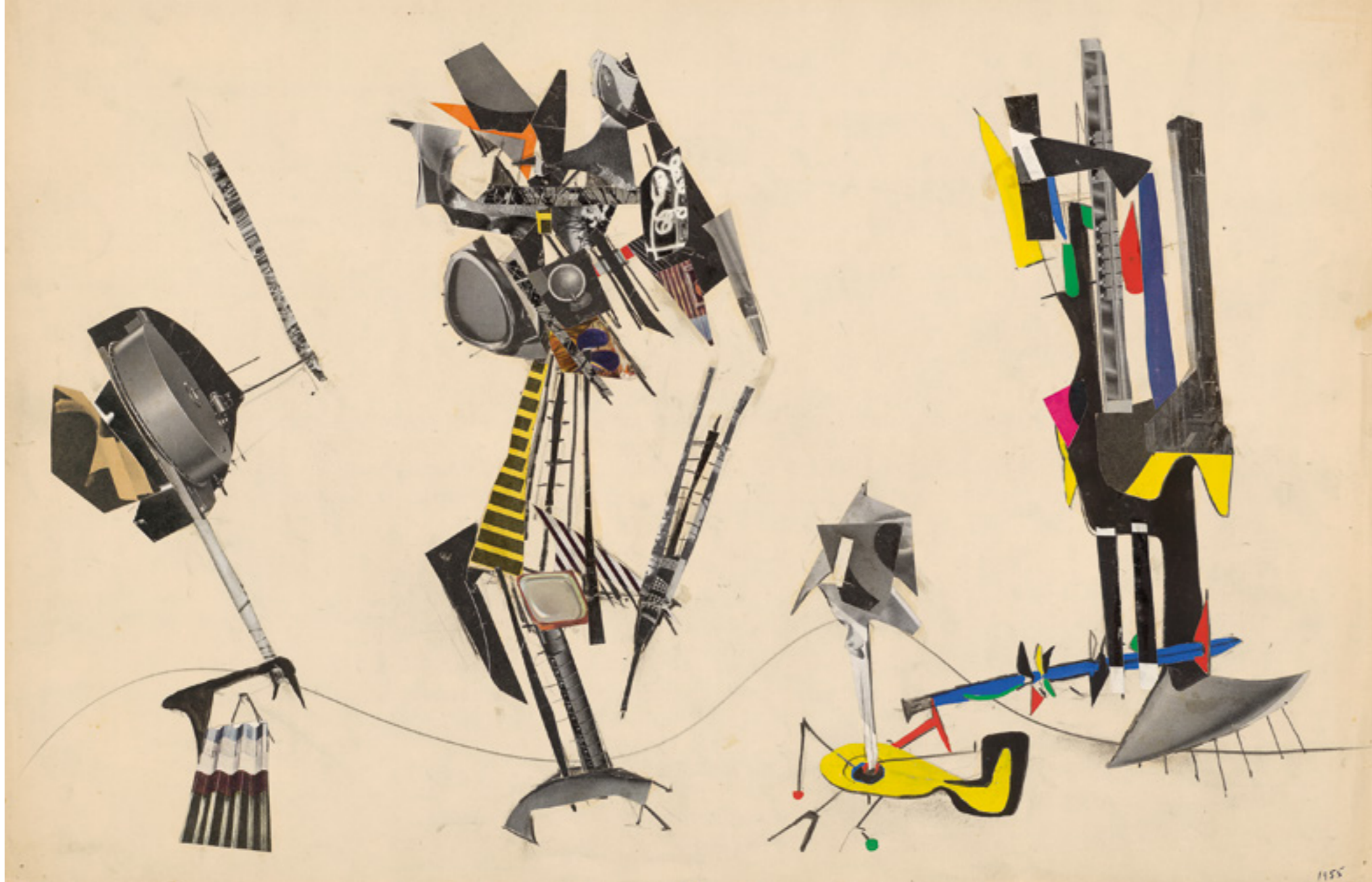
**W**hile perhaps best known for his abstract junk-metal assemblages, Robert Klippel also worked extensively with drawing media, producing approximately five thousand works on paper in his lifetime. Initially, Klippel viewed drawing as a preliminary tool to assist in creating three-dimensional forms. However, he later came to view his work in non-hierarchical terms, placing primacy on method over medium. While Klippel stopped making preparatory drawings for sculptures in the second decade of his career, the experimental techniques and ideas he explored in his ongoing drawing practice continued to heavily influence his sculptural work. In this sense, Klippel's works on paper provide invaluable insight into the artist's evolving creative process and preoccupations.

After serving in the Royal Australian Navy during the Second World War, Klippel enrolled in a full-time sculpture course at East Sydney Technical College in 1946. He found the parochialism of the Sydney art scene frustrating, relocating to London in March 1947 in pursuit of a more progressive environment. Two months after his arrival in England, he commenced life drawing classes at the Slade School of Fine Art – a decision that stemmed from his belief that all good sculptors must first be excellent draughtsmen. However, he soon grew disillusioned by the Slade's conservative curriculum, quitting his second attempt at a formal artistic education in November 1947.

In an unpublished treatise from February 1947 titled *Sculpture as a language of form*, Klippel proclaimed that 'Sculpture ought to express the spirit of the age in which the sculptor is living. Art and life are one.' Shortly before his departure from the Slade, Klippel reiterated this conviction in his diary, writing:

'This age is one of great change, insecurity, fear, fragility, machines, atoms, a probing into the structures of nature. To reflect the age, I believe that art must contain these aspects ... integrated with fundamental truths [about nature] which don't change ... the artist can show a new world, if he sees and feels enough.'

Thereafter, Klippel embarked on an intensive investigation of the inner workings of nature and machinery, finding inspiration in places such as the Rolls Royce showroom and the Natural History Museum. During his visits, he dissected the images and



Robert Klippel (*Untitled*) 1955. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of James Mollison, 1981 © Andrew Klippel. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

objects he encountered into their component parts, filling dozens of sketchbooks with a 'shape alphabet' of recurring forms found in nature and industry. In doing so, Klippel aimed to develop an intuitive sculptural lexicon. However, his approach was never strictly formalist. Rather, Klippel arguably sought to communicate the confusion of life in the machine age through his synthesis of organic and mechanical forms.

Studies for sculptures from Klippel's London period speak to the artist's interest in exploring 'the interrelationship between the cogwheel and the bud'. The embryonic forms on *Sheet of studies including drawing for No. 42*, 1947 (gift of James Mollison AO), were perhaps inspired by Klippel's study of natural processes such as growth. At the same time, these forms are equally recognisable as sinister mechanical contraptions. In 1948, Klippel transformed the study in the top left-hand corner of the sheet into *No. 42 Lethal Machine Monster* – a plaster sculpture that captures the anxieties and innovations of the postwar years, as well as nature's inherent ruthlessness.

Other studies from this period are similarly uncanny in their conflation of organic and mechanical forms. An untitled sheet from 1948 shows Klippel experimenting with the concept

of placing genome-like forms atop long rods. A modified version of a design from this sheet was adapted into a wooden sculpture titled *Opus 48 (Entities suspended from a detector)*, 1948, which art critic Robert Hughes has described as 'an instrument of war – a landmine detector, lurching along and feeling the ground with fastidious antennae'.

In December 1948, Klippel moved from London to Paris. There, he was welcomed by André Breton, who was working to rejuvenate Surrealism in the wake of the Second World War. Breton was instrumental in arranging Klippel's exhibition at the Galerie Nina Dausset in 1949, where sculptures from his London period, such as *Opus 48*, were praised by the Surrealists as significant contributions to Surrealist sculpture, despite Klippel's limited knowledge of Surrealism at the time of their production.

As the nuclear technology race brought atomic physics to the fore of public consciousness, Klippel became interested in developing sculptures wherein electro-magnetic forces held shapes suspended. Struggling to keep up with the technical demands of his increasingly complex ideas, he only brought three sculptures close to completion during his time in Paris, all of which were eventually abandoned. Due to the chasm between his ideas and abilities, he

turned his attention towards drawing, filling twenty sketchbooks. By this stage Klippel no longer conceived of his drawings as preparatory designs for sculptures. Rather, the drawings enabled him to strengthen his imaginative faculties and expand the realm of sculptural possibilities.

Klippel believed that artists ought to emulate natural processes, or create how nature creates. From late 1949 to mid 1950, this led him to splatter drops of ink onto paper at random to mimic the appearance and effect of raindrops. These ink splatters were subsequently worked over with short, sharp lines to create drawings reminiscent of split atoms, or seed pods aloft in a gust of wind. While Klippel's desire to surrender to his creative instincts shared some resemblance to Surrealist automatism, his working method remained distinct in that he merged chance procedures with intentional artistic interventions.

During his time in Europe, Klippel was entirely reliant on his father's financial support. In 1950, Klippel's father stopped providing assistance and the artist reluctantly returned to Sydney to earn a living. Working for the family business during the day meant that Klippel had little time to make art. As a result, he continued to favour drawing over sculpture. Klippel increasingly found wood

too fragile a material to support his ideas, further impeding his progress as a sculptor. In 1952, he enrolled in panel beating, oxywelding and arc welding night classes at the Ultimo and East Sydney Technical Colleges to equip himself with the techniques necessary to make a shift to metalwork.

While night classes left Klippel with even less time to make art, his need for efficiency also inspired technical innovation, and in 1952 he began to create collages in which he used images of machinery cut from technical magazines as abstract compositional elements. Although biomorphic forms had all but disappeared from Klippel's art by the mid 1950s, the artist continued to honour his belief that you have to have life in form not just geometry. In works such as *Untitled*, 1955 (gift of James Mollison AO), collaged fragments of machine parts take on the appearance of bug-like creatures thanks to Klippel's inclusion of spindly legs. An undulating horizon line further underlines this impression by nominally situating these mechanical abstractions within a landscape setting.

The mid-century Australian art market was relatively hostile towards abstract art and Klippel struggled to achieve commercial success. In 1957 he moved to the United States, where he hoped his work would be better received, taking up a teaching position at the Minneapolis School of Art the following year. In Minneapolis, Klippel continued to produce abstract collages of images of machine parts. By the late 1950s he began to make sculptural assemblages using reclaimed junk metal in the same way, welding found steel objects together to create unified forms that are both familiar and enigmatic. It is within this realm of sculpture that Robert Klippel made his major contribution to Australian art.

In 1963, Klippel returned to Sydney, spurred by the unexpected success of his first solo Australian exhibition the previous year. By this point, he no longer viewed drawing as subservient to sculpture but instead saw both as integral to his artistic practice, later professing, 'there is no doubt in my mind. If I had to give up sculpture I'd be quite happy to go on drawing for the rest of my life'.

In the decades to come, Klippel created some of his most well known sculptural assemblages. All the while, drawing enabled him to explore avenues he could not access in the three dimensions. While practical challenges prevented him from realising his long-held ambition to create sculptures on a colossal scale, in works such as the lithograph *Structures in a Landscape*, 1965, he was able to bring his vision to life on paper.

Klippel subsumes into his art the wonderful shapes that underpin contemporary life — cogs that make the machines on which we rely churn along, the skeletal structure of a leaf, or the patterns of bacteria in a petri dish. Although Klippel's synthesis of organic and mechanical forms was arguably in response to the immense upheaval and technological innovations of the twentieth century, his playful language of forms has an evergreen capacity to change our perception of the world around us. He invites us to consider a new way of seeing; one in which the most mundane objects are imbued with a renewed vitality.

Eva Christoff is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Prints and Drawings.

See *Robert Klippel: A Language of Forms* on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. The NGV would like to warmly thank James Mollison AO who gifted some of the works mentioned.

(pp. 84–85) David Moore *Robert Klippel*  
1979 National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.  
Purchased 1998 © David Moore Estate  
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davidmoorephotography.com.au

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PRESENTS

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BOOK VIA [THELUME.COM](http://THELUME.COM)

Dale Chihuly, *Sapphire Star*, 2010  
9 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 9 1/2', The New York Botanical Garden,  
Bronx, installed 2017  
© 2010 Chihuly Studio. All rights reserved.



27 SEP 2024 @ 29 APR 2025

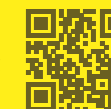
## CHIHULY IN THE BOTANIC GARDEN

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# *The feminine gaze*

Working across painting, sculpture, textiles and installation, Natalya Hughes explores the decorative arts and ornamental traditions, and their associations with the feminine, the body and excess. In her practice she has borrowed from modernist painters to comment on their representation of women. As part of this year's MECCA × NGV Holiday Collaboration, the Brisbane-based artist has created a new body of work celebrating ornamentation, beauty and femininity.

*Interview by* **Anna Honan**

**ANNA HONAN** In discussing your new series of work, you have spoken about the influence of Russian-born French artist and designer Romain de Tiroff, aka Erté. How did you first discover his work?

**NATALYA HUGHES** The way I first came across his work is a little scandalous. I was given a book entitled *Ermyntude and Esmeralda* by my Nanna when I was a child. Because of its pastel palette and its decorative cover it was mistaken for a children's book. It was in fact a very adult book, written by Bloomsbury Group member Lytton Strachey and illustrated in this instance by Erté. How it passed into the collection of my grandfather, who lived in a tiny rural town on the mid north coast of New South Wales, I don't know. In any case the book features the sexual explorations of two teenage girls, so it wasn't something I should have had in my hands at the time. I read it and learnt a lot. But I also spent my remaining childhood, adolescence and adult life marvelling at the illustrations. They're highly stylised, incredibly decorative and move

between explicit scenes and visual code [such as] ‘pussies’ and ‘bow wows’. I think it’s fair to say the book was foundational for my practice and probably much more than that.

AH Erté is perhaps most famous for his elegant fashion designs that capture the Art Deco period in which he worked. Between 1915 and 1937, he designed over two hundred covers for *Harper’s Bazaar*. What do you see as the contemporary resonance of Art Deco today?

NH I’m not sure about Art Deco as I can see it fall in and out of favour depending on where it aligns with a sense of kitsch, like in the 1980s reappropriation. But I think we are now very much in a time where Erté might find favour. The camp, the performativity, and the very dynamic representation of gender make me think it is relevant. I heard his name cited in *RuPaul’s Drag Race* recently. I’m still waiting for the revisionist museum exhibition and attendant publications!

(p. 90) Natalya Hughes in her studio. Photo: James Caswell.

(below) Natalya Hughes *Gay doings* 2023–24. Purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands, 2024. Photo: Nicholas Aloisio-Shearer

(right) Natalya Hughes *Ermyntrude by the window* 2023. Purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands, 2024. Photo: Nicholas Aloisio-Shearer



AH In your works you have critiqued the representation of women by modernist masters such as German painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. For the MECCA × NGV Holiday Collaboration, you continue this practice while also celebrating Erté’s depiction of women. Can you describe this change in approach?

NH This body of work is a big shift from the critique of Willem de Kooning’s and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s work that immediately precede it. It’s all appropriation based and motivated by a desire to closely examine how women have been represented as subjects and objects. But the turn – or maybe return, given the work’s origin story – does signal a change. There is something about Erté’s playful, humorous, camp and exaggerated representations, and the way they seem to lean into a performance of gender that I wanted to stay with. Roland Barthes wrote about the work as ‘dress extended into body’, rather than the inverse that we might usually see. There seems to be something productive about that for me as I consider how I register my experience of being a female-born and identifying artist and looking to representations of those like me.

AH In the three new paintings, *Ermyntrude by the window*, *Esmeralda on a pedestal* and *Gay doings*, 2023, now on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, you have further abstracted the female figures, painting them as dress alone, without any recognisable body. You have described this as presenting the figures as ‘pure sensation’. What do you mean by this?

NH In the book *Ermyntrude and Esmeralda*, the characters are pleasure seeking, sexually curious figures. They remind me of Freud’s claim that sexual curiosity is the prototype or precursor for all research. They have a drive not just to experience sex but to understand its mysteries. I think in describing them as pure sensation I was trying to capture something of that. But I was also referring to this characterisation of the figures I have drawn out in the exhibition. They aren’t pure sensation in the sense of some kind of raw bodily drive. I



was also trying to capture something cultural, something of the impulse to make the decorative detail – all fabric/textile, all pattern, all frill pleat and bow – stand in for these figures.

AH As with many of your recent exhibitions, in this series you present paintings alongside sculptures and design objects. What led you to work across media and how do the paintings and sculptures interact?

NH For me, the work starts with the paintings. I think in terms of anthropomorphic, albeit slightly grotesque, forms. But I also like to think of ways to make the figures operate as surrogates in space as well. Here, like in the other shows, I have been speaking to bodies in expanded ways. And that intersects with my interest in working with objects of décor as well as just decorative images. So, both those things play out in this display.

Anna Honan is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture.

See Natalya Hughes’s *Ermyntrude by the window*, *Esmeralda on a pedestal* and *Gay doings* 2023 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for generously supporting the acquisition of these works, which celebrate the 2024 MECCA × NGV Holiday Collaboration.

BOROONDARA ARTS

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# Aspects of Abstraction

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6 NOV 2024 – 18 JAN 2025

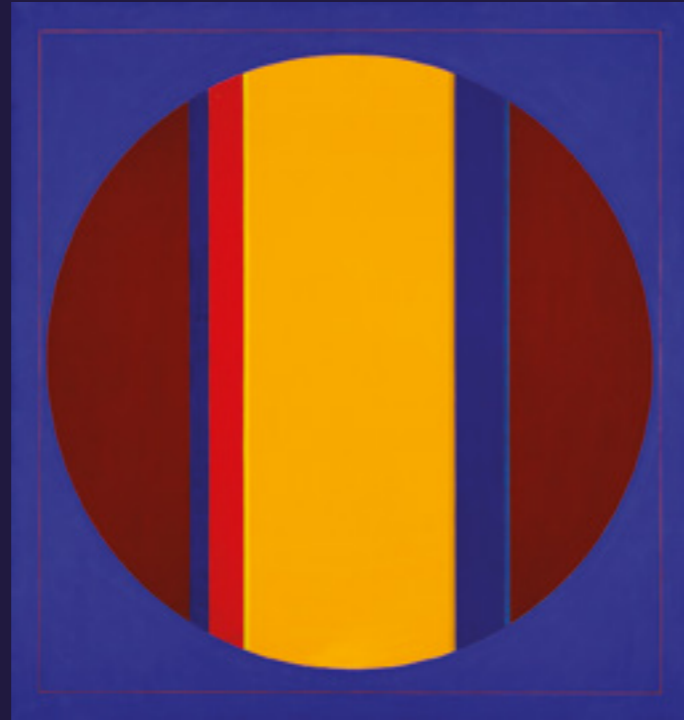


Image: Sydney Ball, 'Canto No 7', 1965, acrylic on canvas, 183 x 176cm, image courtesy of the Sydney Ball Estate.

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 BOROONDARA  
BOROONDARA.VIC.GOV.AU/ARTS



# Counterparts: Expanded Textile Practices Hannah Gartside Britt Salt

16 November 2024  
- 16 February 2025



wangarattaartgallery.com.au  
56 Ovens Street, Wangaratta, 3677



< Hannah GARTSIDE, *The Sleepover* (detail), 2018-19, found nighties and slips c.1965-1980, found synthetic fabric and cotton ribbon, milliner's wire, thread (with assistance from Monika Holgar, Louise Meuwissen, Melanie Ward, Kate Woodcroft) 670cm x 280cm x 210cm, photo Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Tolarno Galleries.  
> Britt SALT, *Grid II* (detail), 2023, Wool and cotton, 97 x 91cm. Photo by Astrid Mulder.



# SOUNDS OF AUSTRALIA FESTIVAL

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ANAM's end of year chamber music festival will explore our homegrown music, with works from across the nation – many that are making their way to ANAM for the first time.

Included in the festival will be the world premiere of works by Kate Tempany and a new Piano Quartet by Anne Cawrse, played alongside music by some of Australia's finest composers, such as Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale, and more.

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Ted May *Blue Face* 2024. Oil on Canvas, 168 x 137cm. Photography Regina Grant.

# TED MAY

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2 – 24 November 2024

Opening: 2 November 2024 6–8pm  
Guest speaker: Eric Nash  
Director Benalla Art Gallery

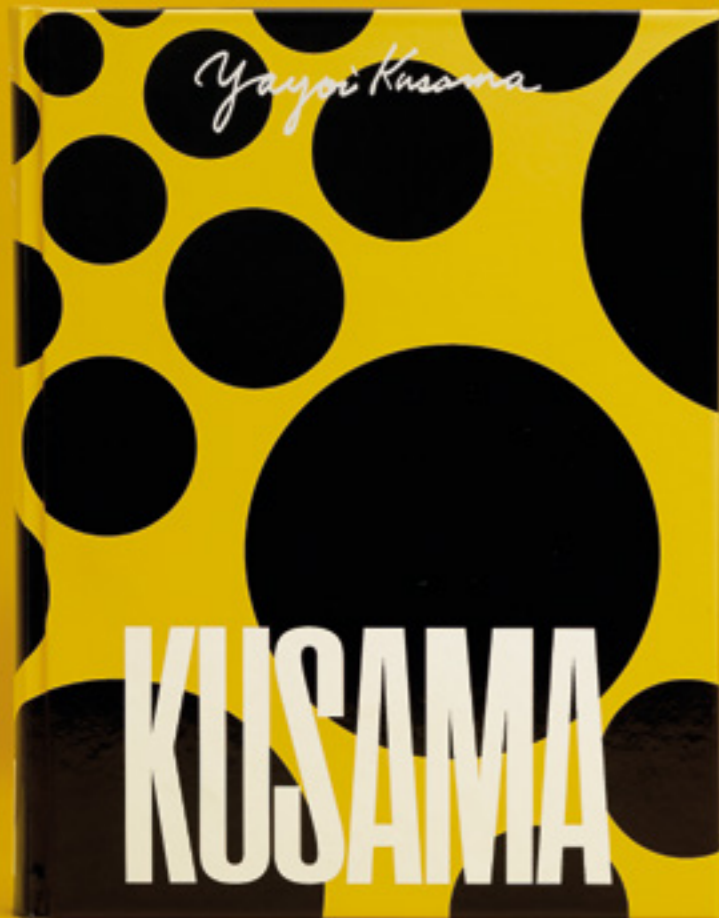
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[galleryelysium.com.au](http://galleryelysium.com.au)  
[tedmayart.com.au](http://tedmayart.com.au)

Design Store

# KUSAMA

Step into the vibrant and mesmerising world of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama with two new NGV publications. *Yayoi Kusama*, \$59.95, explores eighty years of the artist's life and work with over two hundred images and four newly commissioned essays. *Lots of dots*, \$29.95, features the voice of the artist and brings to life one of Kusama's favourite motifs – dots – in a children's book suitable for the young, and young at heart.



## Start the holiday season inspired by curated gift ideas from the NGV design store



NGV x Reko Rennie Collaboration

Apparel and accessories featuring highlights from the exhibition *REKOSPECTIVE: The Art of Reko Rennie* including Rennie's iconic camouflage print and streetwear iconography.



Jewellery by Adèle Dejak  
From \$220

Luxury contemporary jewellery brand designed and handmade in Kenya using reclaimed and recycled materials from across the African continent.



NGV x Shrig Shop

Glassware, napery and paper products celebrating the NGV's recent acquisition of David Shrigley's sculpture *Really Good* 2016, on display at NGV International.



ReFlex Conversation Cards by FlexMami  
From \$29.99

Thought provoking conversation starter games featuring intentionally created questions and prompts by Australian media personality FlexMami. ReFlex Art Edition is exclusive to NGV design store.



SALA Eau De Parfum by TSU LANGE YOR  
From \$65

SALA is the newest fragrance from Troye Sivan's lifestyle label TSU LANGE YOR. Notes of flower stems, grass and nectar make this the ideal summer scent.



Ceramics by Softedge Studio  
From \$70

Softedge is an Australian premium tableware studio collaborating with artisans in Hasami, a historic porcelain town in Japan, to create colourful functional ceramics.



Available instore and online at NGV design store via [NGV.Melbourne/store](https://www.ngv.com.au/melbourne/store)

Members receive a 10 per cent discount when shopping at NGV design store and when dining at NGV. Members also benefit from discounted tickets to exhibitions, programs and courses.

Premium Members receive a 15 per cent discount. Scan to join NGV Members and enjoy these discounts and more.

## A closer look: Designing *Cats and Dogs in Art & Design*

Featuring allegorical emblems and modern masterpieces, this richly illustrated book, released to coincide with the *Cats & Dogs* exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, showcases more than 100 works from the NGV's Collection. Here, we sit down with the book's designer Karina Soraya.

**SIÂN SCOTT-CLASH** **What's the first step in your book design process?**

**KARINA SORAYA** The first step is to look at what will be in the publication – the images and the editorial copy – and think about the hierarchy of this content. This informs the overall look and feel of the book, including the consideration of materials such as the type of paper and the style of embellishments. I then look in more detail at the type of artwork that will be included, which helps me consider more detailed elements such as the typeface.

If there are big essays and shorter texts, like in *Cats and Dogs*, I think about how they fit in the publication alongside the images. Should the images be inset or should they go before or after the text? Aimed for a more general audience, *Cats and Dogs* is a little more interactive, with the two long essays each containing inset images the reader can refer to as they go along.

**SS** **How did you develop *Cats and Dogs in Art & Design's* wonderfully vibrant colour scheme?**

**KS** I knew that I wanted dynamically contrasting colours to go with the idea of cats and dogs – as opposites. At first, I looked at the colours cats and dogs can see – like blue, green, yellow – but the colours weren't that interesting. I wanted contrasting colours that were still harmonious. I took the same approach with the cover type, which is different sizes, to create that movement and tension – like the tension (and movement!) between cats and dogs.

With the colours, I did explore a few different options. Originally, I had vibrant orange and lilac purple, and another option was dark purple and teal green. Again, there's friction. In the end, we went with this bright red and blue.

**SS** **Which typefaces are used in the book and what was your rationale for choosing them?**

**KS** The serif font, which is used for the body text, is Sebenta and the sans serif, used for headings, is Grosa. They are both from Feliciano Type foundry, which is based in Portugal. In keeping with the contrasting idea of cats and dogs, I chose fonts that are quite different from each other. Usually, if I want to use more than one font, I choose fonts from the same foundry because even though they are different, they still have the same quirks and will complement one another with similar curves and lines.

I tried the design with just one font, but it didn't feel right – *Cats and Dogs* is all about counterpoints!

**SS** **What challenges presented themselves as the process of designing *Cats and Dogs in Art & Design* went on, and how did you solve them?**

**KS** The types of works in the book vary quite a bit – you have sculptures alongside etchings, paintings alongside photographs. When laying out the book, I had to think about what looked good together. I always consider the rhythm of the book: flipping through, from one page to another, you want to make sure it feels right and that nothing really stands out or is jarring to the reader. At the same time, you need to include blank pages to create breathing room.

For me, personally, the design has to make sense no matter what. All the elements in that book need to connect, from the grid to the typefaces to the layout.

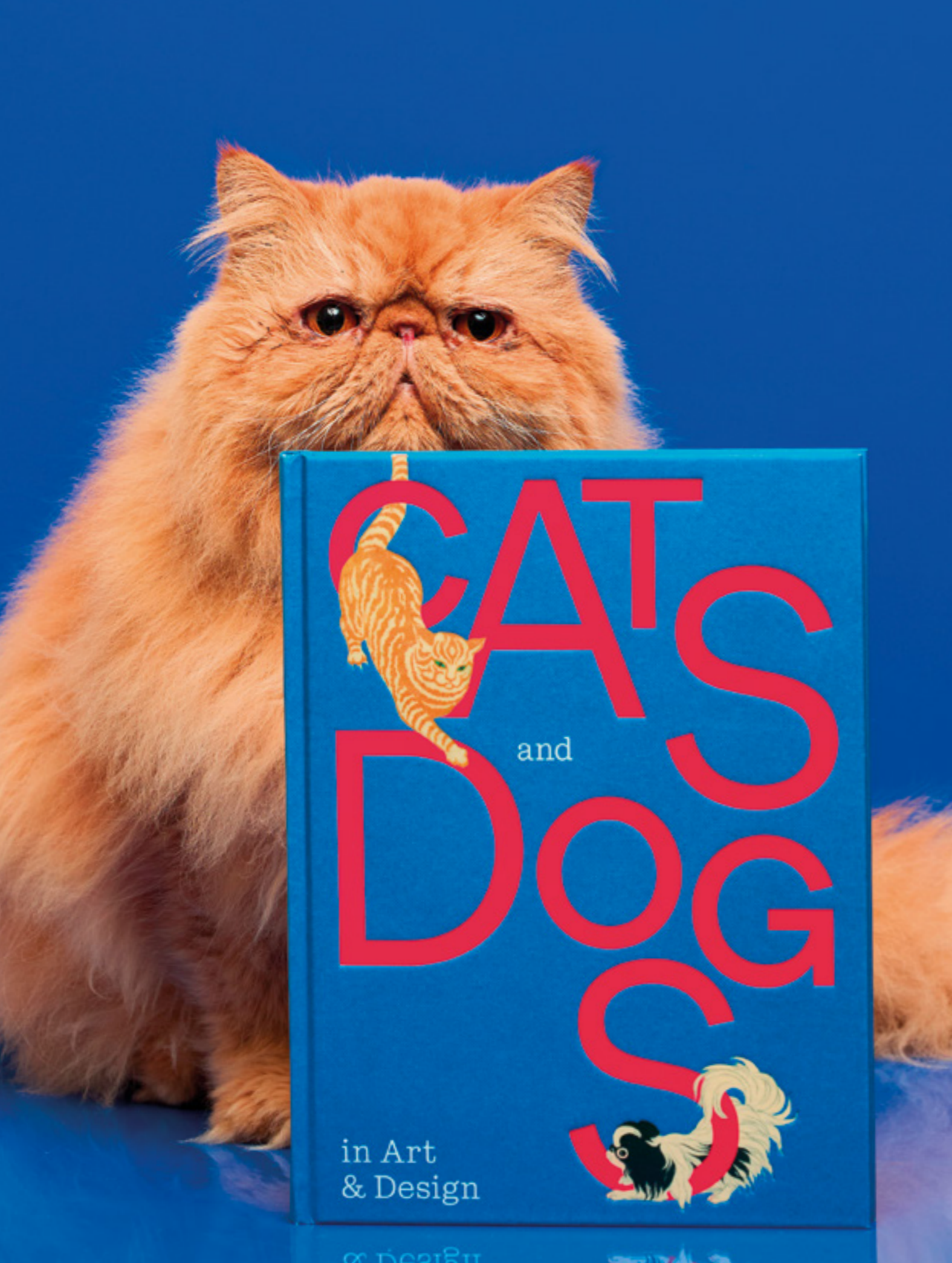
**SS** **What's your favourite part of *Cats and Dogs in Art & Design*?**

**KS** I love a good contents page. It tends to be the most overlooked part of a book, but I love it when the contents page is interesting to look at in terms of both typography and layout. I really like the way the contents turned out in *Cats and Dogs*, but I also like the contents page in another book I recently designed for the NGV, *Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Museum* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2024).

**SS** **Finally, can you tell us – cats or dogs?**

**KS** I have a pug called Rhino, so I'd have to say dogs – but don't tell my cat!

Buy *Cats and Dogs in Art & Design* \$49.95, in store and online at NGV design store via [NGV.melbourne/store](https://www.ngv.melbourne/store).



into  
dots  
into  
pumpkins  
into  
kusama  
into  
art

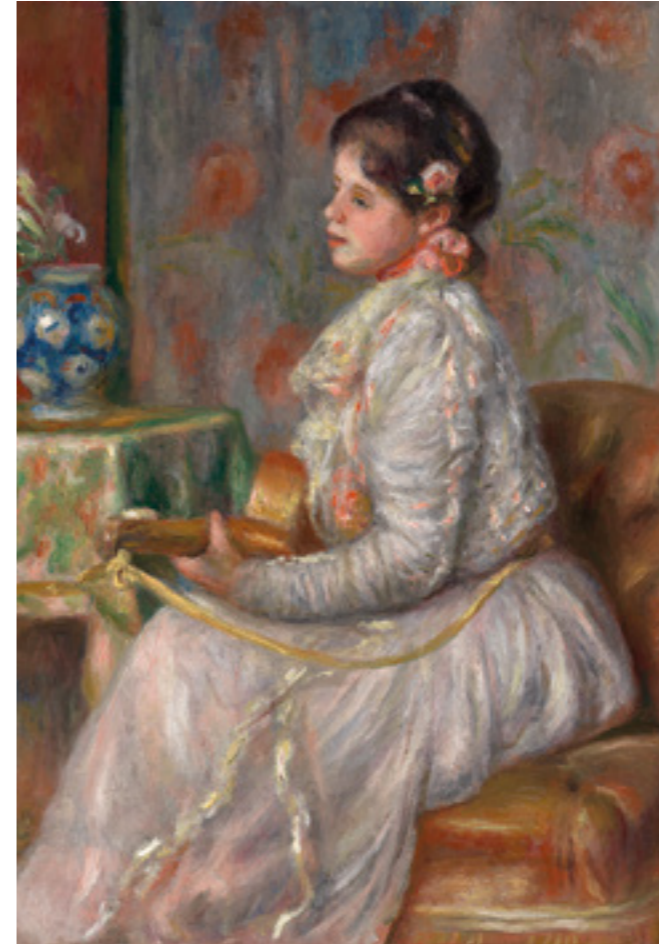


## On Tour

*Medieval to Metal*  
Art Gallery of Ballarat

## In the Next Issue

*NGV Magazine*  
Jan–Feb



Pierre Auguste Renoir *The guitar player* c.1896 (*La Joueuse de guitare*). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Alcoa of Australia Limited and the Alcoa Foundation, Governors, and the Shell Company of Australia Limited, Founder Benefactor, 1977. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited



Yayoi Kusama © YAYOI KUSAMA Photo by Yusuke Miyazaki. Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts.

Exclusive to the Art Gallery of Ballarat, *Medieval to Metal: The Art and Evolution of the Guitar* features forty iconic guitars on loan from the National Guitar Museum in the United States, alongside photographs, paintings, drawings, objects and illustrative designs. Works on loan from the NGV Collection include Pablo Picasso's *Man with a guitar*, 1912–13, Pierre Auguste Renoir's *The guitar player*, c.1896, and Albrecht Dürer's *Instruction on Measurement with Compass and Ruler*, 1525.

The collection of classical to contemporary works on display in *Medieval to Metal* tracks the history of one of the world's most popular instruments, from its medieval beginnings through to the guitar's pivotal role in blues, country and rock 'n' roll.

See *Medieval to Metal: The Art and Evolution of the Guitar* at Art Gallery of Ballarat until 2 February. For more information, visit [artgalleryofballarat.com.au](http://artgalleryofballarat.com.au)

We begin 2025 with an explosion of colour and dive into the wonderful world of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. Comprising more than 180 works, *Yayoi Kusama* is the largest ever exhibition of the artist's work in Australia and one of the most comprehensive exhibitions of the artist presented globally. We explore the exhibition with curators and writers, and bring readers a first look at the new *Infinity Room*, created especially for the NGV exhibition.

Also in this issue, your guide to summer at the NGV with events and new works on display at NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

People

Programs and events celebrating spring at the NGV.



Lucia Soriani and Bruna Capodanno at the 2024 NGV Annual Giving Dinner. Photo: Carmen Zammit.



Tony Ellwood AM, NGV Director, and Janet Whiting AM, President of the Council of Trustees of the NGV, at the home of Anne Stringfield and Steve Martin with proposed gift *Papa Dingo - near Kiwirrkurra 1996* by Ronnie Tjampitjinpa.



Deborah Lennon, Fair Shen and Jennifer Li at the 2024 NGV Annual Giving Dinner. Photo: Carmen Zammit.



Dr Sheryl Coughlin, Treasurer NGVWA and Chloe White, NGVWA Member, at the NGVWA Spring Lunch 2024. Photo: James Braund.



Cherrie Miriklis, Janet Whiting AM, President of the Council of Trustees of the NGV, Geraldine Doogue AO, Kirsten Gray, Georgie Lynch, President of the NGVWA, Tony Ellwood AM, NGV Director, The Hon Maxine McKew AM, and Damian Taylor at the NGVWA Spring Lunch 2024. Photo: James Braund.



Guest speakers The Hon Maxine McKew AM and Geraldine Doogue AO at the NGVWA Spring Lunch 2024. Photo: James Braund.



Bintou Keita, Data Administrator Healthy Cities, Tara Glanville-Yates, ESG Coordinator, Olivia Lynch, Senior Manager Fundraising & Social Impact, Kirsty Harding, Sustainability Manager Australia, Christina Dickinson, Director ESG and Sustainability, Lynette Round, Head of Bupa Foundation & Social Impact, Naveka Karunaratne, Head of Sustainability APAC and Maya Ravis, Senior Manager Sustainability & Social Impact at the *Reimagining Design Concepts for 2070* exhibition opening night at The Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia. Photo: Margund Sallowsky.



NGVWA members Marianne Perrott Hay and Amit Holckner at the NGVWA Spring Lunch 2024. Photo: James Braund.



Merv Keehn and Sue Harlow at the 2024 NGV Annual Giving Dinner. Photo: Carmen Zammit.



Thomas Bridge and Jake Monaghan at the 2024 NGV Annual Giving Dinner. Photo: Carmen Zammit.



Professor Jeffrey Chipps Smith visiting NGV for Scholar Series: Dürer-Mania – Early Commerce and Collecting of Albrecht Dürer's Prints. Photo: Garry Sommerfeld/NGV



Jane Zantuck, Assistant Director, Marketing and Corporate Partnerships NGV; Roger Sharp, Chief Corporate Affairs & Sustainability Officer, APAC, Bupa; Andrew Clark, Deputy Director, NGV; Ewan McEoin, Senior Curator, Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture, NGV; and Lynette Round, Head of Bupa Foundation & Social Impact, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Bupa at the Reimagining Birrarung: Design Concepts for 2070 exhibition opening night at The Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia. Photo: Margund Sallowsky.

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# NGV



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NGV Membership Card and Tote Bag. Photo Selina Ou

What's On



Andrew Rogers *Flora Exemplar* 2000. Italian Carrara marble. Deakin University Art Collection. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023. Image © and courtesy of the artist, photography Fiona Hamilton.

**CLAUDIA GOLD (USA)**  
**CLAW MONEY WORLD**  
From 16 November  
VENUE Warrnambool Art Gallery

*CLAW MONEY WORLD* presents an intimate look at Claudia Gold (aka Claw Money) and her global impact on graffiti, fashion and design from the 1990s to now. Gold rose to prominence in the male-dominated New York graffiti scene of the 1990s with her distinctive 'claw paw' moniker, gaining international notoriety through iconic collaborations with major brands including Nike, Vans, UGG Australia, My Little Pony, and Mountain Dew. In this world premiere, Warrnambool Art Gallery presents a collection of Gold's designs and fashion, set against a vibrant installation of murals painted by the artist in-situ.

thewag.com.au

**ANDREW ROGERS: NEW WORK**  
Until 13 December 2024  
VENUE Deakin University Art Gallery

*Andrew Rogers: New Work* celebrates a selection of the leading contemporary Australian artist's most recent work, not previously seen in Melbourne. As Rogers says, the challenge is always to use materials in a new and different way, to make them convey meaning, and to turn them into a form that has not been seen before.

deakin.edu.au/art-collection

**AZZA ZEIN: TASHABOK**  
From 7 December  
VENUE Walker Street Gallery

*Tashabok* is an evolving exhibition by interdisciplinary artist Azza Zein featuring ficto-critical videos inspired by collaborative drawing sessions and conversations with artists and participants. Since 2020, this project has explored the counter-geography of displaced objects and alternative mappings of migrant materials through playful drawing and storytelling. Zein's work delves into the fluid relationships between body, object, land and labour, reflecting on the invisibility of labour and the violence of displacement. This exhibition links the aesthetics of modernity with the experience of displacement.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/arts-and-culture/exhibitions

**2024 JOHN LESLIE ART PRIZE**  
Until 24 November  
VENUE Gippsland Art Gallery

The John Leslie Art Prize, one of Australia's most prestigious landscape painting awards, returns for its thirteenth iteration. Named after John Leslie OBE, the prize offers a \$30,000 acquisitive award. This year, over 400 entries were submitted with fifty-two paintings shortlisted. The exhibition of finalists features works by both leading and emerging artists from across Australia, showcasing a wide range of styles and approaches within contemporary landscape painting. The judging panel includes artists Juan Ford and Sam Leach, alongside the Gippsland Art Gallery curatorial staff, Melanie Caple and Dr. Louisa Waters.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/arts-and-culture/exhibitions

SEE NGV WORKS IN THESE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SHOWS

**JXSH MVIR-FOREVER I LIVE**  
Until 2 February  
VENUE Art Gallery of Ballarat

*JXSH MVIR-FOREVER I LIVE* is the largest retrospective of works by the late Josh Muir, the Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Barkindji artist, who passed away suddenly in 2022 at thirty.

The works in the exhibition reflect Muir's ongoing artistic legacy, emphasising his love of family and community, drawing on a range of themes including cultural identity, the impacts and legacies of colonisation, mental health, addiction, personal loss and grief.

artgalleryofballarat.com.au

**MOLTO BELLO: ICONS OF MODERN ITALIAN DESIGN**  
Until 23 March  
VENUE Heide Museum of Art

Some of the most significant achievements in the history of twentieth-century Italian design, spanning the sixty-year period from the first Milan Design Triennale in the 1930s to the Memphis Group of the 1980s, are presented in this exhibition, drawn from public and private collections across Australia. The objects range from classic chairs, lamps and home-ware, to the Olivetti Valentine type-writer and the iconic Vespa scooter.

heide.com.au

**ETHEL CARRICK**  
From 7 December  
VENUE National Gallery of Australia

Ethel Carrick (1872–1952) was a pioneering artist who forged new ground in the early twentieth century with her bold and vibrant post-impressionist works. Comprising 140 works, this will be the first retrospective of Carrick's work for nearly half a century and an opportunity to assess her work in a new light.

nga.gov.au

**FLORA YUKHNOVICH: INTO THE WOODS**  
Until 19 January  
VENUE Ordrupgaard, Denmark

British artist Flora Yukhnovich has been hailed as one of the great new masters of painting, destined to occupy a central place in art history. *Into the Woods* features a series of new works produced specifically for the occasion. The exhibition will be on view alongside Ai Weiwei's *Water Lilies #1*. Both exhibitions mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Impressionism with a contemporary artist's perspective on this groundbreaking movement as well as on the eighteenth-century art that preceded it.

ordrupgaard.dk

**TURNER PRIZE 2024**  
Until 16 February  
VENUE Tate Britain, London

Pio Abad, Claudette Johnson, Jasleen Kaur and Delaine Le Bas are the four artists shortlisted for this year's Turner Prize. They will showcase their eclectic work at Tate Britain with the winner announced on 3 December. Named after the radical painter JMW Turner, the Turner Prize was first awarded in 1984. Each year, it is given to a British artist who has created an outstanding exhibition or other presentation of their work.

tate.org.uk

**LOUISE BOURGEOIS: I HAVE BEEN TO HELL AND BACK. AND LET ME TELL YOU, IT WAS WONDERFUL.**  
Until 19 January  
VENUE Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

This is Bourgeois's first solo exhibition in Japan since 1997, and will showcase more than 100 works, including sculptures, paintings, drawings, fabric works, and installations. A series of new projections created for the Mori Art Museum by American artist Jenny Holzer and inspired by Bourgeois's writings will also be on display in the exhibition.

mori.art.museum

## List of reproduced works and end notes

(cover)  
*Untitled* 1967, ink on photograph by Harrie Verstappen  
© YAYOI KUSAMA

(p. 6, below)  
**James Ward**  
*Shepherd boy and sheep dog*  
watercolour and bodycolour over pencil  
30.5 × 34.5 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939  
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

p. 7  
**Maria Pergay** (designer)  
**Ugine Gueugnon, Gueugnon** (manufacturer )  
*Ring chair* 1968  
Uginox stainless steel (brushed)  
271/2 in. (70 cm.) high, 24 in. (61 cm.) wide, 201/2 in. (52 cm.) deep  
Proposed Acquisition

p. 12  
(left)  
**Rona Panangka Rubuntja**  
*The crow cheers for crows* 2024  
terracotta and underglazes  
50.0 × 31.0 × 25.0 cm  
Gift of Beverly Knight, 2024  
© Rona Panangka Rubuntja / Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia  
Photo: Garry Sommerfeld / NGV

(middle)  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*The Obliteration Room* 2002–  
furniture, paint, stickers  
dimensions variable  
Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art  
Collaboration between Yayoi Kusama and Queensland Art Gallery. Commissioned Queensland Art Gallery. Gift of the artist through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation, 2012  
© YAYOI KUSAMA

p. 13  
**Faig Ahmed**  
*Hal* 2016  
ed. 3/3  
wool  
196.5 × 165.0 × 87.5 cm (installed)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by Sarah Morgan and Andrew Cook 2017  
© Faig Ahmed  
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 18–19  
**Morita Shiryu**  
*Kanzan* 1969  
Aluminium flake pigment and lacquer on paper, four-panel folding screen  
162.0 × 310.0 cm  
Forthcoming gift from Felton Bequest  
© The Artist's Estate

p. 20  
**Pierre Soulages**  
*Painting, 202 × 143, 6 November 1967 (Peinture, 202 × 143, 6 novembre 1967)* 1967  
oil on canvas  
202.7 × 143.8 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of The Eugénie Crawford Bequest, Founder Benefactor, 1998  
© Pierre Soulages / ADAGP, Paris. Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia  
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p. 23  
**Maison Martin Margiela, Paris** (couture house)  
**John Galliano** (designer)  
*Coat* spring-summer 2015  
polyester nylon, polyester (satin), silk (satin), polyester cotton (netting), silk (tulle), pvc, conch shells, acrylic resin, nylon (lace), silk cotton (cord), cotton, glass (beads), metal (fastenings)  
(a) 95.5 cm (centre back) 61.0 cm (sleeve length) (coat) (b) 201.0 cm (centre back) 50.0 cm (waist, flat) (bustle)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

p. 24  
**Givenchy, Paris** (couture house)  
**John Galliano** (designer)  
*Coat* 1996  
from the *Empress Josephine* collection, autumn-winter 1996–97  
silk (brocade, satin), polyester (fur), linen, metallic thread, cotton, cotton silk (thread, braid)  
255.0 cm (centre back) 62.5 cm (sleeve, length)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

p. 32  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*Untitled (Flower Sketches)* c.1945  
pencil and ink on paper (sketchbook)  
21.5 × 30.0 (open);  
21.5 × 15.0 × 0.7 cm (closed)  
Collection of the artist  
© YAYOI KUSAMA

p. 36  
Kusama with 'Love Forever' buttons, which she distributed at the opening of *Peep Show/Endless Love Show*, 1966 at Castellane Gallery, New York  
Courtesy Ota Fine Arts  
© YAYOI KUSAMA  
Photo: Hal Reif

p. 41  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*Infinity Nets (2)* 1958  
oil on canvas  
125.2 × 91.0 cm  
Collection of the artist  
© YAYOI KUSAMA

p. 42  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*The Spirits of the Pumpkins Descended into the Heavens* 2017  
mixed media  
200.0 × 200.0 × 200.0 cm  
(mirrored cube); dimensions variable (outer room)  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased with the assistance of Andrew and Hiroko Gwinnett, 2018  
© YAYOI KUSAMA

pp. 44–45  
(left to right)**Chinese**  
**James Giles** (decorator)  
*Pair of vases* c.1755  
porcelain (hard-paste)  
(a) 18.4 × 9.5 × 7.4 cm (b) 18.2 × 9.2 × 7.1 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

**Leeds Pottery, Hunslet** (manufacturer)  
*Sauce boat and stand* c.1780  
earthenware  
(a-b) 12.1 × 19.6 × 13.1 cm (overall)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

**Derby Porcelain, Derby** (manufacturer)  
**Agostino Carlini** (modeller)  
*Figures of Taste and Sight* 1750–55  
porcelain (soft-paste)  
14.6 × 11.4 × 10.5 cm (Taste) 16.5 × 11.8 × 11.3 cm (Sight)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

p. 46  
(clockwise)  
**Meissen Porcelain Factory, Meissen** (manufacturer)  
*Dish* c.1750  
porcelain (hard-paste)  
4.1 × 27.1 × 17.9 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

**Japanese**  
*Plate* 1690–1710  
porcelain (hard-paste)  
25.0 cm diameter  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

**Chelsea Porcelain Factory, London** (manufacturer)  
*Octagonal dish* 1752–55  
porcelain (soft-paste)  
3.9 × 23.6 cm diameter  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Patricia Begg OAM Bequest, 2024

**Japanese**  
*Plate with VOC monogram* 1690-1710  
porcelain (hard-paste)  
(5.7 × 38.6 cm) diameter  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Christopher Begg in honour of Patricia Begg OAM, 2024

p. 48  
**Maria Pergay** (designer)  
**Ugine Gueugnon, Gueugnon** (manufacturer )  
France 1724–1995  
*Ring chair*  
1968  
Uginox stainless steel (brushed)  
70.0 cm (height) × 61.0 cm (width) × 52.0 cm (depth)  
Proposed Acquisition

p. 52  
**Grant Jorgensen**  
*Apple core* 1980  
colour lithograph  
6.8 × 7.4 cm (image) 35.0 × 25.4 cm (sheet)  
ed. 13/29  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Michell Endowment, 1981  
© Grant Jorgensen

p. 53  
**Mark Gertler**  
*The apple woman and her husband* 1912  
oil on canvas  
66.0 × 56.0 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1953  
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p. 54  
**Françoise Gilot**  
*Still life* 1946  
coloured pencil, crayon, gouache, pen and ink  
12.8 × 16.6 cm irreg. (image and sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020  
© Françoise Gilot, courtesy of Vincent Mann Gallery

p. 55  
**Françoise Gilot**  
*Adam forcing Eve to eat an apple* 1946  
pencil, coloured pencil and pen and ink  
12.8 × 16.6 cm irreg. (image and sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020  
© Françoise Gilot, courtesy of Vincent Mann Gallery

p. 56  
**Richard Lewer**  
*Eve takes the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and shares the fruit with Adam* 2022  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
152.8 × 152.5 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2024  
© Richard Lewer, Hugo Michell Gallery, Jan Murphy Gallery and Suite Gallery

pp. 58–59  
**Reko Rennie**  
*Initiation. OA\_RR* 2021  
three-channel colour digital video, sound  
ed. 1/3  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2023  
© Reko Rennie

p. 62  
**Reko Rennie**  
*REMEMBER ME*  
2020  
LEDs, plastic, aluminium, electrical components  
(254.0 × 1878.0 cm) (installed)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of the Eva, Mila and Reko Collection through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023  
© Reko Rennie

p. 67  
**Maitre François** (illuminator)  
**Jean Dubrueil** (scribe)  
*The Penitential Psalms: David and Abigail* c.1475–80  
folio 61 recto in *The Wharnclyffe Hours* c.1475–80  
brown, blue and red inks, tempera, gold paint, gold leaf on parchment  
17.8 × 12.8 cm (folio)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1920

p. 70  
**Monte Di Giovanni Del Fora** (illuminator)  
**Gherardo Di Giovanni Del Fora** (illuminator)  
**Sigismondo De'sigismondi** (scribe)  
*The Strozzi-Acciaiuoli Hours* 1495–96  
black, brown and red inks, tempera and gold leaf on parchment; modern binding  
14.7 × 10.0 cm (folio)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1961

p. 72  
**England** (manufacturer)  
*Doorstop* 19th century  
cast iron  
25.2 × 18.5 × 9.7 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1971  
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p. 73  
**James Ward**  
*Shepherd boy and sheep dog*  
watercolour and bodycolour over pencil  
30.5 × 34.5 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939  
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p. 74  
**Louis Wain**  
*We won't go home till morning* 1900–10  
pen and ink over pencil  
46.6 × 30.9 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1935  
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pp. 83  
**Marc Chagall**  
*Mother and child (Mère et enfant)* 1948–53  
oil on canvas  
75.0 × 56.5 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Marc Besen AC and Eva Besen AO through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2015  
© Marc Chagall/ADAGP, Paris. Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia  
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

pp. 84–85  
**David Moore**  
*Robert Klippel* 1979  
gelatin silver photograph, selenium toned on paper  
56.0 cm x 51.0 cm  
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra  
Purchased 1998  
© David Moore Estate

pp. 86–87  
**Robert Klippel**  
*(Untitled)* 1955  
collage of cut printed illustrations, gouache and pencil  
37.8 × 55.6 cm (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of James Mollison, 1981  
© Andrew Klippel  
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

p. 92  
**Natalya Hughes**  
*Gay doings* 2023–24  
acrylic on polyester  
Purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands, 2024  
© Natalya Hughes  
Photo: Nicholas Aloisio-Shearer

p. 93  
**Natalya Hughes**  
*Ermyntrude by the window* 2023  
acrylic on polyester  
Purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands, 2024  
© Natalya Hughes  
Photo: Nicholas Aloisio-Shearer

p. 101  
(left)  
**Pierre Auguste Renoir**  
*The guitar player (La Joueuse de guitare)* c.1896  
oil on canvas  
55.0 × 46.0 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Alcoa of Australia Limited and the Alcoa Foundation, Governors, and The Shell Company of Australia Limited, Founder Benefactor, 1977  
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

p. 106  
**Andrew Rogers**  
*Flora Exemplar* 2000  
Italian Carrara marble  
Deakin University Art Collection. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023  
© Andrew Rogers  
Photo: Fiona Hamilton, courtesy the artist

ENDNOTES

pp. 28–31

**Kusama, the child artist**

1. Yayoi Kusama, trans. Ralph McCarthy, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, Tate Publishing, London, 2013, p. 69.
2. Kakei (actual first name, Masao) Hibino (1915–99), born in what is now Azumino city, Nagano Prefecture, was a Japanese-style painter and worked as an art teacher in Nagano Prefecture.
3. Kusama, *Infinity Net*, pp. 75–76. Originally published in Japanese in Yayoi Kusama, 'Me inside the pumpkin', *Hanga Geijutsu*, no. 103, 1999.
4. Yutaka Matsuzawa (1922–2006) was born in Shimosuwa town, Nagano Prefecture, and after having a revelation to 'vanish objects' in 1964, pursued artistic expression through language without using objects. Matsuzawa was a pioneer of conceptual art in Japan.
5. Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986), born in Wisconsin, United States, was an artist renowned for abstract paintings with flower or cow-skull motifs.

pp. 32–3

**Untitled (Flower Sketches) c. 1945**

1. Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, trans. Ralph McCarthy, Tate Publishing, London, 2013, p. 90.

pp. 34–7

**Kusama, The Shapeshifter**

1. Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, trans. Ralph McCarthy, Tate, London, 2013, p. 29.
2. Yayoi Kusama, 'Ivan the Fool', in Doryun Chong & Mika Yoshitake (eds), *Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now*, M+, Hong Kong/Thames & Hudson, London & New York, 2022, p. 316.
3. *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, op.cit., p. 48.
4. Ibid.
5. *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, op.cit., p. 29.

pp. 40–41

**Infinity Nets (2) 1958**

1. Lynn Zelevansky (ed.), *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958–1968*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles/The Japan Foundation, Tokyo/ The Museum of Modern Art, New York, p. 13.

pp. 48–50

**A force of nature**

1. Chris Scott, 'Metal Matriarch', *Frame*, no. 94, 2013, p. 195.
2. Ibid.
3. Rita Reif, 'Now when you buy stainless steel, it may be a bed or a desk', *The New York Times*, 31 Jan. 1970, <<https://www.nytimes.com/1970/01/31/archives/vow-when-you-buy-stainless-steel-it-may-be-a-bed-or-a-desk.html>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2024.
4. Alice Rawsthorn, 'The soft and elegant side of stainless steel', *The New York Times*, 18 March 2012, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/arts/design/the-soft-and-elegant-side-of-stainless-steel.html>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2024.
5. Suzanne Demisch, 'Made in France | ANNOTATIONS: Maria Pergay: Master of Stainless Steel', <<https://www.demischdanant.com/projects/annotations-maria-pergay/>>, accessed 12 Aug. 2024.
6. Reif.
7. Demisch.
8. For a more in-depth exploration of the 'timelessness' of Pergay's pieces and their clear ascendance as design classics, see Adam Lindemann, 'On Maria Pergay', in Suzanne Demisch and Stephane Danant (eds), *Maria Pergay: The Complete Works 1957–2010*, Damiani, Bologna, 2011, p. 20.

pp. 52–6

**The not-so forbidden fruit**

1. Tate. n.d. "The Apple of My Eye" – Tate Etc." Tate. <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-56-autumn-2022/the-apple-of-my-eye>.
2. Ibid.
3. Adelson, Fred B. 2014. "First Exhibit of Cézanne's Still Lives on View at the Barnes." *Courier-Post*. CHL. July 20, 2014. <https://www.courierpostonline.com/story/life/2014/07/20/first-exhibit-czannes-still-lives-view-barnes/12858507/>.
4. MacCarthy, Fiona. 2017. "Garden of Earthly Delights." *The Guardian*. The Guardian. November 30, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2003/jul/26/art.architecture>.
5. Ibid.
6. Haddad, Natalie, and Michael Glover. 2023. "Cézanne Saw the Nobility of an Apple." *Hyperallergic*. February 2, 2023. <https://hyperallergic.com/797601/cezanne-saw-the-nobility-of-an-apple-tate-modern/>.
7. "Hurstwic Norse Mythology: Idun." 2024. Hurstwic.org. 2024. <https://www.hurstwic.org/history/articles/mythology/myths/text/idun.htm>.
8. Mair, Victor. 2020. "Language Log: Some Citrus Terms in Sinitic: Today and in the Past." *Upenn.edu*. 2020. <https://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=47623>.
9. "Françoise Gilot | Adam Forcing Eve To Eat An Apple I & Still Life (A Double-Sided Work) | Impressionist and Modern Art Online | 2019 | Sotheby's." 2019. Sotheby's. 2019. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2019/impressionist-and-modern-art-online-2/francoise-gilot-adam-forcing-eve-to-eat-an-apple-i>.
10. Davis, Nicola. 2017. "Geneticists Trace Humble Apple's Exotic Lineage All the Way to the Silk Road." *The Guardian*, August 15, 2017, sec. Science. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/aug/15/geneticists-trace-humble-apples-exotic-lineage-all-the-way-to-the-silk-road>.

pp. 66–71

**Illuminating Words**

1. M.J. Riddle, 'No. 1' in M. M. Manion and V. F. Vines, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in Australian Collections*, London, 1984, pp. 23–26, plate 1, figs 1–7; and H. Buchthal, 'An Illuminated Gospel Book of about 1100 A.D.', *Special Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, 1961.
2. 'No. 69', in Manion and Vines, op. cit., pp. 170–73, pl. 35, figs 155–162, and J. H. Oliver, *The Lambert-le-Bègue Psalter: A Study in 13th Century Mosan Illumination*, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1976.
3. 'No. 70', in Manion and Vines, op. cit., pp. 173–76, pl. 36, figs 163–74.
4. Lot 77, Sotheby's Sale, 3 July 1984; see *Sotheby's Sale Catalogue*, pp. 102–11.
5. 'No. 74', in Manion and Vines, op. cit., pp. 182–83, plate 39, figs 199–202. A Dijon provenance rather than Besançon seems likely for this book.
6. 'No. 78', in Manion and Vines, op. cit., pp. 187–98, pl. 41, figs 214–18; and M. Manion, *The Wburncliffe Hours*, London, 1981, 32 facsimile pages in colour.
7. C. O'Brien, 'No. 33', in Manion and Vines, op. cit., pp. 92–95. pl. 23, figs 76–80.
8. 'No. 56', in Manion and Vines, op. cit., pp. 135–36, pl. 31, figs 120–27.

pp. 78–81

**Home sweet home**

1. "2024 NGV Architecture Commission: Home Truth by Breathe | NGV", National Gallery of Victoria, 2024, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/2024-ngv-architecturecommission-home-truth/>>, accessed 5 October 2024.
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pp. 82–3

**Mother & Child**

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2. Virginia Haggard, *My Life with Chagall*, Donald F. Fine, New York, 1986, p. 38.
3. Haggard, *My Life with Chagall*, p. 46.
4. Haggard, *My Life with Chagall*, p. 57.
5. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and His Times*, p. 588.
6. Haggard, *My Life with Chagall*, pp. 42, 53.
7. Sidney Alexander, *Marc Chagall. A Biography*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1978, p. 386.
8. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and His Times*, p. 789.



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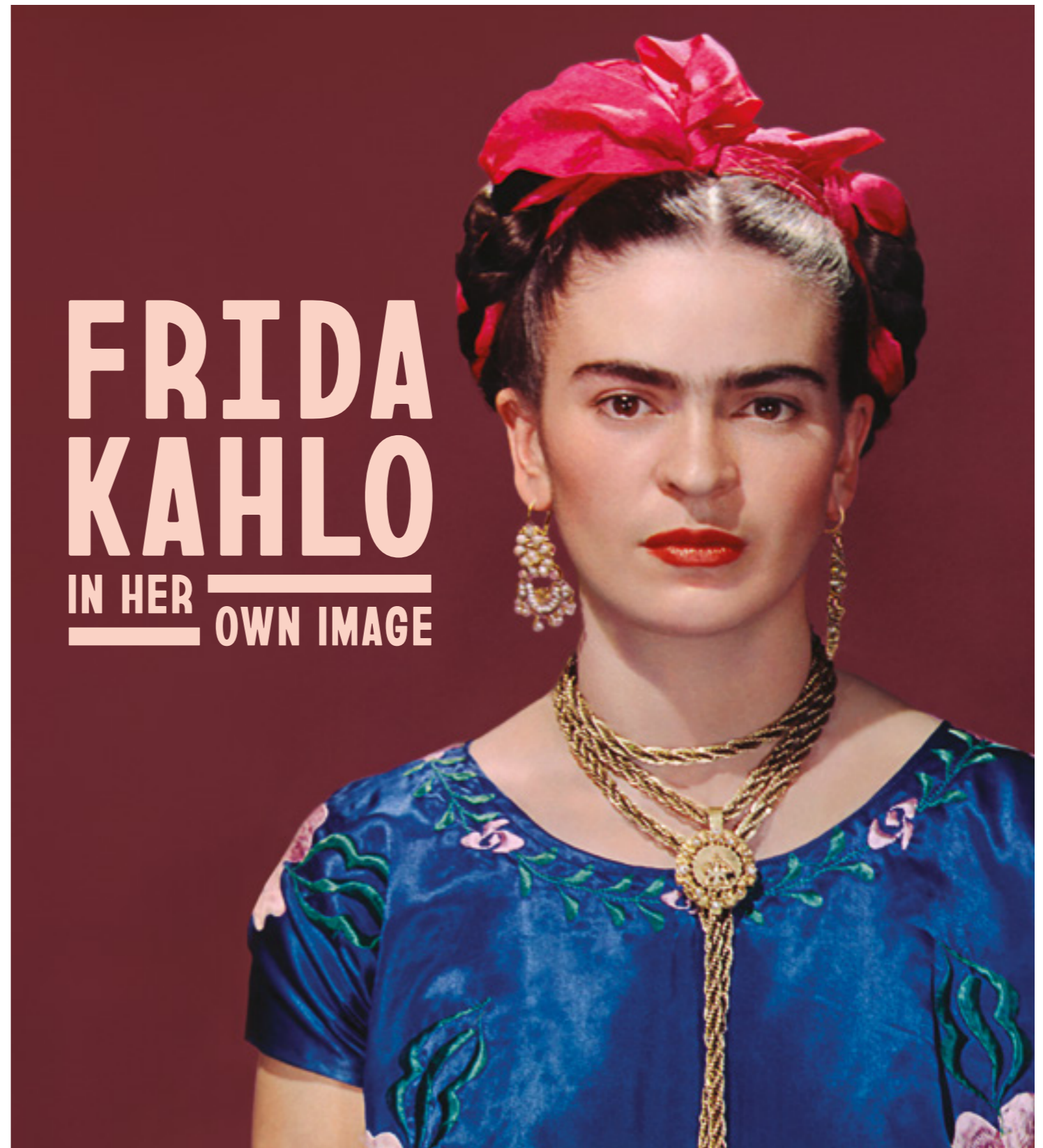
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