NGV MAGAZINE

ISSUE 52
MAY–JUN 2025
$15

KIMONO 着物



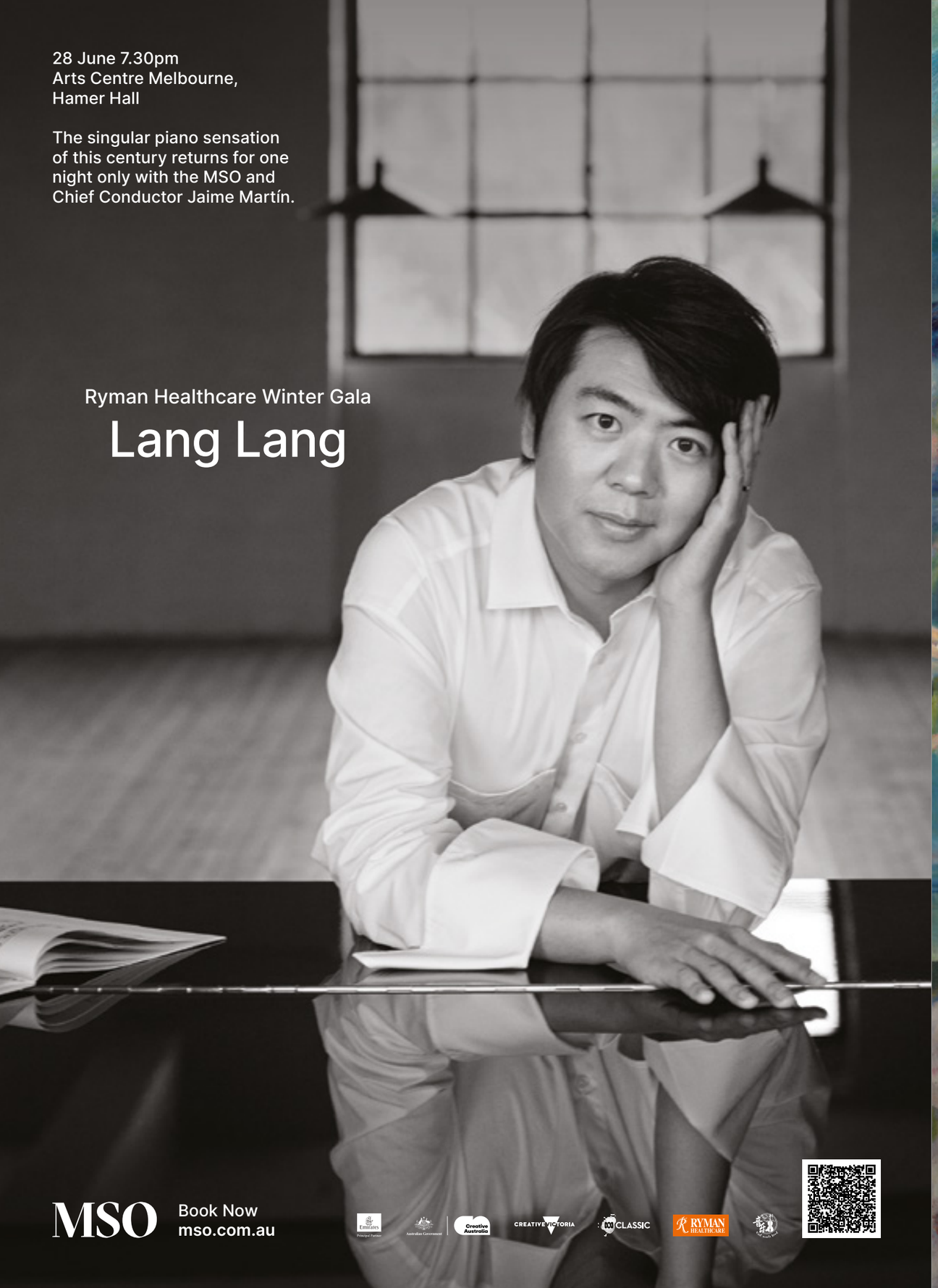
ALSO FEATURING

Preview to Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2025

The story of David Hockney's *The Second Marriage*

Kay Sage, Toyen and Robert Mapplethorpe


© GRAFF.COM
GRAFF
BUTTERFLY
KENNEDY
OFFICIAL RETAILER



28 June 7.30pm
Arts Centre Melbourne,
Hamer Hall

The singular piano sensation of this century returns for one night only with the MSO and Chief Conductor Jaime Martín.

Ryman Healthcare Winter Gala

Lang Lang

MSO Book Now
mso.com.au



NGV

INTRODUCING PREMIUM DUO MEMBERSHIP

All the benefits of NGV Premium Membership – now for two.

Together, see every exhibition free, every time, including this year's Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*. Enjoy exclusive invitations for two to previews and special events, complimentary enrolment in NGV Art School online courses and join a community that's passionate about art and design.

Join or upgrade your existing NGV Membership today.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir *Dance at Bougival* 1883 (detail). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

Contents



Cover Story

38 Kimono Through the Ages *by Wayne Crothers*



Kimono

44 MONYO: Exploring Traditional Kimono Patterns *by Sala Okabee*
48 The Art of Imitation *by Dr Jenny Hall*

At NGV International

14 *10 Artists You Should Know by Elisa Scarton*
16 Robert Mapplethorpe *by Maggie Finch*
20 2025 Annual Appeal: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner *Officer and waitress* 1915 *by Dr Ted Gott*
22 Kay Sage: *Other Answers by Dr Ted Gott*
26 Toyen *by Eva Christoff*
30 Preview to *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston by Dr Miranda Wallace, Michael Varcoe-Cocks* and *Coral Guan*

At The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

52 Ronnie Tjampitjinpa *by Michael Gentle*

Collection Stories

56 Johnson Eziefula: The Essence of the Human Condition *by Sophie Oxenbridge*
60 Descendants of the Sun, Moon & Fire *by Wayne Crothers*
70 *Floribunda by Dr David Sequeira*
76 David Hockney: A Marriage of Styles *by Sebastian Moore*
80 Janenne Eaton: Time, Space and Place *by Beckett Rozentals*
84 Dame Barbara Hepworth: *Oread by Carla Dusevic*
88 Blue Obsession *by Elisa Scarton*
92 Theophanes, the Confessor *by Ruth Shervington and Bonnie Hearn*



7 From the NGV
9 Contributors
10 Making News
96 Design Store
101 Closing Soon and In the Next Issue
102 People
106 What's On
108 List of Reproduced Works and End Notes
112 Thank You

MANAGING EDITOR
Donna McColm

DEPUTY EDITOR
Elisha Buttler

SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR
Elisa Scarton

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE
Adele D'Souza, Imangi Perera, Amanda Spann, Cara Becker, Sarah Cooper, Siân Scott-Clash

EDITORIAL GROUP
Tony Ellwood AM, Andrew Clark, Donna McColm, Don Heron, Misha Agzarian, Jane Zantuck

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Ramona Lindsay

COPYEDITORS
Kelsey Oldham and Eleanor Jordan-Gahan

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
Elisa Scarton
ngvmagazine.editor@ngv.vic.gov.au

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
ngvmagazine.editor@ngv.vic.gov.au
© National Gallery of Victoria 2024
ISSN: 08147833
180 St Kilda Road
Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia
@NGVMelbourne
facebook.com/NGVMelbourne

This magazine is copyright and all rights are reserved. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or communicated to the public by any process without prior written permission. All reasonable efforts have been made to obtain permission to use copyright material reproduced. In cases where this has not been possible, owners are invited to notify the NGV.

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.

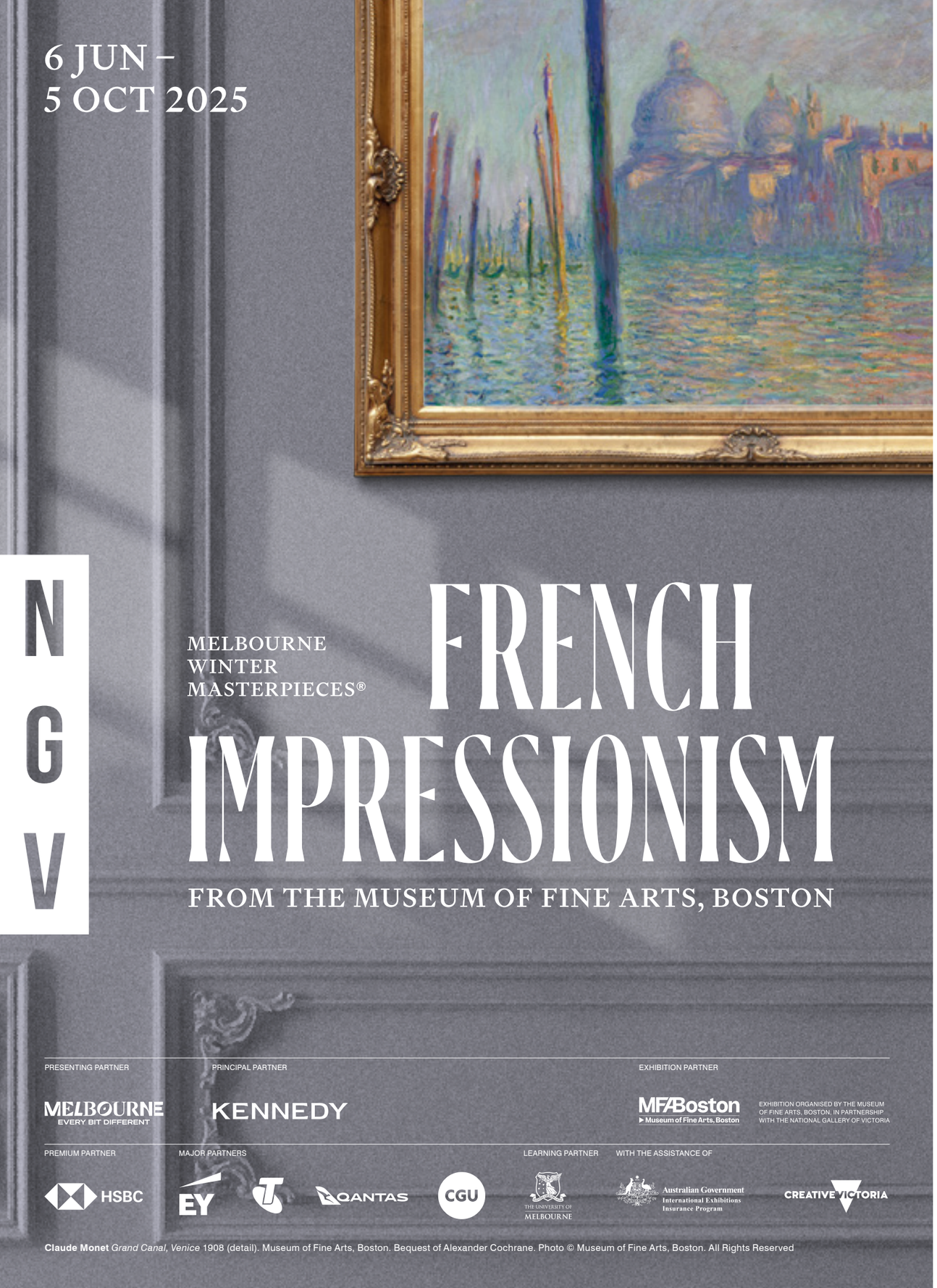
The National Gallery of Victoria acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the NGV is built.

(cover) **Japanese** *Uchikake kosode with windy seashore and fishing scene* late 18th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Janet Whiting and Phil Lukies, 2024

(p. 4 above) **Elizabeth Keith** *Blue and white* (*Ai to shiro*) 1925 *Ai to shiro* 青と白 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by an anonymous donor, 2020 © Estate of the artist

(p. 4, below) **Robert Mapplethorpe** *Irises* 1986, printed 1987. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2025 © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

(p. 5) **Rick Amor** *Blue neon red light* 1970–71. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by the artist under the terms of the National Gallery of Victoria Travelling Scholarship, 1971 © Rick Amor/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation



From the NGV

Kimono, a new exhibition opening from 4 June at NGV International, celebrates the universally recognised silhouette and myriad patterns, symbols, cultural codes and intricate techniques that have endured for centuries through this cultural and fashion garment. Our cover story for this issue of *NGV Magazine* features new writing on the rich history of the kimono, from mid nineteenth–century Japan through to its influence on contemporary designers today. You can read more from page 38.

Also opening in June, the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2025 exhibition *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* is developed by the National Gallery of Victoria in partnership with Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, an institution renowned for its holdings of Impressionist paintings collection. *French Impressionism* is a stunning journey through this wonderfully radical and creative movement. This exhibition would not be possible without the generous support of our partners, including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Presenting Partner Visit Victoria, Principal Partner Kennedy, Premium Partner HSBC, Major Partners EY, Telstra, Qantas and CGU Insurance, and Learning Partner the University of Melbourne. We preview the exhibition on page 30 ahead of its opening and deeper focus in our next issue of *NGV Magazine*.

We are also delighted to announce our 2025 NGV Annual Appeal, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's masterpiece *Officer and waitress* (*Offizier und Kellnerin*), 1915. On page 20, Dr Ted Gott reflects on Kirchner's experience in the First World War and the story behind this important work. We warmly invite you to make a donation of any size, to bring such a significant and rare painting into the NGV Collection.

We celebrate a significant gift to the NGV Collection of *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra*, 1996, by the late Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, one of the most important artists associated with the significant Papunya Tula art movement. Thanks to the generosity of Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield, this major work joins the NGV Collection and will be featured in the NGV touring exhibition *The Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art*, travelling throughout North America from October 2025. NGV curator Michael Gentle shares more on page 52.

Further sharing the NGV Collection with our community, NGV recently partnered with Bunjil Place to present *Floribunda*, a lush exhibition featuring 150 works from the NGV Collection. As guest curator Dr David Sequeira writes on page 70, the exhibition is more than a celebration of humanity's longstanding affinity for flowers, it is 'an invitation to allow memories to surface … and to be deeply moved by the simplicity and profundity of a flower'. See *Floribunda* at Bunjil Place until 20 July.

I do hope you will enjoy the stories and works featured in this issue and find inspiration in the exhibitions launching this season.

Tony Ellwood AM
Director

The NGV Collection is at the heart of the May/June issue of *NGV Magazine*, as we celebrate works by artists from around the globe and close to home.

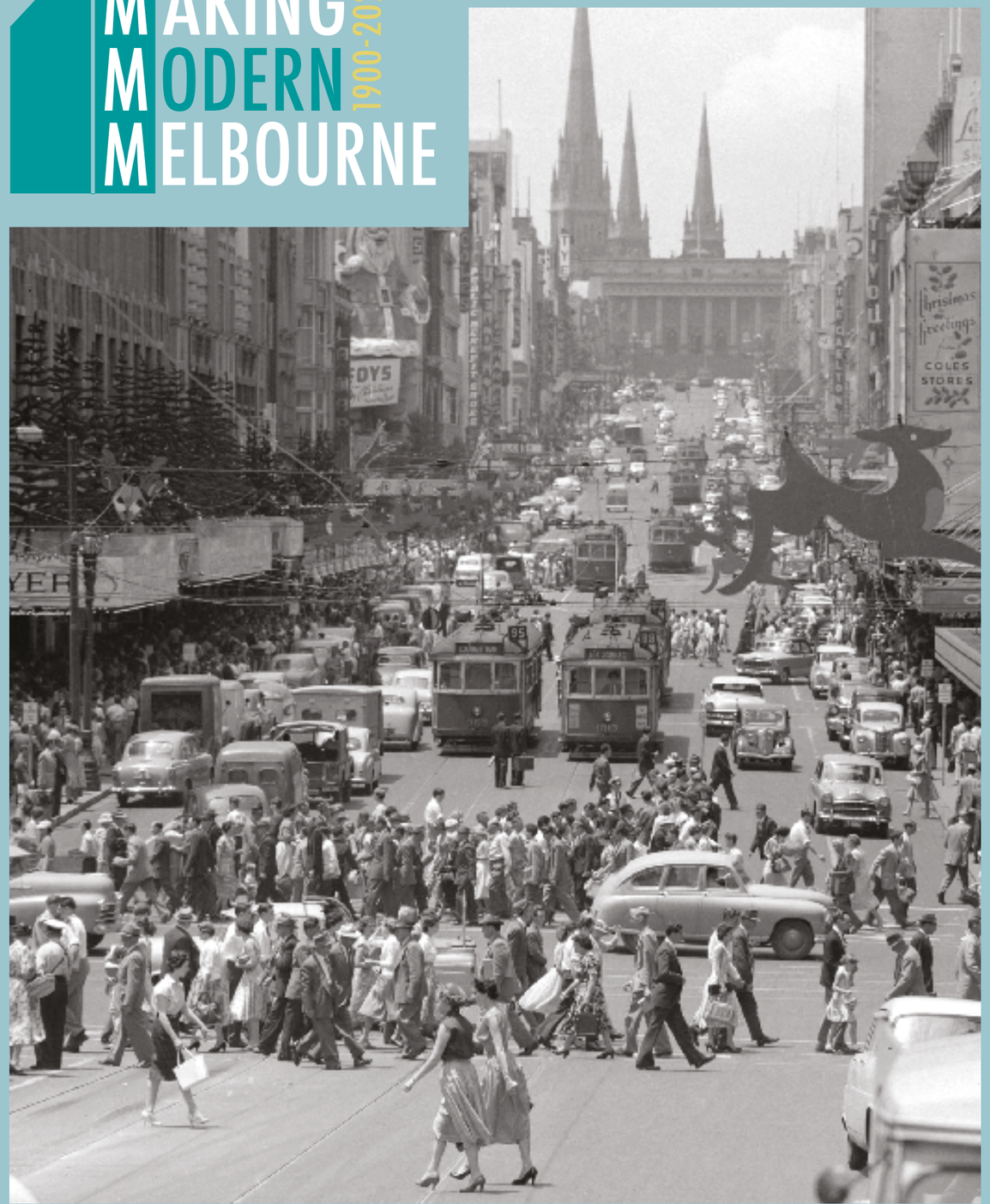
Other answers, 1945, by American artist Kay Sage becomes the first international Surrealist painting by a woman artist to join the NGV Collection. An activist and poet, Sage made a name for herself in the early Surrealist scene in Europe with a unique style characterised by architectural imagery and dreamlike landscapes that explore themes of isolation and the subconscious – even if, as Dr Ted Gott writes on page 22, the artist herself 'always resisted requests to decipher the meaning of her complex paintings'. The NGV warmly acknowledges the John William Fawcett Bequest enabling *Other answers* to join the Collection and we encourage you to visit to see the work on display on Level 2, NGV International in our new dedicated Surrealism gallery. We also take a deeper look at another twentieth-century artist on display, Toyen, on page 26. Born Marie Čermínová in 1902, the Czech artist carved a niche for herself within the male-dominated interwar art scene, enjoying considerable local and international recognition in her lifetime. Her poignant cycle of prints titled *Hide, War! (Cache-toi, guerre!)*, 1944, were acquired in 2022 through the Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest.

Best known for his black-and-white portraits, American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's still life *Irises*, 1987, a play on light, shadows and tonal forms, comes into the NGV Collection through the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family. Read about this work on page 16. And, NGV curators join two contemporary artists in their studios to discuss inspiration. Beckett Rozentals on page 80 speaks with Melbourne-based artist Janenne Eaton while on page 56 Sophie Oxenbridge sits down with Lagos-based artist Johnson Eziefula, whose charcoal and acrylic paintings celebrate universal emotions while also shedding light on his own experiences living and working in Lagos. *A covalent one II,* 2022 – a recent gift of Matthias Arndt through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program – is the first of Eziefula's works to join the NGV Collection.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *NGV Magazine* and discover the stories and works of these artists.

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

MAKING MODERN MELBOURNE 1900-2024



NOW ON PERMANENT DISPLAY at Old Treasury Building | FREE ENTRY

OTB.ORG.AU/MMM | 9651 2233 | 20 Spring Street, Melbourne | info@otb.org.au | Sunday-Friday 10am-4pm

Image: Melbourne, 1957. Courtesy Herald Sun | *Making Modern Melbourne* was researched and curated by the Old Treasury Building in partnership with Public Record Office Victoria

OLD TREASURY BUILDING

Public Record Office Victoria

VICTORIA State Government

Contributors

DR DAVID SEQUEIRA
Melbourne, Australia

Artist, curator and academic Dr David Sequeira focuses on the use of colour and geometry in the creation of contemplative experiences. Dr Sequeria works across media to explore issues around high and low art, personal and shared histories, banality and profundity, as well as the reverberations of colonisation and the persisting impact of incomplete histories. He is the curator of *Floribunda*, open at Bunjil Place, Narre Warren, until 20 July.

JANENNE EATON
Melbourne, Australia

Janenne Eaton is a Melbourne-based visual artist. Her practice incorporates painting, drawing, photography, installation and video. Her works have been exhibited extensively in museums, contemporary art centres, independent artist–run initiatives and commercial galleries, nationally and internationally since 1978.

DR JENNY HALL
Melbourne, Australia

Dr Jenny Hall is a Teaching Associate at the University of Melbourne. Her book *Japan Beyond the Kimono: Tradition and Innovation in the Kyoto Textile Industry* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts) was published in 2020. Her research interests include Japanese art, fashion, textiles and cultural heritage.

JOHNSON EZIEFULA
Lagos, Nigeria

Johnson Eziefula is a self-described naturalist painter who aims to capture the essence of the human condition. Born and based in Lagos, Nigeria, Eziefula has created a space to process and express his feelings, using colour, drama and symbolism to add emotional weight to the works, resulting in a compelling and moving body of work.

SALA OKABE
Melbourne, Australia

Born in Shizuoka, Japan, Sala Okabe is a Melbourne-based kimono stylist. She has a passion for bringing the traditional elegance of kimono into contemporary fashion, and has worked internationally as a kimono stylist in New York, Toronto and Tokyo.

SEBASTIAN MOORE
Melbourne, Australia

Sebastian Moore is an art historian, curator and writer. His work has been featured in *The Australian Book Review* and other journals. His research focuses on nineteenth-century British and Australian art, and in 2024, he received the Miegunyah Student Award for his research on Rupert Bunny.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Bonnie Hearn
Carla Dusevic
Clare McLeod
Coral Guan
Dr Ted Gott
Elisa Scarton
Eva Christoff
Kate Ryan
Maggie Finch
Michael Gentle
Michael Varcoe-Cocks
Dr Miranda Wallace
Monica Do
Ruth Shervington
Siân Scott-Clash
Sophie Oxenbridge
Stephanie Pohlman
Wayne Crothers

Making News



(p. 10, top) *KAWS: PLAYTIME* at NGV International 2019. Image © KAWS

MADE ESPECIALLY FOR *KAWS: FAMILY*

Kate Ryan

Nestled in more than 100 acres of Ozark forest in Bentonville, Arkansas, is the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Named after a nearby spring and designed by architect Moshe Safdie, this art gallery is highly acclaimed for its collection of American art and engagement with leading contemporary artists. This year Crystal Bridges is presenting the exhibition *KAWS: FAMILY*, featuring two multimedia interactives developed by the NGV in collaboration with artist Brian Donnelly, known as KAWS, for the children's exhibition *KAWS: Playtime*, held at NGV International in 2019.

KAWS's sculptures, including *Gone,* 2019, held in the NGV Collection, portray two of his cartoon-styled characters, BFF and Companion, both recognised for imparting human emotions such as loneliness and embarrassment through gestures and poses.

For young visitors to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, *Make a friend for BFF*, a touchscreen interactive featuring a 3D version of KAWS's character, tells a tale about friendship and invites children to draw a friend for BFF.

Also developed by the NGV for *KAWS: Playtime*, a playful photobooth invites audiences to create video portraits playing with different features of BFF. Eyes, gloved hands and furry heads drawn by KAWS playfully conceal the participants' faces. Set to lively music, the finished portrait videos convey feelings of happiness that can then be shared with all the family.

KAWS: FAMILY is on at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Arkansas until 28 July. For more information, visit crystalbridges.org/calendar/kaws-family

MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK 2025

Melbourne Design Week, an initiative of the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, is an annual 11-day event that celebrates contemporary design through exhibitions, talks, tours, launches, installations, workshops and more. This year, Melbourne Design week is held throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria, and NGV, from 15–25 May.

Over 350 events, exhibitions, talks and installations celebrate the depth and richness of design talent in the region from a new crop of emerging designers to the industry's most well-respected and established professionals. Highlights include a retrospective exhibition of lighting designer Volker Haug, marking twenty years of designing and making in Australia, plus presentations by the country's leading showrooms, studios and makers including Trent Jansen, Coco Flip, Jessie French and Fiona Lynch.

Also not to be missed, the eleventh iteration of Melbourne Art Book Fair brings together the best publishers and designers from the Asia-Pacific region from 16 – 18 May. The fair plays host to over a hundred publishers in the Great Hall at NGV International, where visitors can browse booths of limited-edition books, prints and magazines from publishers including Cahyati Press (Indonesia), Spacebar Zine (Thailand) and Suburbia Projects (Malaysia), along with leading and emerging publishers from New Zealand.

Scan the code for more information about these events.



NGV WORKS ON LOAN

Elisa Scarton

Exploring the art and lives of trailblazing women artists, *Dangerously Modern: Australian Women Artists in Europe 1890–1940* is a new exhibition presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia (24 May – 8 September) and the Art Gallery of New South Wales (10 October – 1 February 2026). Highlighting both celebrated and rediscovered paintings, prints, sculpture and ceramics, the exhibition will feature fourteen key works from the NGV Collection, including Iso Rae's *Young girl, Etaples*, c. 1892; Agnes Goodsir's *Woman reading*, c. 1915, and *The letter*, 1926; and Ethel Carrick's *In the Luxembourg Gardens, Paris*, c. 1908.

Further details about the exhibition can be found at agsa.sa.gov.au

From 31 May, Horsham Art Gallery presents *Kaleidoscope: A Queer Perspective*, which includes works from the NGV Collection by artists such as Scotty So, Jeffrey Smart, Dylan Mooney and David McDiarmid.

Find out more at horshamartgallery.com.au

British Romantic painter J.M.W. Turner is the subject of *Turner & Australia*, opening at the Gippsland Art Gallery on 7 June. See NGV Collection favourite *Dunstanburgh Castle, north-east coast of Northumberland, sunrise after a squally night,* 1798, in the exhibition, along with other works by Turner, Frederick McCubbin and Helen Kennedy.

For more, see gippslandartgallery.com and visit ngv.melbourne/ngv-magazine to discover *Dunstanburgh Castle, north-east coast of Northumberland, sunrise after a squally night* in the March/April issue of *NGV Magazine*.

Turner & Australia has been made possible through the generous support of Metal Manufactures Pty Ltd., and we warmly acknowledge their outstanding leadership in enhancing Australia's cultural landscape.

(left) **Jeffrey Smart** *Winter carnival, Viareggio* 1989. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Ginny Green, Sandra Bardas OAM family, Vicki Vidor OAM and Bindy Koadlow in memory of their parents Loti Smorgon AO and Victor Smorgon AO through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2014 © The Estate of Jeffrey Smart

(p. 11) **Agnes Goodsir** (*Woman reading*) c. 1915. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented through the NGV Foundation by John and Suzanne Playfoot, Governor, 2001. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation



NEW EVENTS AT NGV

Stephanie Pohlman and *Monica Do*

NAIDOC CELEBRATIONS

Honouring the theme The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy, NAIDOC Week 2025 celebrations at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and online focus on sharing First Nations culture with children and families. On 12 July, teens can meet a local artist and learn new skills in a drop-by creative workshop, while the whole family can enjoy music, artist-led workshops and inspiring tours of First Nations art. For those unable to make the trip, an online activity for children aged three to five will be held across the month of July and feature a storytime program and making activity to try at home.

THE WHEELER CENTRE & NGV

In partnership with The Wheeler Centre, NGV co-presents a new range of thought-provoking events that celebrate art, ideas and creativity. In July, catch Marieke Hardy and Emilie Zoey Baker's celebrated *Better Off Said*, which invites guest speakers reflect on the theme of cats and dogs, celebrating the closing of the NGV's Cats & Dogs exhibition with a special spoken word event in the Great Hall at NGV International.

NGV ART SCHOOL – AUSTRALIAN ART HISTORIES: FOUR-WEEK COURSE

Immerse yourself in the NGV's collection of Australian and First Nations art in this new four-week course running over four evenings at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia from 12 June. With illustrated presentations, in-gallery tours, activities and group discussions, the course is led by NGV curators, specialist NGV educators. To learn more about all upcoming NGV Art School courses and to enrol, visit ngv.melbourne/artschool.

PRIDE MONTH AT NGV WITH THE AUSTRALIAN QUEER ARCHIVES

This Pride Month, celebrate queer stories from the NGV Collection and the Australian Queer Archives. On 21 June, delve into a day of free programs at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and NGV International with NGV curators and leaders in the LGBTIQA+ community to reflecting on artworks and archival materials connected to important moments in Australian queer history.

Scan the code to find out more about these events

TURNER
& AUSTRALIA



7 June – 24 August 2025

This winter discover the Master of Landscape, J.M.W. Turner, and his echoes through Australian art

EXCLUSIVE TO GIPPSLAND ART GALLERY!

Tickets on sale through **www.gippslandartgallery.com**

GIPPSLAND ART GALLERY

Gippsland Art Gallery
Wellington Centre
Port of Sale
70 Foster Street Sale VIC 3850
Phone (03) 5142 3500
gippslandartgallery.com

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

CREATIVE VICTORIA

Gippsland Art Gallery is proudly owned and operated by Wellington Shire Council with support from the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

MAJOR PROJECT PARTNERS

AWM

VICTORIA

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

LOGISTICS PARTNER

EDUCATION PARTNER

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education

TOURISM AND LIFESTYLE PARTNER

DESIGN PARTNER

5678 Design

PRINT PARTNER

ELLIKON FINE PRINTERS

IMAGE
Mandy Martin (Australia 1952–2021)
Wanderers in the desert of the real; Snowstorm: Hannibal and his army crossing the Alps, after Turner (detail) 2008
Ochre, pigment and oil on linen
180 x 270cm
Collection Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo
Gift of the artist, 2021
© The estate of the artist



Sculpture Walk

Introducing the new Sculpture Walk at ACU Melbourne Campus in Fitzroy

A curated journey featuring 21 exceptional works by both established and emerging artists from the ACU Art Collection.

Commissioned and acquired for their ability to transform and enhance spaces, the sculptures are thoughtfully placed across verdant gardens, quiet alcoves, and soaring balconies, ensuring each piece interacts uniquely with its environment.

These sculptures reflect the university's cultural spirit and connect the campus community with Australia's rich artistic landscape.

We invite you to experience the Sculpture Walk at your own pace and discover these inspiring works.

Under the Obelisk, 1989
Akio Makigawa, 1948–1999, Japan; arr. Australia 1976
bluestone and marble
H 430 x W 597 x D 432 cm (overall)
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Runjiang Investment Group Pty Ltd, 2024

artsandculture.acu.edu.au/news

CRICOS registered provider: 00004G | PRV12008

ACU
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

10 artists you should know



Katsushika Hokusai *The great wave off Kanagawa* c. 1830, from the *Thirty-six views of Mt Fuji* series 1826–33. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1909. A digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

Emily Kam Kngwarray
Suzanne Valadon
Francis Bacon
Katsushika Hokusai
Bhupen Khakhar
Berthe Morisot
Lavinia Fontana
Guerilla Girls
Lee Miller
Francisco Goya

Celebrating the launch of NGV Art School, the Gallery's adult learning hub, the new self-guided online course *10 Artists You Should Know*, beginning 9 May, is dedicated to artists who have left their mark on the art world and shaped the culture around them.

Words by **Elisa Scarton**

Choosing just ten artists to highlight in NGV Art School's newest online course was never going to be an easy task – the NGV Collection features thousands of artists from across centuries and continents. Whether local or international, established or emerging, well-known or a little more under the radar, each and every one of these artists has made their own contribution to art history in their own unique way.



Suzanne Valadon *Nude with drapery (Nu a la draperie)* 1921. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022

For *10 Artists You Should Know*, the NGV turned to its curators, local and international academics and guest educators to put together a list worthy of this inaugural course, which launches online on 9 May.

Whether it be through their innovation and ingenuity, their influence on fellow creatives, or how they pushed the boundaries of artmaking, these ten artists were the ones we kept returning to time and time again.

So, who made the list?

We begin with Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614). Widely recognised as the first woman to become a professional painter in Europe, Bologna-born Fontana featured strong and powerful women from ancient mythology and Christian history in many of her early works.

Fontana is joined in the course by Francisco Goya (1746–1828), the Spanish Romantic painter, who, through his observations, confronting depictions of violence and surreal flights of fantasy, presented a vision of humanity that had no equivalent in the art of his day.

Also a keen social observer, the self-described 'old man mad about drawing' Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) was famous in Edo-period Japan for his innovative approach to design and mastery of the brush, becoming globally recognised within a decade of his death.

A founder of the French Impressionist movement, Berthe Morisot (1841–95) was an intrinsic part of the circle of avant-garde painters that championed individuality, creativity and modernity. Meanwhile, self-taught fellow French painter Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938) embraced realism without artifice or voyeurism, placing the nude, both female and male, at the centre of her work.

American photographer Lee Miller (1907–97) was one of the most original photographic artists of the twentieth century – a Surrealist before Surrealism truly came to the fore. Irish figurative painter Francis Bacon (1909–92) was a maverick who rejected his era's preferred artistic style of abstraction in favour of a distinctive realism. Focusing on the human form, Bacon painted self-portraits and portraits of close friends, often depicted in raw and unsettling ways.

Closer to home, the late Anmatyerr Elder Emily Kam Kngwarray (1910–96) may have been in her seventies when she began painting, but her ascension in the art world was rapid and unprecedented, not just for a First Nations or woman artist, but for any artist in the twentieth century. Drawing from the vast cultural reservoir of Indigenous knowledge, Kngwarray created art transformed by her lived experience and spiritual engagement with Country through vibrant batiks and, later, monumental paintings on canvas.

Often called 'India's first Pop Artist', Bhupen Khakhar (1934–2003) captured the lives of locals in his native Baroda (now Vadodara) in bold colours and lush landscapes. Never one to shy away from weaving his own vulnerability into his work, Khakhar was renowned for his incisive observations of class and sexuality, rendered in his unique figurative style.

Finally, Guerilla Girls (1985–) completes this course's list of ten. The all-female collective of anonymous artists is known for using 'guerrilla' tactics to expose gender and racial imbalances within contemporary cultural institutions, leading the way for the next generation of rule-breaking and era-defining artists.

10 Artists You Should Know is part of NGV Art School – your one-stop resource for inspiration, creative skill–building and immersion in art and art history. Scan the code to find out more about in-Gallery and online courses, practical artist-led classes, and tailored learning experiences led by curators and specialist educators.

Self-guided, *10 Artists You Should Know* is designed to be completed at your own pace. Each module takes approximately one hour to complete and contains readings, videos, activities and other materials.

This course is accessible from 10am on 9 May.
For more information and to book your place, scan the code.

Robert Mapplethorpe

Robert Mapplethorpe was often described as an artist who consistently sought perfection in form. The leading American photographer, known for his black-and-white portraits, self-portraits and nudes, was also fascinated by the still-life genre, as seen in *Irises*, 1987, which recently joined the NGV Collection through the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family.

Words by **Maggie Finch**

Born in 1946 in Floral Park, Queens, Robert Mapplethorpe enrolled at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn in 1963, where he studied painting and sculpture. Inspired by artists such as Joseph Cornell, Mapplethorpe began making collages, often using photographic images from magazines, and bought a Polaroid instant camera in 1970 to document these works. Shortly after, he began using the instant camera to create images to incorporate into his collages, as well as portraits. Mapplethorpe's first solo exhibition at New York's Light Gallery in 1973 comprised a series of these polaroids.

In 1975, Mapplethorpe's photographic vision changed dramatically after receiving a Hasselblad 500 medium-format camera, with which he began creating classically composed portraits. Mapplethorpe lived with his then girlfriend and muse, musician Patti Smith, in the Chelsea Hotel, a hub of artistic activity in the city. It was here that Mapplethorpe created many portraits of Smith and their circle of friends, as well as acquaintances from New York's underground scene – including musicians, artists, celebrities and social sub-cultures. At this time, Mapplethorpe also produced images for commercial advertisements and began to work as a photographer for



Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine, as well as creating images for *Vogue* and *Esquire*.

Mapplethorpe continued to produce photographic works into the 1980s, including nudes, as well as numerous still-life compositions and domestic scenes of flowers. Of the latter, he said:

> Maybe I experiment a little more with flowers and inanimate objects because you don't have to worry about the subject being sensitive or worry about the personality. I don't think I see differently just because the subject changes.[1]

He also developed his practice, studying the history of photography and experimenting with different formats, media, papers and printing techniques.

Taken in 1986, *Irises* is a beautifully composed image of irises arranged in a reflective Aurene glass vase from Mapplethorpe's own collection of American iridescent vases. The floral arrangement is set against a simple background in which light floods in at an angle through blinds on an adjacent window. The composition is a play of light, shadows and tones, as well as of geometric lines and forms.

The large-scale photogravure print of *Irises*, which recently joined the NGV Collection with the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, was produced in 1987. It is one of several works that Mapplethorpe produced as editions in collaboration with the atelier Graphicstudio, part of the Institute for Research in Art at the University of South Florida.

At the time, Mapplethorpe was interested in exploring photogravure, an out-of-favour process invented in the nineteenth century and popular from the mid 1880s into the 1910s. The technique involves the transfer of a photographic image from a black-and-white negative to a copper printing plate. Working with the Graphicstudio team and studio equipment, Mapplethorpe produced a suite of photogravures from his photo negatives, including two flower studies and several images of a regular portrait subject, Ken Moody. The rich tones of his flower studies, such as *Irises*, maximise the famously luscious surfaces and deep shadows afforded by the photogravure process.



Mapplethorpe's work was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1988, his first major American retrospective. The exhibition took place just a year prior to his death from complications from AIDS, with which he had been diagnosed in 1986. Following his death, Mapplethorpe continued to be featured in international exhibitions – including *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographs 1976–1985* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne in 1986 (which toured to Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart and Canberra); at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 1995; and at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2017–18, among others.

Irises is the second work by Mapplethorpe to enter the NGV Collection, after the acquisition of the gelatin silver photograph *Alistair Butler*, 1980, in 2016 (purchased by NGV Foundation).

Maggie Finch is NGV Curator, Photography.

The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for their support in acquiring the work for the Collection.

(pp. 16–17) **Robert Mapplethorpe** *Irises* 1986, printed 1987. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2025 © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

(above) **Andy Warhol** *Robert Mapplethorpe* 1983. Collection of The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh. Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc © Andy Warhol / ARS, New York. Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

PARIS FOR FASHION LOVERS

Immerse yourself in all things fashion in the home of Haute Couture on this unique 12-day small-group tour.

From the incredible Musée des Arts Décoratifs to the exclusive Maison Dior, admire the work of the world's great couturiers as we explore Paris' leading fashion museums, galleries and studios, including a special backstage tour of the Opéra Bastille to see the skilled designers at work, private tours of the finest haberdasheries, fan boutiques and perumeries, plus a morning at the famous flea markets on the outskirts of Paris.

October 4-15, 2025 | 12 Day Tour › Led by cultural historian Nicole Hayward

academyttravel.com.au 1800 639 699

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

ACADEMY TRAVEL

2025 Annual Appeal

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner *Officer and waitress*

In 1915 German avant-garde painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner captured a fleeting moment of joy and repose amid the First World War in the work *Officer and waitress* (*Offizier und Kellnerin*). This work is at the centre of the 2025 NGV Annual Appeal, where we welcome donations of any size to bring significant and rare paintings into the NGV Collection. This represents an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate the contribution of one of the most important artists of the early twentieth century through the Collection.

Words by **Dr Ted Gott**

There are few moments of joy during wartime. Yet Ernst Ludwig Kirchner *Officer and waitress* (*Offizier und Kellnerin*), 1915, is a vigorously ebullient painting, full of bright colour, energy and cheer, celebrating what, for the artist, was a moment of happiness and relief during the dark years of the First World War. In July 1915 Kirchner had been assigned as a recruit to the 75th Field Artillery Regiment in Halle an der Saale in the German state of Saxony-Anhalt. In September, after just a few months of training, Kirchner was discharged in order to receive psychiatric treatment; in November 1915 he was declared unfit for military service. The soldier with his back to us at the left of Kirchner's painting is doubtless Hans Fehr, the instructor who organised Kirchner's discharge from active service. Here he has invited the artist to enjoy a meal celebrating his release from the army, which is being delivered by a white-capped and aproned waitress. At the right of the composition, Kirchner himself enters through a doorway.

In earlier years Fehr, a professor at Halle's university, had been a patron member of the art movement Die Brücke (The Bridge), organising a Die Brücke exhibition in Jena in 1911 and a solo Kirchner show there in 1914. Die Brücke was an art movement founded in Dresden in June 1905 by four students whose hearts were really set upon becoming artists, but who had enrolled in architectural practice to please their parents: Kirchner, Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Kirchner, who pursued architecture studies in both Munich and Dresden between 1901 and 1905, was born in Aschaffenburg, Bavaria in 1880. His initial schooling took place in Chemnitz, where his father, a chemist, had secured a position at the College of Technology. Heckel also came from Chemnitz, and his elder brother had been at school with Kirchner, which helped establish an especially close bond between the two. In Munich, Kirchner had been captivated by the art of Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt van Rijn. He later recalled that: 'There was little of interest in the [architectural] school. I learnt far more in the museums … The freedom of Rembrandt's approach to the figure showed me the way to a reduced style of drawing.'

Die Brücke's manifesto of 1906 declared that 'we want to achieve freedom of life and action against the well-established older forces'. While determined to be resolutely bold and modern in their approach to art, the group also respected and drew influence from the art of the past. The meaning of their name, 'bridge', symbolised this fusion of old and new in their shared artistic vision. In addition to the Northern old masters, the artists were heavily influenced by the radically expressive paintings of Edvard Munch and Vincent van Gogh, as well as the new French Fauve ('wild beast') artists such as Henri Matisse, whose work was now being shown in Germany. Kirchner in fact considered inviting Matisse to join Die Brücke. Bold, strident colours, expressive gestural brushstrokes, abandonment of traditional perspective and provocatively simple figuration became the hallmarks of the group's new avant-garde manner of painting and drawing, which came to be known as German Expressionism, a movement that was to be highly influential until the rise of Nazism brought its development to an end.

The Dresden art critic F. Ernst Köhler-Haussen wrote in 1907: 'Die Brücke is an association of young and up-coming artists in the making. It is a product of ferment and unrest, a cry for barriers to be broken down, a trembling wish for what has hitherto lain beyond the permissible, beyond what was possible to art.' Visiting Kirchner's studio, Köhler-Haussen marvelled that 'there were pictures there brighter and more daubed than anything I have seen from the most audacious French Impressionists. The body of one nude was ashimmer with green and red patches, impasto patches of paint thick as a finger.' In the spirit of modernist rejection of everything considered traditional and conservative, Die Brücke artists led experimentally open social lives, taking casual sexual partners and practising nudism both within their studios and on excursions to the German countryside. Needless to say, Kirchner's parents were appalled by this 'libertine' behaviour.

In 1911 Kirchner moved to Berlin. There, between 1913 and 1915, he produced an extraordinary series of street-scene paintings, depicting stylishly dressed sex workers and their male clients parading along the city's boulevards. An echo of this is to be found in the two small figures in the upper left background of *Officer and waitress*.

Kirchner's brief experience of military life was disastrous for both his mental and physical health. Although he enjoyed working with the horses used by his artillery regiment, he found the physical training and the crude barracks life of a soldier to be excruciating. In the upper-right background of *Officer and waitress* a row of soldiers performing the Prussian goose step march signifies the horror of that militaristic world for the artist. He was indeed fortunate that one of his instructors in riding was his old friend and patron Fehr, who recalled:

> One morning a soldier appeared on the riding field who should never have been put in uniform, as one could see from a long way off. It was Ernst Ludwig Kirchner the painter. He went over to the lieutenant, clicked his heels clumsily, and reported for duty. 'But whatever are you doing here, Herr Kirchner!' – 'I was called up suddenly, I shall never be a good soldier. I know that if I'm sent to the front I'll be shot dead in an instant.'

Fehr duly came to Kirchner's rescue, first arranging for him to take sick leave due to 'overall debility' and then organising to have his leave papers altered to a full military discharge. *Officer and waitress*, with its vivid, uplifting green and violet palette, celebrates Kirchner's liberation from this challenging time in his young life.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner *Officer and waitress* (*Offizier und Kellnerin*) 1915. Proposed acquisition, 2025 NGV Annual Appeal.

Dr Ted Gott is NGV Senior Curator, International Art.

Learn more about the 2025 NGV Annual Appeal at NGV.Melbourne/Appeal and scan the QR code below to make your donation.

OTHER



ANSWERS

The painting career of American modernist, activist and poet Kay Sage was hampered by the gender norms of her era, as well as by the notoriety of her partner, artist Yves Tanguy. But Sage's work stood apart from Tanguy's and her fellow Surrealists with a linear and architectural style and dreamlike compositions like that seen in *Other answers*, 1945, which recently joined the NGV Collection through the generous support of the John William Fawcett Bequest.

Words by **Dr Ted Gott**

In *Other answers*, 1945, a piece of cloth is caught in a swift wind, suspended across a taut wire. It flaps above a group of objects shrouded in a similar material, placed before a gently undulating landscape or sea vista. At left, wooden or steel scaffolding stands sparse and tall, casting ominous shadows across a foreground expanse of earth or sand. The sky is darkening, and the whole composition seems brooding, threatening, filled with unnerving and eerie potential. A classic painting by Kay Sage, *Other answers* (brought into the NGV Collection with funds donated by the John William Fawcett Bequest) exemplifies the essence of Sage's Surrealist practice, which critic Salomon Grimberg has described as representing 'foreboding states of mind suspended in a deafening silence'.[1]

Sage always resisted requests to decipher the meaning of her complex paintings. As she wrote in her poem 'Your Move' in 1961:

> there is no reason why
> anything should mean more
> than its own statement
> two and two
> do not necessarily make four[2]

Born into wealth and privilege, Sage decided as a teenager that art was her calling, and in her early twenties she studied both landscape and figurative art with respected teachers in Rome, becoming highly proficient at both genres.

Her career was interrupted in 1925 by her marriage to the Italian American Prince Ranieri of San Faustino, and a decade of peripatetic travel and aristocratic indulgence followed before she decided to end her marriage and return to art.

In 1936, during a stay in Paris, Sage met the Swiss artist and occultist Kurt Seligmann by chance in a hotel. Seligmann showed her one of his modernist paintings, which was a lightbulb moment in Sage's development as an artist. In late 1937 she relocated permanently to Paris. There, in the opening months of 1938, she visited the great International Surrealist exhibition repeatedly. Held in the Galérie Beaux-Arts at 140 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, this enormous show displayed some 229 works of art by sixty artists representing fourteen countries.

Sage was most struck here by the eight paintings exhibited by Giorgio de Chirico, the Italian artist who was hailed by the Parisian Surrealists as a precursor to their own practice. She introduced herself to André Breton, the founder of the Surrealist movement, and was soon to fatefully meet one of his favourite artists.

Peggy Guggenheim is said to have first connected Sage and the painter Yves Tanguy in the autumn of 1938 in the hopes that Sage might buy one of Tanguy's paintings. The French artist had engaged in a passionate affair with Guggenheim earlier that year, and it had led to the collapse of his marriage to artist Jeannette Ducrocq. It was love at first sight for Sage and Tanguy, with perhaps no consideration of the implications this relationship might have for the former. As Sage's biographer Judith Suther put it:

> It is hard to say whether Sage knew that her personal ties with Tanguy would put her in a triple artistic bind: bound already to be judged as both a woman artist and an experimenter producing 'incomprehensible' paintings, she would also [now] become 'the lesser Tanguy'.[3]

Margaret Barr, the wife of Alfred Barr, who was then director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, somewhat acerbically described Sage's significance for the Surrealists in 1939:

> These Surrealists, Tanguy, Matta and everyone included, were penniless. Most exciting, admirably excitable, but all of them BROKE, and Sage had the advantage of having some money and a natural generosity. For the Surrealists, she was a matter of convenience.[4]

Breton, however, absolutely loathed Sage. Jealous of her influence over Tanguy, whom he regarded as one of his protégés, Breton constantly denigrated her to the painter who was soon to become her husband. Sage remained magnanimous, helping fund Breton and his family's escape to New York following the Nazi occupation of Paris in 1940. She and Tanguy left Paris themselves in late 1939, shortly after France and England declared war on Germany.

Throughout the Second World War, Sage was to help other Surrealists escape from Paris to the safety of the United States. Few were grateful, as the Surrealist 'men's club' could not see past her previous life as a princess. The generally positive reception her work received from American art critics at this time did nothing to increase her popularity among the male painters. As Alfred Frankenstein put it in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1941:

> Firm design and powerful architecture holds [Sage's] pictures together, and the hooded forms that move through them enact their enigma in a curiously poignant and affecting fashion. For this surrealism, one feels, unlike much that passes under that name, is motivated by deep sincerity and profound feeling, and it is certainly realized with exceptional skill.[5]

In addition to being slighted for being a woman artist and marginalised as Tanguy's wife 'who also paints', Sage's 'real crime', for her Surrealist colleagues – 'the crime that made her first unwelcome and then invisible', as Suther has put it – 'was being a good painter … No one quite knew what a Surrealist was, but everyone except the Surrealist men was sure that Sage was one.'[6]



The lack of figures in Sage's art could perhaps reflect her increasing isolation within the circle of exiled Surrealist artists then inhabiting New York, who clearly resented her financial independence and, particularly in the case of Breton, were envious of her talent.

This hostility and indifference surely contributed to Sage and Tanguy's decision to leave New York in 1941 and relocate to the small town of Woodbury in Connecticut. Here the couple worked side by side in adjoining studios for the next decade and more, both artists enjoying a new burst of energy in their painting, away from the stresses of servicing the needs of their exiled colleagues in Manhattan (although Tanguy's alcoholism and increasing jealousy of Sage's achievements brought constant clouds to their relationship). It was in Woodbury that *Other answers* was created in 1945, the same year that the Art Institute of Chicago named Sage the winner of the Watson F. Blair Purchase Prize for her painting *In the third sleep*. This was the first major public recognition of her emerging talent as an artist.

Sage died in 1963 and following instructions in her will, the ashes of both her and Tanguy (who died in 1955) were scattered in the water off the coast of Tanguy's native Brittany in 1964.

Dr Ted Gott is NGV Senior Curator, International Art.

See *Other answers*, 1945, on Level 2, NGV International. The NGV warmly thanks the John William Fawcett Bequest for acquiring this work for the Collection.

(p. 22) **Kay Sage** *Other answers* 1945. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. John William Fawcett Bequest, 2025 © The Estate of Kay Sage / ARS, New York. Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

(above) Kay Sage, Woodbury, Connecticut, USA 1946 by Lee Miller © Lee Miller Archives, England 2025. All rights reserved. leemiller.co.uk



4 JUN – 5 OCT

着物

KIMONO

CREATIVE VICTORIA

Hiroko Takahashi *Self-Portrait: Black Kimonos* 2013 © Hiroko Takahashi. Image courtesy of Hiroko Takahashi

Toyen

Born Marie Čermínová in 1902, Toyen was a leading exponent of Czech Surrealism. Consistently rejecting social stereotypes, as reflected in her gender-neutral pseudonym, she relocated to France after the Second World War, where she remained involved in the Parisian Surrealist scene until her death.

Words by **Eva Christoff**

The Czech Surrealist Toyen does not fit the typical profile of a woman artist relegated to the peripheries of Surrealist circles during the interwar years. While the initially Paris-based movement was exclusively composed of men in its early years, by the 1930s burgeoning Surrealist groups across Europe admitted a select cadre of women artists into their ranks.

However, their contributions were often overlooked in contemporary Surrealist journals. In contrast, Toyen enjoyed both local and international recognition as a leading exponent of Czech Surrealism. How was she able to carve out such a prominent position within the male-dominated interwar art scene? And why has her legacy faded into relative obscurity, while the careers of artists like Lee Miller and Leonora Carrington – once overshadowed by their romantic ties to Man Ray and Max Ernst respectively – have been widely reclaimed? These answers can partly be found in the lesser-known history of Czech Surrealism's rise and abrupt decline.

During the 1920s, Toyen and the Czech avant-garde at large were initially sceptical of Surrealism, the birth of which had been 'officially' announced through the publication of André Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924. In particular, Toyen and her then artistic collaborator Jindřich Štyrský were unconvinced by Breton's famous definition of Surrealism as 'pure psychic automatism'. While Toyen and Štyrský were living in Paris from 1925 to 1928, their practice shared some kinship with the movement, as they drew inspiration from inner states. However, the duo remained doubtful of Breton and his peers' purported ability to directly channel the subconscious in artmaking.

In 1929 Toyen and Štyrský returned to Prague, and Breton published a second *Surrealist Manifesto*. While Breton had initially presented Surrealism as a means of transcending bourgeois societal constraints by freeing the mind, he now defined liberation in less individualistic terms, instead framing the movement as a revolt against capitalist social structures.

This new emphasis on collective emancipation resonated with members of the Czech avant-garde with Marxist-Leninist leanings, prompting them to take Surrealism more seriously. By 1934 a Czech Surrealist group was founded by Toyen, Štyrský, Vítězslav Nezval and several other members of the Czech avant-garde. The same year, in a statement that helps to clarify the Czech understanding of Surrealism, the Czech artist and critic Karel Teige declared:

> [S]urrealism [is] a revolutionary … movement, which identifies itself with the Marxist-Leninist worldview and on the cultural front wants to intervene in the broad social and political question of the open struggle against war, against fascism, against religion, against the bourgeois family and official ideology.[1]

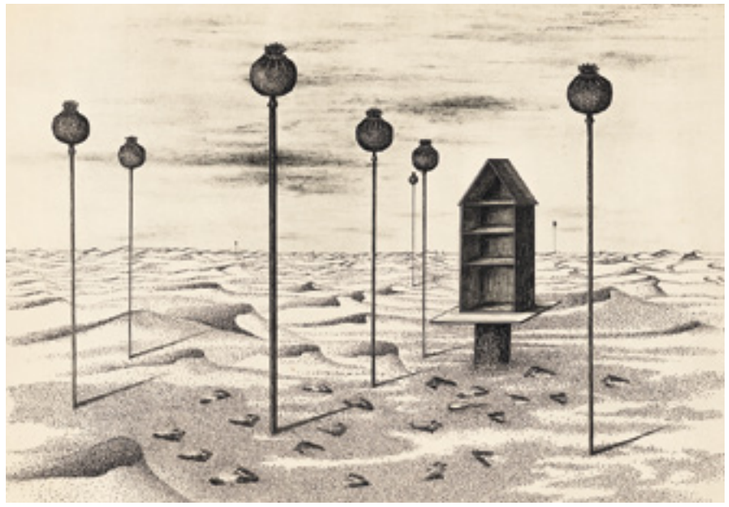
While Breton's writings certainly influenced the formation of the Czech Surrealist group, it also evolved from earlier Czech avant-garde movements such as Devětsil and differed from the Paris group in some key respects. Paris Surrealists typically mounted their attack against the bourgeois social order by desecrating the female form – an act of defiance that directly undermined the Catholic veneration of the Virgin Mary. By contrast, in their commitment to a revolutionary vision of a new egalitarian society, certain Czech Surrealists rejected gender entirely, instead envisioning a new form of citizenship under which people were seen as de-gendered sexual beings.[2]

These progressive ideas had been circulating in radical circles in Czechoslovakia prior to 1934. Indeed, as early as 1923 Toyen had rejected her birth name, Marie Čermínová, in favour of a genderless pseudonym which she later claimed was a truncation of *citoyen* – the French word for citizen. From the 1920s onwards Toyen alternated between feminine and hyper-masculine attire, and offered little information about her past, cultivating the persona of a mysterious figure without precedent. As with her self-presentation, in her visual explorations of the erotic, Toyen explored a radical vision beyond normative gender, favouring enigmatic and dematerialised genital forms as subject matter.

Following the 1938 Munich Agreement and Nazi Germany's subsequent invasion, annexation and political repression of what remained of Czechoslovakia, Czech cultural activity was increasingly constrained. Although Toyen's name appeared on a list of artists banned from public activity in 1939, she nonetheless remained undeterred in her commitment to radical artmaking. During the increasingly oppressive period of Nazi occupation, Toyen forged a new artistic partnership with Jewish poet and photographer Jindřich Heisler. Toyen and Heisler – who had only recently joined the Czech Surrealist group in 1938 – had planned to flee Czechoslovakia for South America; however, they were duped by a customs agent. When the borders closed in 1939, they had no choice but to remain in Prague, and Toyen began to secretly shelter Heisler in her apartment. This illegal arrangement and the duo's ongoing covert artistic collaboration greatly endangered them both.

During the Second World War, Toyen and Heisler produced several clandestine wartime series in which they decried fascism's destructive effects on the cultural landscape. Featuring poems by Heisler and drawings by Toyen, these series were always intended for publication. However, this only came to fruition during and after 1946.

In 1944 Toyen created a particularly poignant cycle of nine ink drawings titled *Hide, War! (Cache-toi, guerre!)*, to which Heisler later







For André Breton, Toyen remained beyond judgement or valuation. He likened her to a nightingale trapped in his apartment, proclaiming that everything she touched was connected to the free song of the nightingale by ‘a ladder of silk’.

EVA CHRISTOFF

contributed an introductory poem. The series’ title, which can be interpreted as both a warning to hide and a plea for the war to end, is derived from a verse in ‘Les Poésies’, an 1870 poem by French poet Isidore Lucien Ducasse, a major influence on the Surrealists. Both Toyen and Heisler pay homage to the poet’s disquieting juxtaposition of unrelated imagery in their respective contributions. In his introductory poem for *Hide, War!*, Heisler writes ‘young dried throats abruptly stutter with blood-filled saliva, firmly curdled’, while in eight of Toyen’s nine ink drawings, improbably animated skeletal forms, suspended between life and death, interact with sundry objects as they traverse barren, post-apocalyptic landscapes. These scenes are filled with subtle references to war. In certain drawings, aloft seed pods resemble parachutes, while in others, darkened clouds recall bombs exploding. As such, *Hide, War!* harnesses Surrealist techniques to convey the irrationality of the horrors of wartime and their fraying effects on the psyche.

In 1946 Toyen arranged for the 1944 *Hide, War!* drawing cycle to be printed lithographically and published as a portfolio that also presented Heisler’s poetry. Toyen and Heisler, both opposed to Joseph Stalin’s leadership, left Czechoslovakia for Paris in 1947, narrowly avoiding the Communist takeover in early 1948. While in Paris, a French edition of the 1947 *Hide, War!* portfolio was published, a copy of which recently entered the NGV Collection through the support of the Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest.

Breton and Toyen first became acquainted during the interwar years, and upon Toyen’s return to France, Breton promptly rekindled their friendship. For Breton, Toyen remained beyond judgement or valuation. He likened her to a nightingale trapped in his apartment, proclaiming that everything she touched was connected to the free song of the nightingale by ‘a ladder of silk’.[3] Breton’s description of Toyen points to the oftentimes contradictory and misogynistic relationship male Surrealists had with their female peers. While it reflects his high regard for Toyen, it also undermines her agency by portraying her as a naïve, otherworldly figure whose creativity was nothing short of miraculous.

Despite his paternalism, Breton was clearly very invested in Toyen’s artistic practice. He held several of Toyen’s works in his personal collection, and, along with Benjamin Péret and Jindřich Heisler, wrote the first monograph of the artist’s work in 1953. In the monograph, Breton presents Toyen as the last surviving postwar representative of Prague, lamenting, ‘What remains of all this? There remains Toyen.’[4] While hyperbolic, this wasn’t far off the mark: the Communist takeover, along with the enduring trauma of the Second World War, meant that Prague’s once celebrated avant-garde community was irrevocably crippled. Toyen had managed to leave before 1948 and continued to produce dazzling Surrealist paintings, but she arrived in Paris at a time when Surrealism was no longer at the centre of the French cultural imaginary, and thus did not achieve widespread post-war recognition.

While Toyen’s relative obscurity in art history can be partially explained by the outsized attention afforded to male artists during the twentieth century, her story is more complex. Toyen is a particularly enigmatic figure, in that, as part of her deliberate performance as a mysterious ‘Other’, she avoided writing diaries or letters – leaving historians limited insight into her motivations and beliefs.

To complicate matters further, during the period of Communist rule between 1949–89, Czech art historians were formally unable to deviate from official ideology, and Western access to the exceptionally rich history of Prague’s early twentieth-century artistic community was severely limited. It was only after the 1989 Velvet Revolution that the primary material relating to the Czech avant-garde became newly accessible, and even still, language barriers have meant that the cultural specificity of Czech Surrealism has often remained misunderstood.

Nevertheless, recent scholarship, such as Karla Huebner’s work on the radical ties between gender ambiguity and Marxism in Czech Surrealism, strongly affirms Toyen’s place as a true Surrealist visionary. The artist’s story, along with that of Surrealism beyond the confines of France, deserves broader recognition and further study.

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

The NGV warmly thanks Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest for acquiring Toyen’s *Cache-toi, Guerre! (Hide, War!)* portfolio, 1947, for the NGV Collection.

(p. 27, top to bottom) **Toyen** (*Untitled*) 1947, from the *Cache-toi, Guerre!* (*Hide, War!*) portfolio 1947. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. the Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2022 © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022. © Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

Credits: Scott Curry © Lyndon Mechielsen/Newspix; Sleeping Beauty, Ballet de l'Opéra de Paris © OnP; Berlin State Opera © Staatsoper Unter den Linden / Marcus Ebener

Renaissance Tours


Sleeping Beauty, Ballet de l'Opéra de Paris


Red House by Philip Webb and William Morris



European Summer Ballet Spectacular

London, Paris and Hamburg
with Donna Cusack
03 – 16 July 2025 (14 days)

Join ballet expert Donna Cusack to experience the best of ballet performances by some of Europe's leading ballet companies.



Morris to Mackintosh

London, Oxford, Windermere and Glasgow
with Robert Reason
16 – 27 September 2025 (12 days)

Delve into the Arts and Crafts Movement through the legacies of William Morris and Charles Rennie Mackintosh.


Berlin State Opera


Gordes in the Luberon, Provence



The Ring Cycle in Berlin

Berlin
with Scott Curry
26 September – 04 October 2025 (9 days)

Witness the monumental *Ring* Cycle, conducted by the iconic Christian Thielemann, performed at the most prestigious opera house in Germany, the Berlin State Opera.



Wines of the Rhône Valley and Provence

Lyon, Châteauneuf-du-Pape and the Luberon
with Brigid Kennedy
08 – 19 September 2025 (12 days)

With wine expert Brigid Kennedy, embark on an unforgettable journey through France's most celebrated wine regions.

Australia's finest collection of cultural and special interest tours.

For detailed information visit renaissancetours.com.au, call 1300 727 095 or contact your travel agent.

Lasting
IMPRESSIONS

Developed in partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the 2025 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *French Impressionism* charts the trajectory of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in late nineteenth–century France, highlighting the contributions of those at the centre of this period of radical experimentation who boldly rejected the artistic conventions of their time. Ahead of the opening at NGV International on 6 June, *NGV Magazine* invites NGV curators and conservators to reflect on works featured in the exhibition.



Frits Thaulow *River view* c. 1890–1900. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Deposited by the Trustees of the White Fund, Lawrence, Massachusetts.
Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

Frits Thaulow *River view* c. 1890–1900

Words by **Coral Guan**

I'm captivated by the water that spreads across the idyllic autumn scene of *River view*, c. 1890–1900. Viscous and thick, the river's eddying mass churns spectacularly in the foreground. Beyond the bend, the waters are placid. My eyes wander across the painting, catching on the shrubby undergrowth on the riverbank, the russet roofs in the distance – but always I return to the water. I am eager to understand the painting's secrets: how the river appears so deep yet full of movement; how drinking its water would surely sound like a gulp. To this end, I imagine the painting's process of creation from the perspective of its maker, Norwegian landscape artist Frits Thaulow.

A virtuoso of waterscapes, Thaulow initially aspired to be a marine painter. This was a genre popularised by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, featuring grand, idealised depictions of the sea, the coast and ships. In pursuit of this goal, Thaulow trained under his artistic forebears, the Danish marine painter Carl Frederik Sørensen and the Norwegian Romantic artist Hans Gude. While all three artists were devoted to painting waterways, Thaulow developed a more naturalistic approach to their depiction and often employed unusual angles.

> 'I am eager to understand the painting's secrets: how the river appears so deep yet full of movement; how drinking its water would surely sound like a gulp.'
> Coral Guan

The two senior artists favoured dramatic seascapes that were equal parts sea and sky, divided by a clear central horizon line. In contrast, Thaulow loved to paint meandering rivers and canals, often covering two-thirds of a canvas with watery ripples. In his paintings, the horizon is almost an afterthought, pushed towards the top of the composition. There is scant regard for the sky, except as a tantalising reflection in the water. This is especially true in Thaulow's many paintings of northern France, which was his adopted home from 1892 onwards. In these paintings, as in *River view*, Thaulow brings us unnervingly close to the water, at a slightly elevated vantage point. It's as if we're peering down at the river from a low bridge, the edge of a rowboat or astride a large rock jutting into the stream. This closeness to the scene draws me in.

I look again at the surface of the water. On the left riverbank, thick strokes of mulchy brown and green extend deep into the water. Flatly applied, these vertical brushstrokes form the reflections of trees. The mirrored surface is broken by scumbled layers of white and light blue – a pale autumn sky reflected on rippling water. Thaulow's mastery of scumbling cannot be understated. This technique involves the application of a thin, broken layer of opaque paint over a previous layer, often with a dry brush. Scumbling adds depth, dimension and texture to a painting by allowing underlying paint to show through. It was a technique beloved by many Impressionists, including Thaulow's friend Claude Monet, whom he met in 1895. Monet's paintings are known to have a 'vibrating' quality, achieved through scumbled layers of contrasting colour. In Thaulow's *River view*, a combination of scumbled swirls and wet-on-wet whorls lends an extraordinary depth and liveliness to the water.

My eyes continue to scan the painting, looking for more secrets. I notice the dry smattering of ochre paint on the outermost branches of the trees on the right. I sense the spectre of Thaulow's agile wrist in the orange dabs of fallen leaves on the water and the V-shaped birds circling the skies in the distance. The tableau is the culmination of thousands of tiny flicks of the brush as Thaulow stood painting *en plein air* – many photographs exist of him captured in this stance – and in the studio, where he likely finished the painting. It is a masterpiece from a painter who loved the water, and who travelled as far and wide as Venice, Scotland, Hamburg and the northernmost town of Denmark to study it. For Thaulow, parsing the water and its turbulence – its changing surface textures, its depth and thickness – was a lifelong pursuit. But this pleasure of sustained attention can be as much ours as it was his. To be able to look and then look again at the tawny colours and gentle flow of *River view*'s autumn scene is its own rare and sweet reward.

Coral Guan is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, International Exhibition Projects.

Paul Signac *Gasometers at Clichy* 1886

Words by **Michael Varcoe-Cocks**

Walking through the NGV Impressionist galleries, I am always struck by the radiant colour of the one of my favourite paintings in the collection, Paul Signac's *Gasometers at Clichy*, 1886. It's a work that naturally appeals to a painting conservator, being a celebration of paint and colour underpinned by scientific methodology, but I also enjoy the history passed on by a view lost to time.

The Parisian riverside suburb of Clichy was familiar ground to Signac, who, following the death of his father, moved with his mother to neighbouring Asnières on the opposite bank of the Seine. From across the river he observed the final construction of the gasometers and the accompanying workshops that covered a 19-hectare site completed in 1882. The seven monumental gas-holding structures, each 55 metres in diameter, were a necessary incursion on the sprawling suburbs of Paris, which created increased demand for the local production of coal gas used for domestic lighting. The cylindrical forms with external spines of wrought iron were built by the prominent engineer Gustave Eiffel, who a year after Signac's painting began construction on the eponymously named Eiffel Tower. Eiffel and his family had previously lived on the site while he was under the employment of another engineering firm.

Unlike the common Impressionist depictions of natural landscapes and urban playgrounds, Signac made a purposeful choice to honour – and even beautify – an industrial zone that was the product of advancements in pneumatic chemistry and scientific capabilities in a rapidly changing world. It has been suggested that he favoured the view of the gasometers as a reflection of his emerging radical anarchistic politics. Certainly, it also aligned with the scientific basis of the colour theory that he and his friend and mentor Georges Seurat adopted in their Divisionist methods that in 1886 became Neo-Impressionism.

After sketching various locations for his painting of the gasometers, Signac chose the far side of the site, cast in an early-morning light, looking west towards the Seine. In the foreground, a group of workshops and domestic buildings are bordered by a picket fence. Signac chose to eliminate a tree that was documented in his original charcoal sketch at the centre of the forms, leaving only a manufactured environment. These buildings sit on the outskirts of the gas-producing facility, which is surrounded by a 5-metre wall used to elevate the infrastructure out of risk of flooding from the Seine. Also elevated is a railway, the blue wall passing on the left, used for delivering the inordinate amounts of coal needed to produce gas to fill the gasometers. The railway enters the facility at the border wall behind the enclosed buildings, emerging in a golden light in the distance to the right.

At the painting's edge, careful observation reveals the side of a three-storey building erected on top of the wall. This impressive structure with a sloped mansard roof was the foreman's residence and was positioned to oversee the facility but, like the railway, overshadowed the workers' area below. However, everything is dwarfed by the gasometers, whose moveable caps ascend and descend the iron spines based on the volume of gas they contain.

Signac's commitment to this composition was deliberate and considered. Despite the lack of other moving elements, the painted surfaces shimmer in light. This is achieved by the application of small strokes of premixed colour, applied as pure pigment lightened by lead white. In the foreground, the use of varying tints create movement in the singular elements of grass and sky, while the potentially homogenous planes of shadowed walls and tiled roofs vibrate with light created by neighbouring strokes of contrasting colour. This Divisionist method was based on the scientific understanding that the use of opposing colour would optically mix at viewing distance. Signac was invited to exhibit this work and others at the final group exhibition of the Impressionists held in Paris in 1886, marking the beginning of a new era of radical change. Inevitably the gasometers became redundant technology and the site was cleared, with the riverbank given over to housing. The wall and the foreman's residence still remain and now form part of an entrance to a public green space known as Impressionist Park.

An important but hidden feature of *Gasometers at Clichy* is that Signac chose to paint it on a raw canvas weave without the traditional white preparation known as a ground layer. This seems counterintuitive to a work so intent on the depiction of bright light! Signac hoped that the absorbent canvas would draw excess oil from the paint and reduce the inevitable yellowing as the work aged, thereby prolonging the specific optical relationships he so diligently established. Unfortunately, a varnish layer applied early in the twentieth century ultimately aged to have the same detrimental influence on the work. One of the great privileges as a conservator is to undo past influences and return a work closer to the artist's intention. When I conserved this work, the varnish was removed to reveal the symphony of colour obscured for decades, once again allowing us to marvel at Signac's achievement.

Michael Varcoe-Cocks is NGV Associate Director, Conservation.

The NGV warmly thanks the Felton Bequest for acquiring Paul Signac's *Gasometers at Clichy*, 1886, for the NGV Collection.



Paul Signac *Gasometers at Clichy* 1886. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1948. 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

'Paul Signac's *Gasometers at Clichy* is a work that naturally appeals to a painting conservator, being a celebration of paint and colour under-pinned by scientific methodology.'
Michael Varcoe-Cocks



Claude Monet *Road at La Cavée, Pourville* 1882. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of Mrs. Susan Mason Loring. Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

Claude Monet *Road at La Cavée, Pourville* 1882

Words by **Dr Miranda Wallace**

French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston features three paintings by Claude Monet created in 1881 and 1882 on the Normandy coast. Each painting is equally worthy of close looking, but the one that left a lasting impression on me was *Road at la Cavée, Pourville*, 1882.

On either side of a sunken path, banks of grasses thickly sewn with yellow and white flowers glisten in the sunlight. Below the centre of the composition and slightly to the right, a darkened glade promises cool respite from the warm sun. In the background is a calm triangle of sea, rendered with small horizontal strokes in lilac, cerulean, green and white.

The work's X-shaped composition is a traditional trope in landscape painting, which creates a sense of depth with a road disappearing into a village, a river flowing through a landscape, or a crooked path wending through an open field. Retaining this basic structure, Monet has reduced his composition to an almost abstract assembly of forms, an impression increased when you take in the dazzling array of paint strokes that keep the eye moving across the painting's surface.

Monet's brushstrokes become almost animated when viewed up close, with each slanted or curved line evidencing the painter's determined and repeated dabs with his brush to convey the rich colours that weave together to create the impression of coastal grasses in flower. Gazing at this painting, I could easily imagine the grasses moving gently in the breeze, with bees and butterflies flitting among the flowers, as I mentally follow the path downwards, to an unseen, sandy beach.

Between 1881 and 1885, Monet undertook lengthy excursions along the Channel coast, often in the winter months, painting the sea and shoreline in all weather conditions. He often focused his eye on the rocky coves and rugged cliffs that lend this coastline its distinctive character, staying in different coastal villages, including Varengéville, Fécamp, Étretat and Pourville. This was a period of intense change in Monet's personal life, and he later described each of these 'painting intensives' as providing 'a period of relaxation and rejuvenation'.[1]

For over a decade, Monet and his wife, Camille, had lived with persistent financial insecurity and had experienced periods of near ruin. In 1876 Monet met Ernest Hoschedé, a department-store owner who commissioned Monet to paint decorative panels for his summer residence, the Château de Rottembourg. In a strange reversal of fortunes, within a year Hoschedé had declared bankruptcy and he and his family – wife Alice and their six children – came to live with Claude and Camille Monet, and their young son Jean, in a rented house in Vétheuil. Two years later, Camille gave birth to a second son but, following a long illness, she died before his second birthday.

The early years of the 1880s thus included a period of considerable sadness for Monet, but they also saw the development of a new relationship – with Alice Hoschedé, who would become his second wife in 1891. Within two years of Camille's death, Monet and Alice, with their blended family of eight children, were living together in Poissy. By 1883 they had moved once again, this time further west along the Seine river, to a rented house in Giverny. This began a period of greater stability in Monet's life, with gradually improving painting sales leading to his ability to buy, in 1890, the property where he would live for the rest of his life. (Although Ernest Hoschedé effectively abandoned his wife and children, he didn't provide Alice with a divorce, so she and Monet weren't at liberty to marry until after Ernest's death in 1891.)

The early 1880s was also a period in which Monet tested, again and again, his capacity to capture in paint his personal vision of the world. In an 1868 letter written from Étretat to his painter-friend Frédéric Bazille, Monet explained his need to paint away from the city:

> One is too taken up with all that one sees and hears in Paris, however strong one is, and what I do here will at least have the merit of being unlike anyone else, at least I believe so, because it will simply be the expression of what I, and only I, have felt.[2]

In early February 1882, Monet was staying at a hotel in Dieppe, but soon he determined it was too distant from the cliffs and beaches where he hoped to set up his easel. On 15 February, he moved further west, to Pourville-sur-Mer – about one hour's walk from Dieppe, across the beachfront and up and over the chalky cliffs. He became a lodger in a house that he described to Alice as 'on the shingle itself, and the waves beat at the foot of the house'.[3]

Monet was still in Pourville in April 1882 when he wrote to Alice:

> I've spent so long on some paintings that I no longer know what to think of them, and I am definitely getting harder to please; nothing satisfies me and in addition to that nature is changing so much at the moment. How lovely the countryside is becoming and what a joy it would be for me to show you the delightful places there are to see here![4]

He received a visit from Alice and their children during the summer months, and in September he was still in Pourville when he wrote to Paul Durand-Ruel:

> [I] am in a state of utter despair. After a few days of good weather, it's raining again and once again I have to put the studies I started to one side. It's driving me to distraction and the unfortunate thing is that I take it out on my poor paintings. I destroyed a large picture of flowers which I'd just done along with three or four paintings which I not only scraped down but slashed. This is absurd, I know, but I feel the hour of my departure drawing near and I am witnessing a complete transformation taking place in Nature, and my courage is failing as a result, in the awareness that I have spent money in advance and have nothing to show for it.[5]

Despite frequent struggles with the elements and personal misgivings about what he had achieved, in 1883 Monet presented twenty-five paintings from his Pourville sojourn in an exhibition staged by Durand-Ruel, first in Paris and then in London. We can imagine that each of these exhibited canvases was hard won, given his frequent anguish and tendency to destroy his works.

Unfortunately, Monet felt his work was met with a resounding silence, ruefully writing to Durand-Ruel:

> This new and unfamiliar indifference has affected me deeply. When we were attacked and even vilified in the newspapers we could always comfort ourselves with the thought that it was all a measure of our worth since no one would have bothered about us if that weren't the case. So how should this silence be interpreted?[6]

Some critics, however, did argue the case for Monet as a painter of brave new talent and insight. *Road at la Cavée* was singled out by Gustave Geffroy in his review, described simply as 'a painting composed of three straight lines, two leafy, grassy slopes whose bases intersect with the sea in the background'.[7] Geffroy went on to say that this initial sketching out of the composition was followed by the artist's 'real work':

> It is then that the painter exhausts himself to render the nuances of the color, all the accidents of the light. With the juxtaposition of pure colors, he succeeds in expressing planes and a sense of relief, distance, and movement.[8]

I have wondered if the persistence in my memory of this particular painting, following my first encounter with it in 2021, was due to the sense of déjà vu it evoked. Although I had no recollection of seeing Pourville, I visited Normandy almost thirty years ago and vividly recall the experience of recognising in nature something I was long familiar with from a painting. In that case, it was Monet's paintings of Étretat that had featured in slide exams during my art history studies. However, meditating further on *Road at la Cavée*'s sunken path, I realised the place evoked by the painting was not the Normandy coast at all, but a sandy track down which I had walked many times in summers past, on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), just off the coast of southern Queensland.

Of course, Pourville has radically different vegetation and no doubt a gentler sun, but there was something very evocative to me about the grasses growing among the sand and the dark tangle of trees to the side of the path. Perhaps it was the circumstances of the 2021 Melbourne winter and the impending sixth Covid lockdown, and the fear that such places would soon be impossible to reach, that also influenced my response to this painting.

Arguably, Monet's *Seacoast at Trouville*, 1881, is a more successful composition and attractive painting, with its central motif of a bent and twisted tree evoking the strength and force of the winds that shape the Channel coast's vegetation. But perhaps the more abstract composition of *Road at la Cavée* rendered it more translatable to my own memory, returning several times to my mind's eye when I have sought to visualise a calm place that evokes a sense of peaceful enclosure, the sensation of warmth and a gentle breeze, and the glistening reflections and hum of a benevolent natural world.

Dr Miranda Wallace is NGV Senior Curator, International Exhibitions.

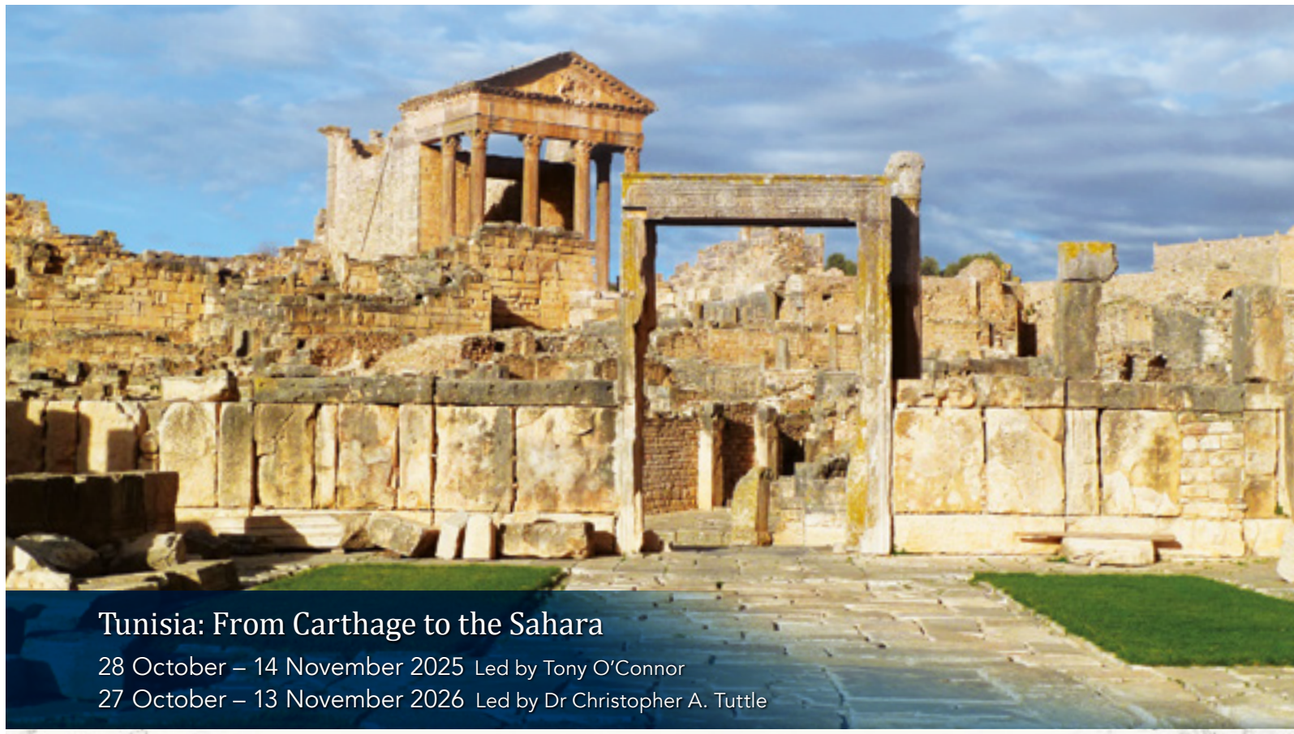
See the works discussed in the 2025 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* at NGV International from 6 June.

French Impressionism is organised by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in partnership with the NGV and supported by Presenting Partner City of Melbourne, Principal Partner Kennedy, Premium Partner HSBC, Major Partners EY, Telstra, Qantas and CGU, and Learning Partner the University of Melbourne.

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

ASA CULTURAL TOURS
AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

Cultural Tours
for an inquiring mind



The Roman Capitol at Dougga, Tunisia. Photo: Julia Kelly

Australians Studying Abroad
Over 40 years of innovation and excellence

Join an ASA cultural tour for a fresh vision of the world.

Learn about places you have always longed to visit or see your favourites with new eyes. Feed your imagination with new sights and knowledge, and delight in the company of like-minded travellers.

"*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.*"

– Marcel Proust



Sardinia and Corsica:
Islands of
Forgotten Riches
2 – 19 October 2025
Led by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle



Ancient Kingdoms of South India:
Forts, Palaces, Temples
& Spice Gardens
24 January – 13 February 2026
Led by Em. Prof. Bernard Hoffert



Jordan in Depth: Petra,
Desert Fortresses, Wadi Rum
and the Red Sea
19 March – 3 April 2026
Led by Dr Lucy Wadeson

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD ABN 27 006 589 242
Call +61 (0)3 9822 6899 Email info@asatours.com.au
For detailed itineraries and a complete list of tours visit our website.

www.asatours.com.au
australiansstudyingabroad
asa_culturaltours



KIMONO

THROUGH THE AGES



Opening 4 June at NGV International, *Kimono* examines the beauty and artistry of this eponymous Japanese garment and how it has inspired global art, design and fashion since Japan reopened to the world in the mid nineteenth century. The exhibition premieres new, never-before-seen acquisitions, supported by generous donors, alongside a selection of paintings, posters, magazines and woodblock prints from the NGV Collection, including works by some of the most experimental and innovative fashion designers working today. Here, Wayne Crothers, NGV Senior Curator, Asian Art, explores the history of the kimono through key works in the exhibition.

Words by **Wayne Crothers**

On any given weekend, the streets of Tokyo's fashion district, Harajuku, are heaving with young pleasure-seekers promenading with their friends. Whether cruising the iconic Laforet fashion centre and its infinite variety of tiny boutiques and designer stores, or attending J-pop idol book signings, their strict weekday regimen of study or employment is given over to youthful abandon. Venturing down Takeshita Street to indulge in renowned Marion crêpes filled with strawberries, azuki-bean paste and whipped cream, or treating themselves to the recent craze for rainbow cheese toasties (Google it!) or strawberry whipped-cream sandwiches, Gen Z – or Zoomers, those in their mid-teens to late twenties – voraciously seek a lifestyle and fashion that will not only distinguish themselves from previous generations but, most of all, shock their parents.

From the 1940s and Japan's redevelopment through the austere postwar decades, followed by the hedonistic pursuits of the bubble economy of the 1980s and 90s, wearing Japan's traditional costume – the kimono – was increasingly seen as a dying tradition. Difficult to put on and physically restricting when worn, kimono were deemed impractical for a modern lifestyle, typically reserved for formal occasions. In the spirit of Japan's new imperial era, Reiwa ('beautiful harmony'), inaugurated in 2019 and characterised as an era of 'culture being born and nurtured by people coming together beautifully', a new generation of young Japanese are challenging ideas of modernity and rediscovering their country's heritage and unique fashion traditions by reinventing the kimono. New kimono designer labels like Robe Japonica, Modern Antenna and Y. & SONS, alongside talented artisan kimono artists like Tamao Shigemune and Rumi Rock, present new street-fashion themes like 'super cute' (*kawaii*), 'playful gothic' and 'new dandyism'.

Craving new designs and innovative fashion statements as rapidly as the seasons and years change, visitors to Harajuku are a continuation of Japan's intriguing design and fashion traditions. Time-travelling back two hundred years, the same scenes of youth demanding innovation in fashion were found in the popular recreational and shopping districts of Ryōgoku along the Sumida River, Asakusa around Sensō-ji Temple, and the celebrated pleasure district of Yoshiwara. At this time, the city of Edo (the former name of Tokyo) was considered the world's most populous city, its burgeoning economy driven by an affluent merchant and samurai class. Fashion-conscious youth, conservative established families and professional courtesan entertainers all sought the latest kimono, with insatiable demand for new and innovative styles.

The word kimono is a combination of two characters, 着物, literally meaning 'thing to wear'. This term has only come into common use in the modern era, particularly from the Meiji period (1868–1912) through to the early 20th century. Early kimono-like garments worn by officials were originally based on Chinese costumes that were brought to Japan during periods of exchange, from the Kofun period (300–538 CE) to the Nara period (618–907 CE). It was during the time of great cultural development and independence of the Heian period (794–1185) that a unique style of court costume known as *jūnihitoe* (twelve-layer robe) was developed for women of the imperial court, as magnificently illustrated in depictions of episodes from the *Tale of Genji*. The undergarments of both men's and women's court costumes from this time were known as *kosode* (literally: 'short sleeves') and were simply constructed silk garments made from joining lengths from a bolt of fabric.

Through the subsequent Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1333–1573) periods, Japan experienced feuding imperial factions and rival military lords displaying their ruling bravado and status through costume. During this time, silk *kosode* became increasingly decorated and the chosen garment over which layers of opulent outer robes known as *uchikake* were worn. Very few examples of *uchikake* from this era remain; however, their appearance, style and use of luxuriantly woven and embroidered fabrics have been preserved from the fourteenth century into the present day in the production of Noh theatre robes. Such magnificent examples include the



gorgeously decorated Noh theatre robe *Asuita* (meaning a thick, heavy stiff fabric) in the NGV Collection featuring alternating block designs with auspicious symbols such as bamboo grass leaves (*sasa*), cloud-shaped gongs (*kumochoban*), stylised flowers (*karabana*) and interlocking deer horns.

As the warring years of Japan's medieval era drew to a close during the Momoyama period (1573–1603), the seventeenth century ushered in a time of peace and prosperity known as the Edo period (1603–1867). The simply constructed *kosode* became a common garment across all classes. Uncomplicated in tailoring and generic in form, the *kosode* distinguished the social standing of its wearer through the quality of materials used, the fineness of techniques employed, and the sophistication of coded decorations and motifs displayed. Bustling cities and towns became the backdrop for people flaunting their wealth, personality and social position. While the ruling classes were rarely, if ever, seen in public, the samurai class, alongside the recently financially empowered merchant classes, became the driving force of creativity and innovation in fashion.

The samurai classes, who associated themselves with the preservation of Japan's cultural heritage, cherished symbolism alluding to poetry, the sophisticated Noh theatre and the changing seasons. The *Katabira kosode, summer kimono with bouquets and scattered fans*, early 19th century–mid 19th century, (acquired with the support of Dr Peter Chu), a lightweight summer kimono made from ramie fabric that would be worn by high-class samurai women, showcases colourful bouquets of peonies, hollyhocks and wisteria against a white background. Scattered throughout are fans displaying bamboo, maple leaves, pine trees, butterflies and pine needles, alluding to the changing seasons and poetry from the *Hyakunin Isshu*, the classical anthology of one hundred poems by one hundred poets.

Celebrating their recently established financial power, the merchant classes also took great pride in appreciating the subtle nuances of seasonal themes, as can be seen in the *Katabira furisode, summer kimono with falling snow scene*, early 19th century–mid 19th century (acquired with the support of Cecily and John Adams), a light-yellow ramie kimono. In a visual pun, the decoration on this summer-weight garment features snow falling diagonally onto a frosty landscape festooned with bamboo, rocks and plum trees bearing the first blossoms of spring, intended to evoke a cooling sensation for its wearer during the hot summer months.

A prominent feature of both the yellow *katabira furisode* and the NGV's red *Uchikake furisode, wedding kimono with pine, bamboo, plum, and cranes*, early 19th century–mid 19th century (purchased with funds donated by Michael and Emily Tong), is their *furisode*, or 'swinging sleeves'. *Furisode* indicate their wearer is a young, unmarried woman, serving as unmistakable signals of nuptial availability when worn out, perhaps at the theatre, or in shopping and recreational districts. The *uchikake furisode* wedding kimono highlights the auspicious colour of *beni* (deep red) and features a delicately precise *shibori* (tie-dye) design of cranes, bamboo, pine trees and plum blossoms, symbolising long life and happiness. Pine trees, plum blossoms and bamboo are known as the 'three friends of winter', representing strength, resilience and rebirth – qualities associated with a successful and congenial marriage. *Furisode* for young women were often the most expensive and gorgeously decorated kimono to produce. Treasured items filled with nostalgia, they represented the owner's youth and, in many cases, they were altered to have their sleeves shortened after marriage to allow for ongoing use.

The kimono continued to transform and innovate through Japan's modern era of the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, with new materials and techniques used to make vibrantly decorated garments. The creation and use of lower-grade silks, mechanically woven wool and synthetic rayon, all decorated with bold geometric patterns and stencil-applied ikat motifs (*meisen kasuri*), made innovative and exciting kimono designs affordable for youthful modern urban dwellers and the working classes. These innovations continue to this day, with the use of polyester and digitally printed fabrics that not only fulfil the traditional role of a kimono as a practical garment but also represent traditions perpetuated by innovation and creativity, encapsulating the social identity of each new generation. While kimonos have remained consistent in form and tailoring over the centuries, it is the individual choices of fabric, colour, pattern and adornment that reveal the ever-changing story of Japan and its people.

Wayne Crothers is NGV Senior Curator, Asian Art.

See these works as a part of *Kimono*, opening at NGV International on 4 June.

The NGV warmly thanks all those who donated the works discussed. For more information about this ticketed exhibition, scan the code.

(pp. 38–39) **Issey Miyake, Ikko Tanaka** after *Sharaku* 2016 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by the Hon Michael Watt and Cecilie Hall, 2016 © Miyake Design Studio.
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

(p. 40) **Japanese** *Katabira furisode, summer kimono with falling snow scene* early 19th century–mid 19th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Cecily and John Adams, 2024

(p. 41) **Japanese** *Uchikake furisode wedding kimono with pine, bamboo, plum, and cranes* early – mid 19th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Michael and Emily Tong, 2024

(left) **Japanese** *Katabira kosode, summer kimono with bouquets and scattered fans* early – mid 19th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Dr Peter Chu, 2024

MONYO 紋様

Exploring traditional kimono patterns

In Japan, traditional kimono patterns are more than just decoration – they carry deep meanings and stories. Known as *monyo* 紋様, these designs often reflect nature, the changing seasons and auspicious symbols (symbols of good fortune). Choosing a pattern was about more than beauty; it was also about wearing the right wish for the right occasion. Here, we introduce some of the timeless patterns featured in *Kimono*.

Words by **Sala Okabe**



FUJI 藤
WISTERIA

The *fuji* or wisteria is a traditional Japanese motif rich in meaning. Known for its vitality, wisteria grows by winding its vines around other trees, symbolising resilience, prosperity and the flourishing of descendants. The word *fuji* also echoes *fushi* (meaning 'immortality' in Japanese), which further connects it to wishes for longevity and lasting family lines. Additionally, because wisteria blooms gracefully downwards, it was believed to connect heaven and earth, and people in ancient times thought of it as a messenger for the gods descending to the human world. This combination of beauty, strength and spiritual meaning has made the wisteria a beloved design in kimono, obi and various decorative arts, often used for auspicious occasions.

TSURU 鶴
CRANE PATTERN

Believed to live for a thousand years, the crane symbolises longevity in Japanese culture. Cranes also mate for life, symbolising fidelity and enduring love, making them a perfect motif for celebrations, especially weddings. The crane was highly revered as a sacred being as its call was said to reach the heavens, connecting humans with the divine. This combination of longevity, loyalty and spiritual significance makes the crane pattern an auspicious and meaningful design in various traditional Japanese crafts, particularly in festive and ceremonial settings.



TATEWAKU 立涌
RISING STEAM PATTERN

The *tatewaku* pattern, featuring two curved lines representing rising steam, originated in the Heian period (794–1185) as part of *yūsoku* 有職文様, court patterns used by nobles. This auspicious design symbolises growth, advancement and prosperity, and was often used for formal garments and furnishings within the imperial court. Because of its meaning associated with upward movement and good fortune, *tatewaku* has been widely used for celebratory occasions, including wedding kimono and formal wear. Its simple yet elegant design reflects a wish for continuous progress and success, making it one of Japan's most cherished patterns.





SHŌBU 菖蒲
IRIS

In Japanese the iris is called *shōbu* 菖蒲, a name that later came to be associated with the word *shōbu* 勝負, meaning 'victory' or 'competition'. Therefore, irises were commonly used in the design of weapons. Additionally, the iris was believed to have health benefits, making it a popular protective charm against evil. To this day, irises are displayed during *Tango no Sekku* (Boys' Festival), and people take baths with iris leaves to pray for good health and protection from illness. *Shōbu* symbolise both martial strength and wellbeing, remaining an important and cherished design in Japanese tradition.

(p. 44, above) **Japanese** *Summer kimono (Yukata)* Meiji period 1868–1912 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Late Hon Michael Watt KC and Cecilie Hall, 2013

(below) **Japanese** *Uchikake furisode wedding kimono with pine, bamboo, plum and cranes* early – mid 19th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Michael and Emily Tong, 2024

(p. 45, above) **Japanese** *Girls kimono with, flowers, butterflies, pine trees and flowing stream design* c. 1960 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Forthcoming gift of Pauline Gandel, 2025

(below) **Japanese** *Hitoe kosode, kimono with themes alluding to eight Noh theatre plays* late Edo period (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Jennifer Lempriere and Michael Pithie, 2024

(p. 46, above) **Japanese** *Uchikake kosode with a falconry scene and Heian period imperial cart amongst flowers* c. 1800 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Geraldine Buxton, 2024

(below) **Japanese** *Katabira kosode, summer kimono with bouquets and scattered fans* early – mid 19th century (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Dr Peter Chu, 2024

(p. 47, above) **Japanese** *Noh theatre robe, Atsuita (Nōshōzoku Atsuita)* late 18th – early 19th century (detail) (Nōshōzoku Atsuita 能装束厚板). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest in honour of Allan Myers AC KC President of the Council of Trustees of the NGV, 2012

(below) **Oju Shogetsu** *Honour of education: Dressmaking* 1890 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Sidney Myer Fund, Governor, 1994. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

KIKU 菊
CHRYSANTHEMUM PATTERN

The chrysanthemum pattern represents longevity and protection from evil spirits. Known for its medicinal properties, the chrysanthemum is linked with immortality, longevity and good health. During the Heian period (794–1185), chrysanthemums became popular in court decorations, furnishings and clothing, symbolising nobility and authority. Due to its association with the aristocracy, the pattern was reserved for the imperial court, and common people refrained from using it. However, after the Edo period (1603 to 1867), the chrysanthemum pattern became widely used by the general population. Today, it continues to embody wishes for longevity, wellbeing and good fortune, while retaining its connection to noble heritage and auspicious symbolism.





ŌGI 扇
FOLDING FAN PATTERN

The folding fan, or *ōgi* in Japanese, is a traditional motif symbolising prosperity and good fortune. When opened, the fan spreads out in a radial shape, representing the idea of expansion and growth. Because of this, fans are associated with family prosperity and good luck, making the folding fan pattern a popular choice for celebratory occasions such as weddings. In addition to symbolising good fortune, fans were also believed to have protective powers, serving as charms for warding off evil and misfortune. This strong symbolism has made fans an essential element in traditional Japanese performing arts, including Noh theatre, *kagura* (Shinto dance), classical dance, *kyōgen* (comic theatre) and *rakugo* (comic storytelling), in which they are used both as props and symbols of auspiciousness.



KIKKŌ 亀甲
TORTOISESHELL PATTERN

The tortoiseshell-shaped *kikkō* pattern is based on a regular hexagon – one of the strongest structures found in nature. Since turtles are believed to live for ten thousand years, this pattern symbolises longevity and good fortune. It also carries a protective meaning, as the hard shell is thought to ward off evil. Introduced to Japan from China during the Asuka to Nara periods (6th–8th centuries), *kikkō* was quickly adopted as a symbol of prosperity. From the Kamakura period (1185–1333) onwards, it became popular among warriors and commoners alike, used in armour, garments and daily items. Today, *kikkō* remains a motif that conveys wishes for strength, protection and longevity.

ASANOHA 麻の葉
HEMP LEAF PATTERN

The *asanoha* pattern is a geometric design inspired by the shape of hemp leaves. It has been used in Japan since the Heian period (794–1185), making it one of the oldest traditional motifs. Hemp, cherished in Japan long before the arrival of cotton and silk, is known for its strength and rapid growth. Because of these qualities, the *asanoha* pattern symbolises healthy growth and was often used in children's clothing to wish for their strong and steady development. It is also connected with prosperity and protection against evil, making it a popular motif in women's kimono.

Sala Okabe is a kimono stylist based in Melbourne.

See the works illustrated in this article as part of *Kimono* at NGV International from 4 June. The NGV warmly thanks all those who supported the acquisition of these works for the Collection.





THE ART OF IMITATION

For centuries, the kimono served as a tableau on which to describe and record histories. The variety of patterns and colours and the often-changing trends featured in these garments reveal much about Japanese culture and society. Here, through works in *Kimono,* Dr Jenny Hall explores how *shokunin* (artisans) achieved their extraordinary patterns in the Meiji and Edo periods and beyond.

Words by **Dr Jenny Hall**

Japanese *Indigo summer kimono with tigers* Meiji period 1868–1912 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Late Hon Michael Watt KC and Cecilie Hall, 2023

In a cluttered Kyoto studio an artisan checks his kimono design on a computer. A scarlet peony outlined in white fills the left of the screen, bordered by a hot-pink chrysanthemum, purple tassels of wisteria, orange petals and sage-green leaves. The artisan presses print and the design appears on a piece of silk from an inkjet printer. This is how 70 per cent of kimono are produced in Kyoto today. Dubbed 'digital *yūzen*', the process bears little resemblance to traditional *yūzen* rice-paste resist dyeing, but it imitates long-established kimono design and is accepted as a contemporary iteration of kimono production – even by artisans that practice conventional kimono-dyeing techniques.

Prior to digital printing, kimono were patterned using three main methods – *yūzen* (rice-paste resist dyeing), *shibori* (tie-dyeing) and weaving. Called *tegaki yūzen* (freehand *yūzen*) or *tsutsugaki yūzen*, this method uses a *tsutsu*, a pipe similar to that used to ice cakes, to apply the rice-paste resist. The design is drawn onto the fabric using the *tsutsu*, the dye handpainted within the lines of resist according to the pattern, and finally the rice paste washed out of the cloth, leaving the undyed lines and multicoloured design.

The white outlines of leaves and flowers produced using *tegaki yūzen* can be seen clearly on the NGV's blue Meiji-period (1868–1912) *Summer kimono* (*yukata*) (purchased with funds donated by the late Hon. Michael Watt QC and Cecilie Hall). Indigo dyeing (*aizome*) is a complex process in which the depth of colour is determined by multiple applications of fermented dye. The lighter blue of this kimono was created by covering the flowers in rice-paste resist after dyeing to protect them, and the background was dyed several more times to create the deeper indigo.

As a highly visible art form, kimono were a way for people to display their aesthetic taste and wealth. In the Edo period (1603–1868) the Tokugawa government issued numerous sumptuary edicts to regulate and control the classes, especially to prevent the lower classes – such as the increasingly wealthy merchants – from flaunting their newfound affluence. Lower classes were restricted in the types of fabrics they could wear, and production techniques were regulated to curb sartorial excess. One such example is the tie-dyeing technique *kanoko*, or 'fawn-spot', *shibori*, so-called for its minute tie-dyed dots that are said to look like the spots on a young deer's back. This is the most revered form of *shibori* because pinching and tying thousands of tiny spots of fabric is technically difficult and labour-intensive.

The Tokugawa government banned *kanoko shibori* in 1683 for being too extravagant. But while many such edicts were issued throughout the Edo period, the public dubbed them 'three-day laws' based on their lack of effectiveness. Officials struggled to enforce the rules and townspeople looked to ways of flouting them by wearing forbidden fabrics or colours such as red or purple beneath their everyday clothing, or lining their kimono with higher quality cloth.

Artisans also adapted to these edicts by developing new techniques that imitated forbidden methods. The high quality of one early nineteenth-century *Katabira kosode summer kimono with bouquets and scattered fans* (supported by Dr Peter Chu) is emphasised by peonies, heart-shaped wild ginger and threads of wisteria flowers picked out in gold thread and deeply coloured embroidery. *Katabira* were light, unlined robes of finely woven



Silk threads being dyed at Kawashima Textile Mills in Kyoto, Japan, c.1965. The hanks of silk hang from the ceiling on bamboo rods and are then dipped into the dyeing vats. Photo: Three Lions/Getty Images



Yoshio Mori indigo dye workshop outside Kyoto, Japan. Photo: Education Images/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

‘As a highly visible art form, kimono were a way for people to display their aesthetic taste and wealth.’

Dr Jenny Hall

ramie or hemp cloth, used in the Edo period for the summer clothing of the upper classes. This kimono illustrates the technique of *suri-hitta* in rust and ochre tones on the fans, leaves and flowers. *Suri-hitta* is pattern applied using a stencil and appears as sections of small squares with a tiny dot of color in the centre, a substitute for the prohibited *kanoko shibori*. Referencing a difficult, labour-intensive and highly valued technique such as *kanoko shibori* also served to elevate the perceived quality of the garment.

There are more than a hundred kinds of *shibori* involving folding, twisting, sewing, compressing or binding. The NGV’s *Arimatsu shibori yukata* kimono illustrates several stitched *shibori* techniques. *Kamiate shibori* uses paper stitched or glued onto the fabric, creating the leaf interiors, while lines of stitching called *ori-nui shibori* have been gathered tight before dyeing to create the outlines of the leaves, frog and water. The dramatic collar is produced using a rare, technically difficult method called *mino shibori* that is no longer practised, whereby the cloth is pulled on a hook, folded and bound. *Mino* refers to the traditional Japanese straw rain cape, which the collar is said to resemble.

Artisans of the Meiji period continued to imitate *shibori* using other methods of dyeing such as stencil rice-paste resist (*katazome*). This was likely for commercial purposes – patterns could be mass-produced more economically. The repeating pattern of flying geese, reeds and vertical stripes on a Meiji-period cotton men’s *Indigo summer kimono with geese and reeds* (supported by the late Hon. Michael Watt KC and Cecilie Hall) was created using a medium-sized stencil (*chugata zome*). The cloud-like sections with their blurred borders imitate *shibori* but have also been produced by stencilling. In addition, each cloud either contains stripes or black dots that mimic different *shibori* tying techniques such as the loop-binding *miura shibori*, which produces a water-like circular design. The black cross-hatches included in the pattern appear to mimic woven ikat, referencing yet another technique.

A further example of stencilling techniques used to copy *shibori* can be found on another Meiji-period cotton kimono on display in *Kimono*, this one featuring tigers (*Indigo summer kimono with tigers,* also purchased with funds donated by the late Hon. Michael Watt KC and Cecilie Hall). The bamboo back-ground pattern with its wavy intertwined lines imitates *arashi shibori*. *Arashi* means ‘storm’, and *arashi shibori*, created by wrapping the fabric around a pole, binding it with string and compressing to produce a rippled pattern, is said to resemble driving rain.

Today, artisans continue to produce these patterns by alternative methods. In Kyoto, the digital *yūzen* artisan also imitates traditional dye methods such as *tegaki yūzen* by outlining his floral images in white borders. Tie-dyeing is more difficult to copy because its handmade attributes result in a lack of uniformity. To create the irregularities of traditional *kanoko shibori*, the artisan scans pieces of hand-created *shibori* into their designs, continuing a centuries-long practice of imitation.

Dr Jenny Hall is a Teaching Associate at the University of Melbourne.

See the works discussed in this article as part of *Kimono* at NGV International from 4 June. The NGV warmly thanks all those who supported the acquisition of the works discussed for the Collection.

into art

Sam Jinks
Wally (2025)
Silicone, pigment, resin, nylon, fabric
Commissioned by Telstra for Into Art, 2025

Telstra’s helping more Aussies get into art by turning three art sceptics into artworks.
See the sculptures at NGV Australia.

RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA



Ronnie Tjampitjinpa *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra* 1996. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield, 2025
© Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency

Born west of the Kintore Ranges in the Northern Territory, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa was one of the youngest of a group of men who began painting at the start of the Western Desert art movement in 1971. In 1996 he painted *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra,* which recently joined the NGV Collection as a gift of Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield.

Words by **Michael Gentle**

Australian historian Patrick Wolfe famously wrote 'invasion is a structure, not an event'.[1] Wolfe's statement encapsulates the systematic nature of colonisation – in the context of the White Australia Policy, assimilation became the primary tool of colonial control of First Nations people in the twentieth century, a process that also helped uphold the myth of terra nullius and eradicate and assimilate all signs of Indigeneity. Assimilation policies displaced First Peoples from their Ancestral lands and destroyed languages, kinship systems, cultural practices and connections to Country. In 1961 then Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck stated that 'extension, where applicable, of government settlement work to encourage nomadic and semi-nomadic natives to adopt a more settled way of life [should be encouraged],' accelerating destructive policies that had been dismantling communities since the late nineteenth century. [2]

Established in 1957 about 250 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs, Papunya was one of the last assimilationist settlements, symbolising the violent drive of colonial powers to encourage local groups to adopt Western codes of socialisation. The settlement brought together Pintupi, Luritja, Anmatyerr, Warlpiri and Kukatja language groups, forming a hybrid space where Ancestral stories – expressed in diverse ways – intersected. It was this coming together that fuelled a strong will for First Peoples to defy assimilationist policies through community resilience, often manifested through the making and sharing of art. Just under two decades after the formalisation of Papunya, a contemporary First Peoples art movement would be realised, birthed out of resistance, cultural expression and dynamic adaption.

The expansion of the colonial frontier into the Central and Western Desert from the late nineteenth century through to the 1950s paralleled the gradual integration of First Peoples' art practices into the Eurocentric art market. Artists such as Edwin Pareroultja and Albert Namatjira from Hermannsburg, two hours north-west of Papunya, sold works to both private and public collections. Their figurative watercolour landscapes were descendent from Western visual languages as relayed by artist Rex Batterbee and were thus *accepted* by the European art market.

Others from Groote Eylandt and Oenpelli further north were commissioned by anthropologists to paint on panels of bark from the stringybark tree, with only a few entering into 'fine art' contexts, for example Gumuk Gumana's *The two men, Nabira-mira*, 1948, in the NGV Collection (gift of the Commonwealth Government, 1956). This practice of commissioning was commonplace from the early twentieth-century; however, colonial powers did not recognise the artistic value of work by the peoples in the Central and Western Desert regions.

Education played a key role in the assimilation policies of the period, with First Peoples' knowledge systems undermined and Western ways of thinking elevated in the Eurocentric classroom; Indigenous languages were suppressed in favour of the colonial tongue through direct and violent form of linguicide (enforced language death). Social unrest in Papunya in 1970–71 was, in part, a response to the imposition of Western law and education. In this context, Anmatyerr, Warlpiri and Aranda man Kaapa Tjampitjinpa spearheaded the creation of a mural on the blank wall of the school at Papunya. With art teacher Geoffrey Bardon's guidance, Kaapa Tjampitjinpa brought together a group of men to paint a narrative depicting the honey-ant tunnels beneath the earth that intersect with significant locations above ground, including Papunya itself. Such senior knowledge-holders navigated the space between the growing Western art market and sacred and secret knowledge. These senior men were joined by younger artists, including Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, who contributed his own experiences and knowledge to the project.

Born around 1943 near Muyinga, close to the Northern Territory–Western Australia border, Tjampitjinpa followed the common path of First Peoples who moved into settlements designed for assimilation. He travelled from Yuendumu to Papunya, where he met many family members who had been displaced between various settlements. As the art movement based at the Papunya Tula Arts centre gained momentum in the 1970s, Tjampitjinpa became deeply focused on returning to

‘This work, like the origin story of Papunya, showcases hybridity, reflecting changing aesthetic currents.’

MICHAEL GENTLE

his Ancestral land, playing a key role in the homelands movement, which sought to bring people back to their Country. In the early 1980s, he moved his family to the Kintore settlement in pursuit of this goal. While working in political spaces to sustain connections to Country, Tjampitjinpa continued his art practice, contributing to the second-wave Papunya Tula movement. This period saw artists working on a larger scale, with a graphic intensity that allowed them to confidently convey Ancestral narratives to a growing Western audience, while still preserving the sacred nature of their art.

One of Tjampitjinpa’s key works, *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra*, 1996, was recently gifted to the NGV by American actor and art collector Steve Martin and his wife, writer Anne Stringfield. This work, like the origin story of Papunya, showcases hybridity, reflecting changing aesthetic currents, the growing influence of the art market, and the lasting significance of the Papunya Tula movement.

Painted at Balgo Hills while Tjampitjinpa was visiting from Kintore for Ceremony, the work was created during a period in which he was stranded by floods. He used this time to produce a large-scale piece depicting a dingo story from Kiwirrkurra, about 500 kilometres from Balgo and 200 kilometres from Kintore. The work was intended to support the artist financially during the flood period, with the proceeds providing vital funds to sustain Tjampitjinpa.

However, the work was initially sold below its market value and, upon entering the secondary market, continued to record below-market prices. This is unfortunately a common story for First Peoples art, as the art market – which often does not include Indigenous representatives – can superimpose its own values onto works without recognising their cultural or political significance.

Tjampitjinpa’s aesthetic fortitude and contemporary sentiment in this context was subjugated in favour of the prospect of a ‘cheap sale’. In this way, much like Patrick Wolfe suggests, colonial power is not linear and its ongoing effects are multifaceted.

Recently, D’Lan Davidson, the director of the Melbourne-based gallery D’Lan Contemporary, perceived the sale of *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra* to Steve Martin as an opportunity to give back to Tjampitjinpa’s community. Davidson directed 100 per cent of the funds from the sale to a newly created trust fund, the National Endowment for Indigenous Visual Arts, an independent fund established to centralise and distribute revenue from art sales, ensuring that First Nations artists and their communities benefit directly.

In 2024 Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield gifted this powerful artwork to the NGV as a formidable example of second-wave Papunya art. *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra* will be part of the upcoming touring exhibition *The Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art*, which will travel throughout North America from October. The exhibition provides an exciting opportunity to further amplify the significance of Tjampitjinpa’s work and to share the ongoing legacy of the Papunya Tula movement with international audiences.

Michael Gentle is NGV Curator, Australian and First Nations Art.

See Ronnie Tjampitjinpa’s *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra*, 1996, as part of *The Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art* at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, from 18 October.

The NGV warmly thanks Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield for gifting this work to the Collection.



NGV Director Tony Ellwood AM, Anne Stringfield, Steve Martin and NGV President Council of Trustees Janet Whiting AM with **Ronnie Tjampitjinpa’s** *Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra* 1996

Your first look at *THE STARS WE DO NOT SEE*



Wingu Tingima *Minyma Tjuta* (*Seven Sisters*) 2006. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Supporters and Patrons of Indigenous Art, 2006 ©Wingu Tingima/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

The largest exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art ever presented internationally, *The Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art* will make its global premiere on 18 October at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and tour venues across the United States and Canada. Featuring the 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.

Through a rich display of iconic masterpieces, including many that have never-before left the country, *The Stars We Do Not See* charts watershed moments in Indigenous art, revealing a rich history of creativity in Australia that predates the arrival of Europeans.

The exhibition’s title is in part inspired by the late senior Yolŋu artist Gulumbu Yunupiŋu (1943–2012), who, after her passing, became known as ‘Star Lady’ for her extensive paintings of the night sky. Yunupiŋu’s intricate works, a selection of which will be featured in the exhibition, use crosses to represent the stars we can see, and a dense network of dots to symbolise the stars we cannot see; the unseen expanse of the universe. The Yolŋu people live in Arnhem Land, with Star Lady coming from a community in the north-east known as Yirrkala. Arnhem Land is a region at the top of the Northern Territory that is internationally known for its artists’ daring work on bark.

Highlights in the exhibition include Emily Kam Kngwarray’s magnum opus and largest painting, *Anwerlarr anganenty (Big yam dreaming)*, 1995. This icon of the NGV Collection measures three by eight metres and represents the yam’s underground root systems. This immense canvas, drawn in a single, continuous line, highlights the gesture and spontaneity for which Kngwarray’s body of work is globally renowned.

Urban-based contemporary artists working in new media are also represented throughout the show, with key works by influential artists such as Brook Andrew, Richard Bell, Reko Rennie, Ricky Maynard, Maree Clarke and Lorraine Connelly-Northey. Christian Thompson’s *Burdi burdi (Fire fire)*, 2021, a four-channel sound installation that explores the loss of First Nations languages, will also be on display, alongside Destiny Deacon’s *Snow storm*, 2005, in which found black ragdolls have been placed inside a clear Perspex cube filled with polystyrene balls. The work draws a connection between the concept of ‘the white cube’ and the way Aboriginal material culture has historically been presented in a clinical, museological environment.

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a major publication produced by the NGV and the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

The *Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art* is organised by the NGV and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with the Denver Art Museum, the Portland Art Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the Royal Ontario Museum. Bank of America is the North American Tour Sponsor for the exhibition.

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

The essence of the human condition

Producing a deeply personal yet universally resonant body of work, Nigerian artist Johnson Eziefula infuses his paintings with a hidden autobiographical narrative borne from memories of joy, pain and loss. *A covalent one II*, 2022 – a recent gift of Matthias Arndt through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program– is the first of Eziefula's works to join the Collection. Here, he sits down with NGV curator Sophie Oxenbridge to discuss the work, his interest in the human figure and his love of vibrant colour.

Words by **Sophie Oxenbridge**

SOPHIE OXENBRIDGE **Let's start at the beginning. How did you become an artist?**

JOHNSON EZIEFULA My journey as an artist began during my formative years, watching my older brother draw and create watercolour paintings. Being exposed to his creative process at a young age sparked a deep fascination in me – it was my first introduction to the power of visual expression. For a long time, art remained a personal hobby, something I nurtured quietly. But in 2013 I encountered the work of a Nigerian artist that deeply moved me. It was a pivotal moment – one that gave me permission to take art seriously. From then on, even while studying in medical school, I devoted myself to developing my craft – reading, observing and creating as much as I could. I would say it has been a gradual unfolding, shaped by curiosity, inspiration and a quiet determination to grow.

SO **You work primarily in portraiture. What attracts you to the human figure?**

JE Its expressive and communicative power – the way body language, mannerisms and gestures can convey complex emotions and layered narratives. I'm fascinated by how much can be said without words – how a figure's posture or gaze can hold multiple meanings, sometimes reflecting not just outward expression but inner worlds as well.

I'm naturally drawn to the psychology of being – how people relate to themselves, to others and to the objects and spaces around them. It's also a way for me to mirror my own human experiences, tapping into personal history while creating connections that others can relate to. Through portraiture, I'm able to explore themes of identity, vulnerability and the quiet, often unnoticed stories people carry.

SO **There is a sense of intimacy and familiarity in the depiction of your subjects. Do you know the people in your paintings?**

JE Most of the time, yes. They are family, friends and people within my close circle. I choose to paint people I have real relationships with because they feel like the most honest vessels through which I can tell my story. My work is largely autobiographical – even when the figure represents someone else, it often speaks to a part of me or to shared experiences that are deeply personal. In many ways, these subjects help me navigate my own identity, experiences and reflections, while also allowing others to see parts of themselves in the work.

SO **Do you work from source imagery?**

JE Most of the references I use are photographs I've taken myself – images I create intentionally to build a composition. But I also draw from books, found images and material I come across online. The internet, as a space we all inhabit, feeds into our visual memory – and, sometimes, images I encounter online spark an idea or give form to something I've been thinking about. I would say my process involves gathering and assembling references that embody ideas I want to explore, and from there I build the composition in a way that feels true to the narrative or emotion I'm trying to convey.

SO **The combination of charcoal and acrylic has become a signature medium of yours. Why is that?**

JE I was initially drawn to the softness and depth charcoal on paper gives, especially when applied directly with my fingers. But as my work grew, I began introducing acrylic to add more layers, colour and texture. The dialogue between these materials has become essential to how I convey emotion, mood and narrative within my paintings.

SO **Can you speak about how you employ colour, drama and symbolism in your work?**

JE I tend to work within a carefully considered range of colours to create a consistent and cohesive mood across my paintings. I use a lot of muted tones because they allow me to convey a sense of calm, introspection and melancholy – but I balance these with occasional bursts of stronger, vibrant colours to draw attention to particular compositional elements.

These patterns in clothing, domestic objects and living forms serve as symbolic markers through which I embed subtle narratives and metaphors into the work. These elements carry layers of meaning that relate to identity, personal history and emotion. So, while the overall palette might appear subdued, the interplay of colour, form and symbolism deepens the emotional and psychological space of each work.



Johnson Eziefula *A covalent one II* 2022. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Matthias Arndt through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024 © The artist and The ARNDT Collection

SO **More than just physical representations of your subjects, your portraits capture your subjects' complex inner worlds. How do you convey such emotional depth on the canvas?**

JE That's an interesting question – and, honestly, I think a lot of it comes from a place I can't fully explain. It feels innate, something that flows naturally when I'm creating. It's not entirely intentional or calculated – it's just a part of who I am and how I see people.

Of course, there are elements that contribute to it – my painterly approach, how I treat charcoal, how I layer elements – but at its core, I think the emotional depth comes from my sensitivity to the human condition. I'm always drawn to what lies beneath the surface and I think that sensitivity naturally finds its way onto the canvas.



Johnson Eziefula. Photo: Courtesy of MARUANI MERCIER, Belgium

‘For a long time, art remained a personal hobby, something I nurtured quietly. But in 2013, I encountered the work of a Nigerian artist that deeply moved me. It was a pivotal moment – one that gave me permission to take art seriously.’
Johnson Eziefula



Johnson Eziefula *Never Apart* 2023 © Johnson Eziefula, Courtesy of MARUANI MERCIER, Belgium

SO **Your 2022 work *A covalent one II* has recently entered the NGV Collection. The work depicts a couple holding one another in a tight embrace – can you share the story behind this work?**

JE That painting is a deeply personal piece – an ode to my love life, referencing myself and my partner, who is now my wife. Our journey together started about fourteen years ago and I wanted to reflect that enduring bond.

The setting, with elements of a classroom and school uniforms, is a nod to our early years – a way of transporting myself back to moments that still spark something in me. It’s one of the few works where I speak directly to love, weaving themes of memory, connection and the passage of time.

SO **The title of the work suggests a scientific metaphor – ‘covalent’ often refers to chemical bonds. How does this idea of connection manifest in the painting?**

JE A ‘covalent bond’ felt like the perfect metaphor to describe the connection between myself and my partner. Chemistry is something we’ve shared both academically, as students, and personally, in the emotional bond that has kept us together all these years.

Given my background in science and pharmacy, the concept of two distinct elements sharing parts of themselves to form a stable whole resonated deeply with me. In the context of the painting, it amplifies the idea of love as a bond – something built on mutual exchange, vulnerability and shared growth. The title brings together both our shared history in school and the emotional chemistry that defines our relationship.

SO **Your art often explores themes of identity, youth and culture in contemporary Nigeria. What aspects of Nigerian life do you feel most compelled to capture?**

JE At one point, my work was very much centred around social commentary and observation – looking at how globalisation and the interconnectedness of the world influence contemporary life, especially for Nigerians and Africans like me. I was really compelled to capture the reality of cultural hybridity – the idea that, as people today, we are mostly hybrid beings, shaped by multiple cultures at once. I’ve always found that fascinating – the fact that I speak English though I’m not of British origin, or that I eat Italian food, sing French lyrics and dress in an American style. That mix – that layering of identities – is such a powerful reflection of contemporary life and it was something I wanted to explore deeply in my earlier works.

For me, highlighting this hybridity was also a way to challenge rigid notions of identity and to engage in conversations around race, marginalisation and belonging. I wanted to show how beautiful it is that we are all citizens of the world – that beyond borders, there’s a shared human experience that connects us.

Over time, my focus has evolved. Now, I find myself delving more into personal history – exploring themes and stories that are intimately tied to my own life and experiences. Within that personal space, the influence of Nigerian culture – the everyday realities, the subtleties of living and growing in Nigeria – still shapes the way I think and create.

SO **What do you hope viewers take away from your work, especially those who may be unfamiliar with the contemporary Nigerian experience?**

JE That it stirs something in the viewer. I want it to reawaken certain conversations or reflections that may be dormant in people’s minds – about identity, connection or simply the human experience.

For me, my work is about creating a mirror – a space where people can see themselves, even if they are not directly familiar with Nigeria or Nigerian culture. Yes, my work reflects my context and my experience, but I think human stories are universal. You don’t have to know Nigeria deeply to understand vulnerability, love, identity or struggle.

Sophie Oxenbridge is NGV Curator, Contemporary Art. Johnson Eziefula is a self-taught mixed-media artist who lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.

The NGV warmly thanks Matthias Arndt for gifting *A covalent one II*, 2022, to the Collection.



DESCENDANTS OF THE SUN, MOON & FIRE

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the precision and realism of Persian painting converged with the colour and vitality of lndian traditions. This resulted in the creation of idealised, luxuriant visions of the world, lifestyle and spiritualism that existed within the royal Rajput courts of lndia. NGV Senior Curator Wayne Crothers shares the history of his favourite Mughal, Rajput and Udaipur paintings in the NGV Collection, generously acquired by the Felton Bequest.

Words by **Wayne Crothers**

Known as the 'sons of kings', the Rajputs trace their origins to indigenous Indian clans like the Rathors or migrating tribes from Central Asia that include the Hunas and Scythians. After taking territory from the Gupta Empire, which covered most of the central and northern Indian subcontinent between the third and sixth centuries, they established numerous kingdoms throughout north-west India, in a region that came to be known as Rajputana, 'the abode of the kings'.[1] Certain regions of the Gupta Empire had practised Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, and the Rajputs gradually adopted the pre-existing Hindu beliefs of the lands they conquered. Mythical stories of their origins were created to give the three Rajput lineages an air of immortality and association with the natural elements, helping to establish an ancestry of natural authority. To associate themselves with Hindu divinity, the Suryavanshi lineage, which included the Sisodia clan of Mewar, claimed to be descendants of the sun god Surya. The Chandravanshi lineage, which included the Bhati clan of Jaisalmer, claimed to be descendants from the moon god Chandra. The Agnivanshi lineage, which included the Chauhan clan of Bundi, claimed ancestry from the fire god Agni. Consolidating their power, the Rajputs established family-based kingdoms and ruled most of north-west India by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Their dominance did not remain unchallenged, however, and during the final decade of the twelfth century, Muslim Afghans and Turks invaded from the west and fought their way to Delhi to establish a power base from which they expanded their control over most of the Indian subcontinent.

THE CONFLUENCE OF THE TWO SEAS

To commemorate their victorious arrival the new sultans constructed a complex of mosques and administrative buildings in Delhi, including the enormous minaret Qutub Minar, a 73-metre-high prayer tower that remains the tallest brick minaret in the world to this day. This transition of dominating ideology is confirmed with an inscription on its eastern gate stating that the religious and administrative complex was constructed from the masonry of twenty-seven dismantled Hindu temples. It was a symbol of Islam's presence and represented a religious, educational and administrative power base from which successive sultans of Delhi could expand their rule over their newly acquired territories in India. For 320 years and five dynasties, the Delhi sultanate's influence ebbed and flowed over large areas of the Indian subcontinent. Despite wars, violence, forced conversions and discrimination, the Rajput rulers managed to preserve many elements of their independence.

In fact, it was when northern India came under the dominance of Islam that the Rajputs were the most vigorous in preserving their independent status, lifestyles and, perhaps most importantly for their subjects, Hindu beliefs and traditions in their courts and domains. They were subjected but by no means conquered, and it is stories from these turbulent centuries that have made the title of 'Rajput' synonymous with valour, chivalry and patriotism. An unknown Rajput poet once

wrote, 'When the home and hearth is in danger, when religion is at stake, when women folk are in distress, then is the time to die fighting'.[2] During this tumultuous era of invasion, Rajput warriors established their reputation for selflessness and loyalty. When faced with inevitable defeat, men would dress in saffron robes, sprinkle purifying kusha grass[3] on their heads and recklessly attack their enemy, fighting to their last breath. Similarly, when all was lost, the women, to protect their honour and avoid capture, dressed in wedding finery and immolated themselves, often en masse, in a ceremony called *jauhar*.[4]

The Delhi sultanate's rule came to a dramatic finish in the early sixteenth century with the arrival of yet another Muslim dynasty from central Asia. Originating from near Tashkent, in what is now Uzbekistan, the conqueror Babur (r. 1526–30) was a descendant of the great warriors Chinggis Khaan and Timur (Tamerlane). Like many before him, Babur and his army entered the northern Indian plains through the Khyber Pass and made their way to the outskirts of Delhi. Employing the first use of artillery on the subcontinent, Babur and his army defeated the last sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi (r. 1517–26), and an army five times their size at the Battle of Panipat in 1526. Babur went on to consolidate his new Mughal Empire in the following year by defeating a joint Rajput resistance led by Maharana Sangram Singh I (r. 1508–28) of Mewar at the Battle of Khanwa in 1527.

The staunch defence of Rajput independence continued until the greatest Mughal ruler of them all, Babur's grandson Akbar (r. 1556–1605; opposite), was able to establish an amicable end to hostilities by accepting Rajput rulers into his court and taking their daughters as brides. Through this cunning diplomacy the leading Rajput courts of Amber,[5] Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bundi and others lost sovereignty, but ensured the preservation of their domains, Hindu faith, aristocratic nobility and – if only symbolically – their hereditary connection to gallant warriors of the past. One exception to this chastening compromise remained: the powerful and defiant maharanas of Mewar, who again refused to submit to the Mughals and staged guerrilla war for a further forty years. Distinguishing themselves from the other Rajput states, the Mewars in 1615 negotiated more dignified terms and greater autonomy with Akbar's son, the Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27), enabling them to avoid the indignity of cowering at the Mughal courts in Agra, Lahore or Delhi, and the humiliation of dutifully presenting their daughters as wives to the Mughal emperors.

> 'It was when northern India came under the dominance of Islam that the Rajputs were the most vigorous in preserving their independent status, lifestyles and, perhaps most importantly for their subjects, Hindu beliefs and traditions in their courts and domains.'
>
> WAYNE CROTHERS

The four great Mughal rulers, Babur,[6] Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58), Akbar and Jahangir, had established Muslim rule throughout most of the Indian subcontinent that would last for almost three hundred years. With the new and enlightened philosophical approach of his forefathers, Jahangir's eldest son, Dara Shikoh (1615–59), dreamt of a utopian society in which Hindus and Muslims could live together in a coexistence of religions that Dara expressed would be like 'twins; hairs of the same head' and the idea that India would become 'the confluence of the two seas'.[7] In a story of sibling rivalry and betrayal, before Dara could ascend the throne he was ruthlessly deposed by his religiously orthodox brother Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), and his dream was never fully realised. However, it was the idea of coexistence that the founders of Mughal India had established that allowed the subcontinent to pursue a multifaith society. Under this rule, the Rajputs could preserve the traditions, religious practices and distinct identities that would give rise to some of the most recognisable and internationally admired art forms in Indian history.

RAJPUT PAINTING

The practice of creating small paintings on tangible and lightweight material has its origins in Buddhist and Jain religious manuscripts illustrated on palm leaves in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,[8] which was followed by the use of the more practical material of paper from the fourteenth century, as seen in *Sakra commands Harinagamesin: folio from a Jain Kalpasutra manuscript*, c. 15th century (presented by Hamza Gallery).[9]

During the fifteenth century, Rajput rulers, notably the Maharana Kumbha of Mewar (r. 1433–68), sponsored the production of illustrations that depicted poetic themes of idealistic love known as *nayaka-nayika-bheda*, and a genre of pictorial painting known as *ragamala* that visualised the mood of a musical composition. This movement, and the production of paintings depicting religious narratives, was energised by the popularity of devotional cults that celebrated Hindu stories, such as the life and triumphs of Krishna and the ten incarnations of Vishnu.

An example of pre-Mughal painting is *Yashoda nursing the child Krishna*, c. 1525–50, an illustration that depicts an episode from the *Bhagavata Purana*.[10] In such works we can detect Hindu influences that trace their stylistic lineage to the expressive qualities of ancient Indian art and the sculptured figurative decoration found on temples constructed between the tenth and thirteenth centuries in the Hoysala kingdom of Karnataka, the Hindu and Jain temples at Khajuraho, and the Sun Temple at Konark. Attributes like exaggerated eyes, large breasts and pronounced hips in these sculptural traditions became transformed, somewhat crudely at times, into the visual language of early Rajput painting.

Akbar furthered the development of a hybrid style by establishing an atelier of local artists under the mentorship of two Persian masters. This unification of artists and traditions brought together the refinement and technical skills of Persian painting with the passion and vitality found in the paintings of Hindu epics.[11] However, it was Jahangir, the great patron of the arts and progressive thinker, who oversaw the production of portraits and nature studies of unprecedented visual elegance and the highest technical quality.



The Mughals arrived with Muslim culture and painting styles from Persian courts that soon featured local subjects imbued with Rajput artistic traditions. The first Mughal emperor, Babur, brought with him court painters that specialised in portraiture and who, under the patronage of enlightened and open-minded courtiers, exercised an observant eye that could capture the individual personalities of their subjects with a level of intimacy not seen in Indian painting before.

The first half of the seventeenth century was a period of mostly harmonious association between the Mughals and Rajputs. Regular visits by many of the Rajput kings to offer tribute at the Mughal court were made and long periods of residence in the Mughal courts by Rajput officials became a common practice. Perhaps the most influential factor in the cross-fertilisation of ideas between Mughal and Rajput culture was an agreement by which future Rajput heirs would be raised in the Mughal court and intermarriages enforced to bond Rajputs and Mughals by blood and obligation. These close family associations resulted in an understanding, and in most instances admiration and respect, between the two cultures. In this manner, Mughal culture, with its opulent ceremonies, courtly etiquette, gorgeous costumes and refined music, poetry and painting, peacefully spread throughout the empire, creating not only an atmosphere of unity but a new sophisticated culture that identified with both Hindu traditions and the imported world of Islam. By becoming familiar with the sumptuous lifestyle of the Mughals, and by no means feeling

inferior to Mughal culture, Rajput princes and their families acknowledged that upon returning to their kingdoms, the sponsorship of painters, calligraphers and book illuminators was an important attribute of a great ruler, and essential in establishing their own legacy as individuals of cultivation and nobility.[12]

During the early years of their empire, the Mughals' influence over different Rajput kingdoms varied considerably, with the strongest alliances being established with the powerful trading kingdom of Amber, the kingdom of Jodhpur with its massive citadel, and the desert-locked kingdom of Bikaner. The fact that these three large royal courts employed both Muslim and Hindu artists led to the development of local styles with distinct Mughal influences. These characteristics of fine linework, flattened perspective and stylised floral motifs on textiles and in garden settings are seen in the early Rajput painting *Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur listening to music*, c. 1660. The isolated court of Bikaner became known for developing the least Hindu-affected style of painting and employing the classical Mughal characteristics of a cool palette, delicate drawing style and restrained expression that can be seen in *A lady playing with a child*, late 17th century. The court of Amber, with its proximity to the Mughal strongholds of Delhi and Agra, produced a Mughal-influenced style of portraiture with a bold appearance often employing the compositional device of a horizonal line dividing a flat background into two sections.[13]

The ruler of Bikaner, Raja Rai Singhji (r. 1541–1612), held high rank as an army general at the Mughal courts of Akbar and later Jahangir, during which time he gained great favour through his successful military exploits, one of which involved winning half of the Rajput Mewar kingdom for the Empire. This alliance of a Hindu ruler with the Muslim Mughals to fight against fellow Hindu Rajputs is evidence of the lack of unity between Rajput kingdoms, which regularly reverted to tribalism, blood feuds, vendettas and mutual jealousies that kept them divided and resulted in different levels of acceptance of their Mughal rulers and their Muslim culture.[14]

PARADISE ON EARTH

Of all the Rajput kingdoms, the Mewar and its maharanas stand out as having the most defiant, opulent and vibrant history. Consistently maintaining the proudest of traditions and highest rank among all the Rajput chiefs, they were the leaders of the Hindu resistance against Muslim invaders and vigilantly upheld the Rajput warrior tradition by fiercely defending their independence. After a grand citadel at Chittor fell to Akbar in 1567–68, they continued resistance with guerrilla warfare throughout the forested and hilly terrain of the Mewar kingdom for forty years, after all other Rajput states had capitulated. Following their submission to the Mughals in 1615, the maharanas of Mewar could finally enjoy peace and embark on a grand plan of palace and temple construction in their new city of Udaipur. In the words of James Tod, an English chronicler of the Rajputs, in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829–32), '[the Mewars] exchange the dim of arms for voluptuous inactivity',[15] which aptly describes their transition from genuine to ornamental warriors and the luxuriant scenes of court life found in Mewar court paintings over the following three hundred years.

The Mewar kingdom's new capital, Udaipur, was named after its founder, Udai Singh II (r. 1540–72), who, according to legend, came upon a hermit while hunting in the fertile foothills of the Aravalli Range in southern Rajputana. The hermit blessed the king and guided him to a rocky ridge beside Lake Pichola, assuring him it would be well protected and an ideal place to build a palace. The Amar Mahal and Badal Mahal palaces were duly constructed. Udai's son Maharana Pratap Singh I (r. 1572–97) fought the Mughals for independence, and Pratap's son Amar Singh I (r. 1597–1629) continued the struggle before both sides finally reached an agreeable coexistence in 1615. In a new era of peace, Amar Singh I, his son Karan Singh (r. 1620–28) and grandson Jagat Singh I (r. 1628–52) embarked on a vision to establish a utopian paradise on Earth. Magnificent buildings constructed during this era formed the backdrop for the lives, scandals and exotic pleasures of the Mewar court through to the birth of democratic India in 1947, and even on to the present day, when descendants of the Mewar royal family continue to reside in Udaipur. In the centre of the city, the colossal, ever-expanding City Palace, Jagdish Temple, with its intricate sculptured facade, and the secluded lake palaces of Jagniwas and Jagmandir, with their columns, reservoirs, fountains, flowerbeds and orange and lemon groves, remain some of the most exquisite and unique locations in India.

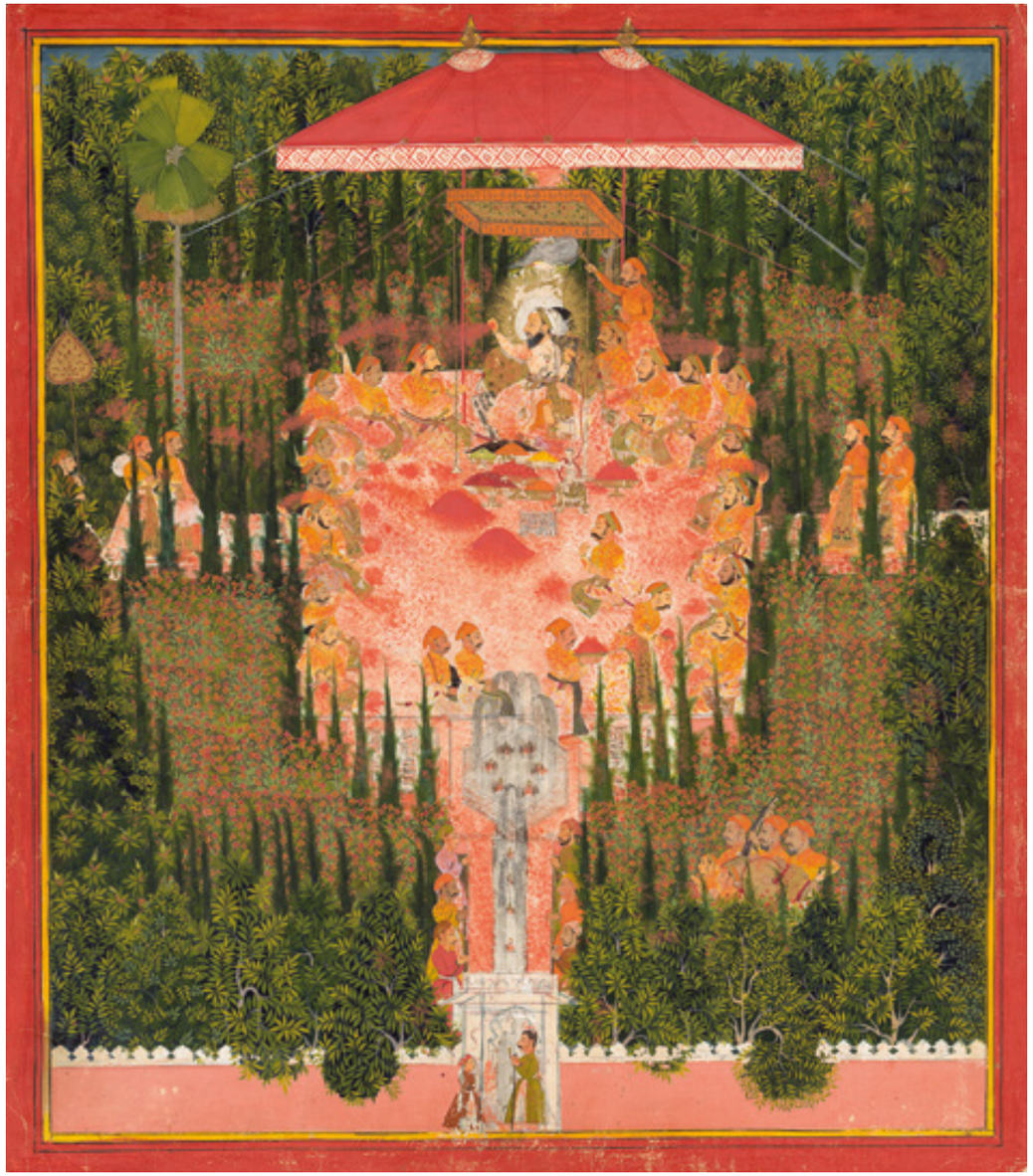
The two island palaces (Jagniwas and Jagmandir) were favoured oases of the maharanas during the hot summer months and appear as the setting for numerous Udaipur paintings. James Tod offers a sensual insight into the mood in which hours might flow into days and even years when spent in these hedonistic retreats:

> Here they listened to the tale of the bard, and slept off their noonday opiate amidst the cool breezes of the lake, wafting delicious odors from the myriads of the lotus-flowers which cover the surface of the waters.[16]

HEDONISTIC PURSUITS AND RELIGIOUS PIETY

In the middle of the Jagniwas island palace, secluded from the common gaze, was a small tank or pool in the form of a maze, with a marble chair in the centre. Here the maharanas sat and watched their concubines bathing and at play, this agreeable diversion proving a popular subject for painters.[17] In this man-made paradise the maharanas of Mewar filled their days with hedonism alongside activities of religious piety.

Karan Singh, and increasingly Jagat Singh I, were aficionados of grandiose building projects and extravagant lifestyles, and led a cultural renaissance that re-established the tradition of religious and poetic manuscript



(p. 60) **Indian** *Maharana Ari Singh II* c. 1765. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1980. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

(p. 63) **Mithram** *Folio from a Bhagavata Purana: Yashoda nursing the child Krishna* c. 1525–50. Felton Bequest, 1976. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

Indian *Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas garden* c. 1708–10. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1980



painting. However, it is ironic that the last great Rajput warrior and nemesis of the Mughals Raj Singh I (r. 1652–80) is credited with adopting the Mughal practice of representational portraiture to his atelier of manuscript illustrators and commissioned some of the earliest Mewar court portraits of himself. The introduction of Mughal-trained artists and an increasing trend to record their nobility in portraiture increased under the successive maharanas of Mewar. Under the patronage of Jai Singh (r. 1681–98) and Amar Singh II (r. 1698–1710), Mewar ateliers began to portray their rulers in a refined manner similar to that seen in portraits produced in the ateliers of the Mughal emperors. Dressed in layers of robes and shimmering *patka* (sashes) produced from the finest fabric available, the maharanas of Rajputana were depicted adorned with pearls and precious stones. In *Maharana Amar Singh II of Udaipur*, early 18th century, and *Maharana Ari Singh II*, c. 1765, the kings stand tall and slender in a regal manner equal to any portrait of a Mughal emperor.

It was during this transformative era in Mewar painting that a new style of large-format, event-filled depictions known as *tamasha*, meaning spectacle or show, became popular with the maharanas. Not only are the scale and exquisite details of these paintings impressive, but the artists' sensitive approach to capturing intimacies of the ruler's life and activities remains unparalleled to this day. With the maharana as the central figure of a festival, official occasion, religious event, hunting expedition or recreational activity, the painters employed techniques of compositional balance, multiple viewpoints and flattened perspective, and used richly coloured pigments to emphasise an atmosphere of great celebration, occasion and nobility.

One of the earliest examples in this style, *Diwali celebrations at Kotah*, c. 1690, is from the regional Mewar domain of Bundi. To record the myriad festivities throughout the palace environs at Diwali, the celebration in honour of the goddess Lakshmi and god Ganesha, the artist employed multiple viewpoints and perspectives. The ruler of Kotah is seen enjoying the festival of lights and watching burning oil lamps with his female attendants and musicians in the palace's inner courtyard while, in other sections of the palace, women dance before a portrait of Krishna-like *gopika* from the *Bhagavata Purana* and wander among flowerbeds in the garden.[18] Outside the palace gates, courtiers celebrate the festival with music, fireworks, acrobats and animal fights. In *Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas garden*, c. 1708–10, another more formally composed yet equally innovatively designed Mewar *tamasha* painting produced some twenty years later, we find the maharana seated in durbar, a formal assembly of ruler and courtiers on a garden terrace. To emphasise his importance, he is surrounded by a symmetrical composition of lush gardens, flowerbeds in full bloom and rows of cypress trees. Most theatrically, his immediate surroundings are a saturation of red powder to signify the Holi festival, which celebrates the end of winter, the arrival of spring and the victory of good over evil.

> 'The two island palaces (Jagniwas and Jagmandir) were favoured oases of the maharanas during the hot summer months and appear as the setting for numerous Udaipur paintings.'
>
> WAYNE CROTHERS

AT THE MAHARANA'S REQUEST

The NGV's collection of Rajput paintings contains a high number of these large-scale event- and pageantry-filled paintings, and their popularity with the Rajput rulers during the eighteenth century is evidenced by the number of *tamasha* works produced. As we can assume the subjects of these paintings were composed at the request of the maharana for their personal pleasure, they can be interpreted as an insight into each ruler's passions, personality, favoured pursuits and how he wanted to be viewed. Maharana Sangram Singh II (r. 1710–34), for example, is featured in many noble horseriding portraits, military processions and epic hunting expeditions. We can observe his passion for the outdoors and the pursuit of cheetahs, boars, tigers and cranes, as well as activities like camping with fellow Rajput rulers, violent elephant fights, or the feeding of crocodiles from the landing of the Jagmandir island palace. *Maharana Sangram Singh II loses his huqqa-bearer*, c. 1730, shows that the fatal incident of the maharana's personal *huqqa* (water pipe) bearer being crushed to death by an elephant on which the maharana was riding during a public event was even deemed worthy enough to record.

In contrast, the following Mewar ruler, Maharana Jagat Singh II (r. 1734–51), must have had a very different personality and interests. The warrior traditions that had distinguished the Mewar in the past had been consumed by decades of pampered privilege, and rather than going to war with the powerful Maratha invaders, who began encroaching from the south during the 1720s, Jagat Singh II agreed to pay a large annual tribute that allowed him to remain in power and continue to indulge in pursuits of pleasure. He participated in the mandatory hunts and officiated elephant fights but is more commonly found celebrating the Festival of Flowers in a colourful garden setting, or in a magnificent palace courtyard as a ruler of great cultivation enjoying traditional nautch dance, or attending the *Rasalila*, a dance performance telling the story of Krishna's life.

Jagat Singh II's passion for the *Rasalila* resulted in the commission of a series of large paintings that serialise

the performance. Of the eight paintings known to have survived, two are found in the NGV Collection. Often filled with over one hundred animated figures, these large panoramic group scenes create a wonderful sense of occasion and spectacle. As the maharana's participation in an event is of primary importance, he is usually the largest figure in the scene and distinguishable among the mass of activity by a nimbus, or halo, of golden sunrays. In the action-filled *Maharana Ari Singh II playing polo*, 1761, we find, in the middle of the polo pack, that his horse is the most elaborately decorated with regalia and that the maharana is mounted in the most dignified manner. To enhance the narration, the artist has innovatively depicted the event in two time-lapse scenes of the polo match side by side. In one scene the maharana is seen among the fray battling for position and in the other he is sprinting in full gallop. In the NGV Collection, Maharana Ari Singh II (r. 1761–73) appears in nineteen portraits either standing in elaborate costume, on horseback, or riding an elephant in full regalia, as well as in numerous hunting and recreational scenes that capture his flamboyant lifestyle. These visual records are testament to his egocentric behaviour and could be attributed to his unpopularity, extravagance and legacy of destroying the Mewar economy. During the final years of his reign many of the most talented artists in Udaipur are noted as having left for the ateliers of other fiefdoms. Maharana Ari Singh II's reign ended when he was dramatically slain by a prince of Bundi while on a hunting expedition. During the reigns of the Mewar maharanas that followed, economic woes and heavy annual tributes paid to the Maratha continued to take their toll on court life and affected the number of paintings produced.

THE MEWARS' FINAL REPRIEVE

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Mughal Empire's influence lessened, its territories became fragmented and they finally submitted to the British in 1858.[19] Perhaps more importantly for the Mewars, it was the British East India Company's[20] defeat of the Maratha Empire in 1818, and subsequent British dominance over most of the subcontinent, that allowed the Rajput ruling families to maintain their kingdoms and privileged lifestyles as living relics of Rajput traditions and preservers of Hindu culture, in return for being dutiful regional administrators for the British Raj. This reprieve saved many of the Rajput courts from complete demise but also left them without motivation to reinvigorate their warrior instincts, and in many cases led their courts to slide into further excess and financially unsustainable lifestyles. An example of this can be found in Maharana Jawan Singh (r. 1828–38), in whom the British initially had faith: 'a prince in appearance, and a gentleman in manners, he bears a high character and manages his own affairs well'.[21] Soon after his accession to the throne, however, he appears to have fallen into a life of debauchery and indulgence. In the large-scale Mewar painting, *Maharana Jawan Singh bathing with his sardars*, c. 1835, we find Jawan Singh in a huge palace courtyard pool bathing with his *sardars* (chieftains). The pool is surrounded by an entourage of attendants, women and musicians, with the maharana clearly identifiable as the largest figure in the upper left with gold nimbus and wearing pearls and jewellery. Filled with more than one hundred figures, this masterpiece of composition is made up of a square pool within a square courtyard and is deliberately unbalanced, with a tree placed off centre to the right. Humorously, diminutive sardars are depicted only from the chest up, bobbing in the pool around the larger, stately sized maharana. Some of the sardars require floatation devices, while an attendant has been given the job of holding the royal *huqqa* above water to allow the maharana to continue smoking.

As with the exposure to Mughal painting three hundred years earlier, Rajput subjugation to the British led to foreign painting styles and visual techniques having increased influence on the Rajput artists. In comparing *Maharana Jagat Singh II playing Holi*, 1745, with *Maharao Ram Singh II of Kotah and companions playing Holi on elephants in a street*, 1844, we can observe paintings about the same subject produced a century apart, one pre-British rule and the other after. In the earlier work, figures are all the same size and the work appears flat in its use of colour and perspective. The later painting displays shading and shadow, as well as a three-dimensionality in the riders' costumes, the elephants, buildings, and the figures in the distance, which diminish in size. The dense layering of the elephants and riders combined with the volume of red powder being thrown in the 1844 work creates a heightened sense of activity which, alongside the humorous introduction of a fire-hose pump, which gives the Maharao Ram Singh II a stately advantage, has transported this traditional scene into a new modern era. These influences from European realism, and later photography, established a final style of heavily worked and overly contrived Rajput painting that continued until the dissolution of the princely states at Indian independence in 1947.

Wayne Crothers is NGV Senior Curator, Asian Art.

See works from the NGV's collection of Indian court paintings displayed on Level 2, NGV International. The NGV warmly thanks the Felton Bequest for acquiring all the works mentioned in this essay unless otherwise specified.

This essay originally appeared in *Visions of Paradise: Indian Court Paintings* by Wayne Crothers, with various contributors (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2018).

(p. 66) **Indian** *Maharana Jawan Singh bathing with his sardars* c. 1835. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1980. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

METRICS

Looking for alternative income?

The Metrics Direct Income Fund seeks to generate monthly income[1] of the RBA cash rate plus 3.25% p.a. (currently 7.35% p.a.)[2] net of fees through a diversified portfolio of direct loans to Australian companies.

Performance highlights:

- 8.58% net of fees over 12 months to 28 February 2025 [3]
- 7.67% p.a. net of fees since inception on 1 July 2020 [3,4]

Metrics Credit Partners is a leading alternative asset manager with in excess of $23bn in AUM and a track record of more than 11 years of performance and capital preservation.[3]

Learn more at www.metrics.com.au/mdif

[1] Income payments depend on the success of underlying investments and are at the responsible entity's discretion.
[2] Return of capital and target return may not be achieved. RBA Cash Rate as at 11/12/2024 435 bps p.a.
[3] Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.
[4] Since inception return is annualised.

This communication has been prepared by Metrics Credit Partners Pty Ltd ABN 27 159 646 996 AFSL and issued by Equity Trustees Limited ABN 46 004 031 298 AFSL 240975 as the Responsible Entity for the Metrics Direct Income Fund ARSN 641 620 331 (Fund). It is general information only and is not intended to provide you with financial advice, and has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. All investments contain risk and may lose value. Before making an investment decision in respect of the Fund, you should read the PDS, TMD, and full disclaimer available at metrics.com.au/mdif.

Floribunda

Organised by Bunjil Place in partnership with NGV, *Floribunda* explores the special relationship between humans and flowers. Showcasing more than 150 works, including painting, ceramics, photography, sculpture, installation, jewellery, fashion, textiles, prints and drawings from the NGV Collection, the exhibition positions flowers as a persistent subject in a range of art practices, histories and movements. Here, guest curator Dr David Sequeira takes readers on a virtual tour.

Words by **Dr David Sequeira**

It is hard to imagine an existence without a fascination with flowers. In a 2018 paper, behavioural science researchers Ephrat Huss, Kfir Bar Yosef, Michele Zaccai suggest that because it takes physical effort to touch, smell, collect and tend to flowers, they have a unique embodied and relational aesthetic.[1] More specifically, perception of the beauty of flowers is inseparable from their colour, texture, scent and the care required for their growth. With this in mind, who could better articulate the poetic and evocative relationship between humans and flowers than artists?

A portmanteau of 'flower' and 'abundance', the title of the exhibition *Floribunda* suggests beauty and plenitude. Organised by Bunjil Place in partnership with the NGV, the exhibition comprises of more than 150 works drawn from the NGV's rich and diverse collection. One of the largest single loans in the gallery's history, *Floribunda* was conceived as a 'Wunderkammer' or 'Cabinet of Curiosities' dedicated to flowers[2]. Part fantasy, part taxonomy, *Floribunda* is underpinned by a philosophical, democratic curatorial strategy, through which a range of artistic expressions sit side-by-side to generate new sensations, readings and insights. In this Wunderkammer, there is no single hero work of art. Instead, the enchanting intoxication of *Floribunda* arises from the







(p. 71) Installation view of works by Jean Patou, Linda Jackson and Bush Couture and Paul McCann in *Floribunda* at Bunjil Place Gallery. Photo: Christian Capurro.

(above) **Hans Heysen** *A cottage bunch* 1930. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift from The L. W. Thompson Collection, 2004 © Hans Heysen Estate/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

(left) **Sybil Craig** *Flowerpiece medley* 1960. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1978 © Estate of Sybil Craig. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

totality of its parts – an expansive profusion of flowers that speaks of tenderness, fragility, resilience, fertility, joy, sorrow, love and the human condition.

This exhibition was conceived specially for Bunjil Place, an extensive purpose-built arts complex, gathering place and creative hub located in Melbourne's south-eastern suburb of Narre Warren. Established and managed by City of Casey, Bunjil Place has developed a reputation for innovative, collaborative exhibitions for diverse audiences.[3]

By focusing on still life and decorative motif artworks (as opposed to flowers in a garden), *Floribunda* draws attention to the symbolism of flowers. The works are a potent reminder of the enduring presence of flowers in our lives. Flowers form a part of births, deaths, romances, marriages, dinner parties, religious rituals, coronations and other rites of passage. Flowers are even fashioned in clothing, printed on lingerie or sprayed in a perfumed mist on the body; they have a place in the most delicate and intimate of human rituals and experiences. Given that flowers have always been there in our lives, we may ask, why draw attention to them now? What does it mean to examine the relationship between flowers and art in 2025? The themes and ideas associated with temporality may provide some insight. Perhaps artists are drawn to flowers because they locate us in the present. The relatively short life span of most flowers means that their 'peak' is momentary. Oblivious to environmental, social or political complexities and injustices, a flower blossoms in a small window occurs regardless of what else is happening in the world. In this sense the act of being with a flower, that is, experiencing it, noticing its visual subtleties and being aware of its aura, is a call to be present – to ground oneself and surrender to the now.

This understanding of the 'now' is further echoed in the curatorial methodology for the exhibition. *Floribunda* is a decidedly transcultural, transhistorical, interdisciplinary project. The harmful limitations of singular linear narratives are more visible now than they have ever been. The reverberations of colonialism echo with booming resonance, placing art museums at the most significant crossroad in their colonial histories. *Floribunda* has been curated to highlight the intersections, problems and possibilities for collections.

Proximity generates a new kind of interrelational connectivity between works in this exhibition. Early twentieth-century photographs of waterlilies by Lorraine Barber are displayed with 1970s paintings on paper of waterlily bulbs by Papua New Guinea artist Apokwinya, Charles Boyun's bark painting of waterlilies from 1965 and an ancient Japanese Buddha standing on a stylised waterlily. Individually the works maintain their own specificity, but collectively they speak of a global understanding of serenity, enlightenment, cyclic change, and physical and spiritual nourishment that transcends standard concepts of time. This type of curatorship provides a rare opportunity to break free from linearity and understand and experience time as malleable. The rule is very simple: objects with different histories, brought together purposefully and artfully, form their own special time.

Although there is no strict order for viewing the exhibition, its layout can be imagined as a rose in the process of blooming. At the heart of the exhibition is a shrine-like installation of *Block flowers,* 2023, from the *A Chaotic Garden project,* 2023, by Azuma Makoto (commissioned by the NGV and supported by Bagôt Gjergja Foundation, Andrew Penn AO and Kallie Blauhorn, Michael Buxton AM and Janet Buxton, Paul and Samantha Cross, Anthony and Clare Cross, Cameron Oxley and Bronwyn Ross, and Woods5 Foundation). The work consists of 130 plant specimens, collected at their visual peak and suspended in resin. A meditation on the competing concepts of immortality and temporality, Makoto's flowers appear to be held in a liminal state somewhere between life and death.[4] Surrounding this installation, other clusters of works joyously unfold like petals to deepen reflection.

The major salon-hang of floral still life paintings includes works from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Works by well-known figures of Australian art such as Margaret Preston, Arthur Streeton, Grace Cossington Smith and John Brack are shown alongside lesser-known artists such as Guelda Pyke and Esther Paterson. A mashup of Western art 'isms', this section highlights the consistent presence of flowers throughout major European and European-influenced movements – from Impressionism to Cubism. At first glance it is glorious and celebratory. Close inspection reveals a multi-faceted layering of emotional responses to the conditions of the world at large. The freedom of early twentieth-century modernity, the hardship of the Great Depression of the 1920s and World War II and the flowering of postwar optimism are suggested within this selection of works. Joyous, introspective, surreal and melancholy, this mix of paintings highlights the complexity and fecundity of the subject matter. Clearly, a painting of flowers is not just a painting of flowers. It is a window to a world of feelings and associations – warming the heart and bringing a tear to the eye.

Opposite the salon hang is a selection of fashion with two distinct approaches to florals. Linda Jackson and Bush Couture's *Flame waratah*, 1984 (purchased by Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists), has a sculptural quality that references the rich colouring and intricate structure of a waratah. The garment is designed to envelope the model in the intensity of these unique qualities. Other garments incorporate flowers that are either printed, woven, embroidered or applied in 3D form as an embellishment. Marrithiyel artist and designer Paul McCann's *Sovereignty gumnut, tiara set,* 2021 (purchased by NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles), represents a composite of these two approaches. Its billowing, green, handpainted organza and gumnuts are clearly inspired by the flowering eucalypt, while the silhouette calls to mind 1950s opulence, elegance and glamour.

On another wall, Jim Dine's series of twenty-seven black-and-white prints *The Temple of Flora,* 1984 (gift of the artist), is interspersed with verses of Sufi poetry. A fusion of East and West, this merging of the mystical and spiritual dimension of Islam with Dine's sensitive observations of



flowers suggests that flowers are a portal to experiencing and understanding divinity. Clustered nearby is a suite of cabinets containing sumptuously decorated ceramic vessels, tiles and jewellery. Together with textiles from India, these displays highlight the importance of flowers as decorative motifs across a range of cultures. The presence of flowers imbues these objects with an extraordinary sense of beauty, love, growth and transformation.

The exhibition pairs Deanne Gilson's suite of ten paintings, *Before Joseph Banks, Our Baskets and Plants Held Sacred Knowledge,* 2022 (purchased by Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists), with twenty prints selected from *Banks' Florilegium*, the monumental folio of coloured engravings by Sydney Parkinson, James Miller, Gabriel Smith, drawn 1770–84 and printed in 1981 (presented by Rio Tinto Limited through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program). This is perhaps the most poignant and revealing grouping of works in *Floribunda*. The paintings by Gilson, a Wadawurrung woman of Aboriginal and Australian/English descent, hang at eye level, literally centering Indigenous knowledge while pushing colonial understandings to the periphery. Offering both a contemporary reading of historical works and historical context for contemporary works, this grouping demonstrates how a museum collection can articulate multiple contested histories simultaneously. The knowledge of flowers that has been handed down over millennia and rendered lovingly and powerfully within a context of lived experience, once rejected, now assumes its rightful position alongside the meticulous investigations of revered botanist Sir Joseph Banks.

Given its subject matter, it would be easy to get caught up in the sumptuous nature of *Floribunda*. It might even be easy to think about it as an exhibition that doesn't require much thinking. While these responses would be valid, they overlook the invitation implicit in the exhibition. *Floribunda* invites audiences to reflect upon their own lives through the realm of flowers, magically explored by artists across generations. It is an invitation to allow memories to surface, to consider that which is often taken for granted, and to be deeply moved by the simplicity and profundity of a flower.

Dr David Sequeira is a Melbourne-based artist and academic and the guest curator of *Floribunda*.

See these works on display as part of *Floribunda* at Bunjil Place, Narre Warren, until 20 July. For more information about the exhibition, visit bunjilplace.com.au/events/floribunda.

The NGV sincerely thanks AWM Electrical for its support of *Floribunda* as well as its support towards numerous Australian galleries and warmly acknowledges its outstanding leadership in enhancing Australia's cultural landscape. The NGV also thanks all those who supported the acquisition of the works mentioned in this article.

Installation view of work by Azuma Makoto and Jim Dine in *Floribunda* at Bunjil Place Gallery. Photo: Christian Capurro.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
×
BUNJIL PLACE GALLERY

FLORIBUNDA

CURATED BY
DAVID SEQUEIRA

29 MARCH – 20 JULY
BUNJIL PLACE GALLERY

Proudly presented by
Bunjil Place

Exhibition partner
NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA NGV

Exhibition sponsor
AWM ELECTRICAL & DATA SUPPLIERS

Program supporter
ORANA BY BALCON

The Netherlands, *Flowerpiece* late 17th century (detail), oil on canvas, 70.4 x 54.6 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Mr Norton E. Grimwade in memory of his wife Mrs Norton E. Grimwade, 1945



A MARRIAGE OF STYLES

While visiting a Berlin museum in the 1960s, David Hockney was amused by the paired profile of a friend standing alongside a sculpture of an Egyptian woman. Inspired, the English artist decided to explore the subject, initially in *The first marriage (A marriage of styles I)*, 1962 (Tate, London), and soon after in *The second marriage*, 1963, which joined the NGV Collection in 1965 through the support of the Contemporary Art Society of London. The latter recently went on display at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris as part of the major retrospective, *David Hockney 25*.

Words by **Sebastian Moore**

In 1983 British fashion designer Raymond 'Ossie' Clark visited David Hockney's famous double portrait *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, 1970–71, at London's Tate Gallery. It had been thirteen years since Hockney had painted Clark and his wife Celia Birtwell CBE, whose marriage had collapsed a few years after the work was completed. Gazing at the portrait of a marriage that no longer existed, Clark wrote in his diaries, 'I stood in front of it. And nobody recognised me. I'd become anonymous too.'[1]

Hockney knows the peculiar power of a portrait to render its subject anonymous. This tension sits at the heart of the darkly comedic *The second marriage*, 1963. While many are familiar with Hockney's sun-soaked series of Los Angeles paintings, *The second marriage* is noticeably absent of pools, parties and boys. Rather, it is marred by an irrepressible domesticity, predating Hockney's realism and belonging to the 1960s–70s trend for inquisitive portraits of married couples. In this way, the work serves as an early augury to his fascinations with the dynamics of modern love. With its austere voyeurism, *The second marriage* still beguiles in its representation of this strange relationship, leading us to muse on our own marital worlds.

Leaving the Royal College of Art in 1962, Hockney embarked on a journey throughout Europe with his friend Jeff Goodman.[2] During this European sojourn, the artist's time in Berlin would be particularly fruitful. On his choice of Berlin, Hockney admitted he was 'a bit attracted to Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*' – a prescient consideration, as Hockney would later paint the writer and his partner, Don Bacardi, in 1968.[3]

While strolling through the Pergamon Museum, Hockney observed from afar Goodman standing in profile against a large Egyptian

sculpture. Despite their incongruity, Hockney recognised the two shapes as united, using the figures for *The first marriage (A marriage of styles I)*, 1962, and later incorporating the horse-like head of the Egyptian statue, which

'Hockney knows the peculiar power of a portrait to render its subject anonymous. This tension sits at the heart of the darkly comedic *The second marriage*, 1963.'
Sebastian Moore

Hockney copied from a photograph, into *The second marriage*.[4] The two paintings, while featuring the same figures, are markedly different. In *The first*, there is an air of hope around the newlyweds set against their yellow background. In *The second*, the scene acquires a noticeably darker tone.

The second marriage is an exercise in anonymity and erasure, with Hockney's use of the 'Egypto-aesthetic' central to its impact. The collision of style and subject results in a stripping of identity, with Hockney saying that his interest in this Egyptian aesthetic was 'that the rules were so rigid, there was no individualism in the painting.'[5] The flatness and absence of personality is complicated by the extension of the canvas, creating an isometric tableau vivant, where the subjects are posed harmoniously and set within the 3D structure. This battle between flatness and depth gives a paradoxical quality not only to the work's aesthetic, but also to its meaning. Suddenly, these unknowable 'flat' newlyweds are seemingly given depth. However, much like their marriage, it is only an illusion.

Another significant aspect of *The second marriage* is how it serves as a map of Hockney's early stylistic influences, including the work of French outsider artist Jean Dubuffet, who Hockney said was an essential influence on this early period. Dubuffet was one of the early exponents of Art Brut – Raw Art – which sought to define a style of authentic works, incorporating a naive stylistic approach. However, a lesser discussed influence is the work of Francis Bacon. With Hockney's positioning of characters in darkened voids, it is hard not to see in his early paintings visual murmurings of the Baconesque. The suited male character in *The second marriage* harkens back to a character of Bacon's painted two years earlier in *Seated figure,* 1961, also housed in the Tate Gallery, London.

Arriving in London in 1959 to begin his studies at the Royal Academy, Hockney would see Bacon's 1960 exhibition at Marlborough Gallery. At the sight of the work, he commented 'You can smell the balls.'[6] Later in May 1962, the same year that Hockney commenced work on his 'marriage duet', Bacon exhibited his first retrospective at the Tate Gallery, a major show that Hockney visited.

Just as Bacon treats the body as a vessel for societal scrutiny, Hockney, too, subverts the corporeal with dark abstraction. When asked if Bacon was an influence on his early work, Hockney, especially in later interviews, has been equivocal: 'Well yes, in technique certainly, but over the years, the influences change, don't they? I think now they would be quite different.'[7]

While Hockney is abstemious in his acknowledgment of Bacon, there is nonetheless a dialogue between *The second marriage* and Bacon's works during this time, with both artists' aesthetic seeking to recalibrate the domestic realm.

When we look at *The second marriage* we are not looking at 'real' people. Rather, these figures are benign talismans of an English anxiety about the loose morals of the 1960s and the degradation of the sanctity of marriage. As a child of the 1950s, Hockney grew up in a time when the institution was under increasing scrutiny, intensified by a series of high-profile scandals, including the relationship between the never-married Princess Margaret and the divorced Peter Townsend. In a 1995 obituary for Townsend, the *Independent* newspaper reflected that the scandal 'constituted a watershed in the nation's attitude towards divorce'.[8]



More than a portrait of national amorality, *The second marriage* can also be read as a portrait of Hockney himself. According to former NGV curator Jason Smith, the groom can be seen as a 'tongue-in-cheek self-portrait' of the artist.[9] The grey male figure had already appeared in Hockney's earlier series of etchings *A Rake's Progress*, 1961–63, inspired by William Hogarth's original etchings of the same name. Following a sunglasses-wearing youth – a thinly veiled self-portrait – Hockney's etchings are a story of disillusioned youth, squandering wealth for gay sex and hedonism abroad.[10] In this series, Hockney invokes the same aesthetic flatness and depth that he would extrapolate in *The first marriage* but make explicit in *The second*. The former functions as a stylistic epilogue to the etchings that refines the shady flaneur, dressing him in a suit and confining him to marriage. In Hockney's oeuvre, each work is a word in a conversation, a question. We might ask, What became of the fruity rake? The answer is an unhappy marriage to a horse-like woman, when his queer desires existed elsewhere.

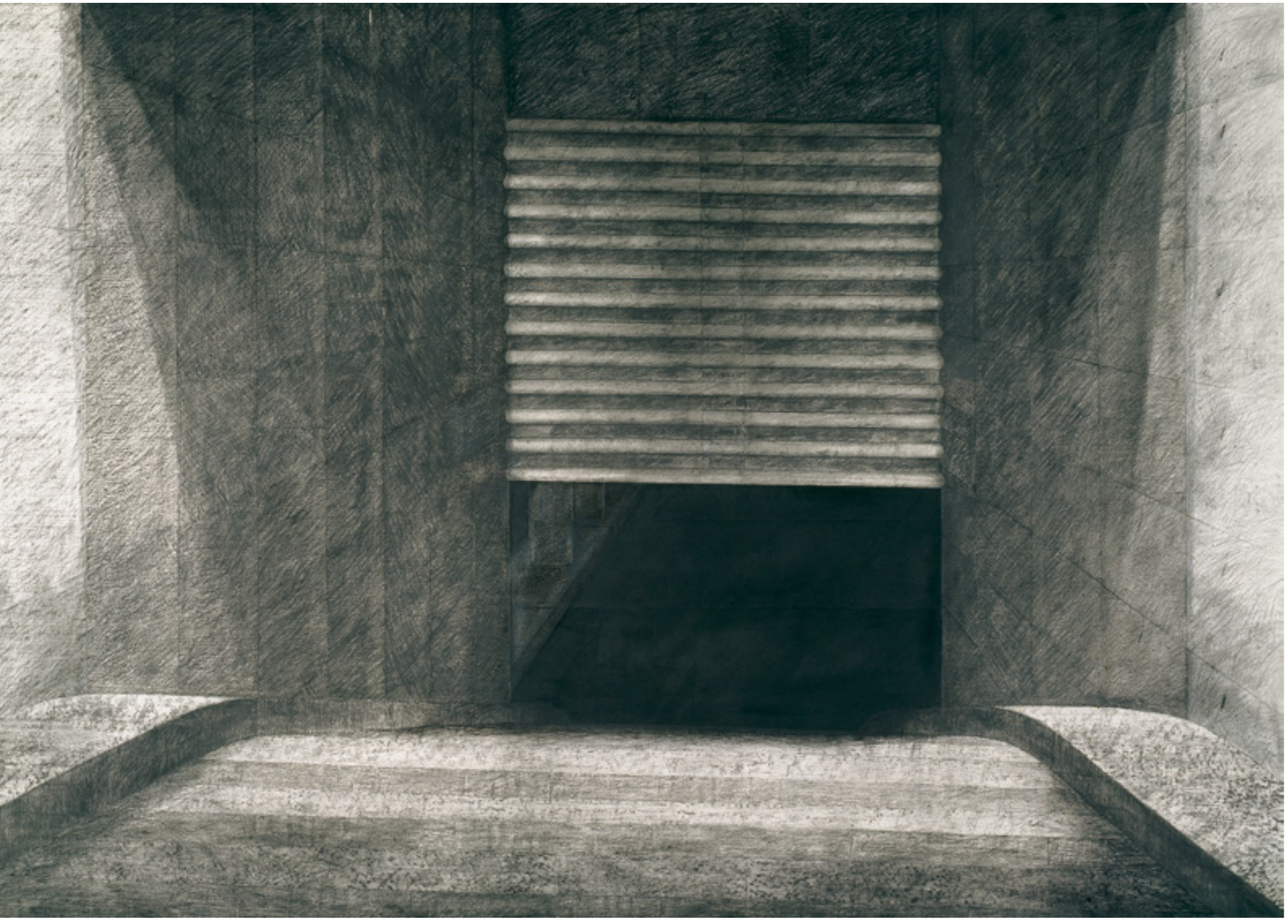
Sebastian Moore is an emerging art historian, curator and writer based in Melbourne.

David Hockney's *The second marriage*, 1963, recently went on display at the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris. See it as a part of *David Hockney 25* until 1 September.

The NGV warmly thanks the Contemporary Art Society of London, 1965, for gifting this work to the Collection.

(pp. 76–77) **David Hockney** *The second marriage* 1963 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society of London, 1965 © David Hockney. 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

(above) David Hockney in his studio, Los Angeles, April 2016. Photo © Shaughn & John



Time, space and place: Janenne Eaton

Melbourne artist Janenne Eaton and NGV Curator of Australian Art Beckett Rozentals recently met to discuss Eaton's distinguished artistic career ahead of the opening of the exhibition *Janenne Eaton: Lines of Sight—Frame and Horizon* at Geelong Gallery. Their conversation provides new insights into works by Eaton held in the NGV Collection.

Words by **Beckett Rozentals**

Janenne Eaton was born in Springvale, Melbourne in 1950, and as far back as she can remember, has had a deep passion for creating art. As young as eleven, Eaton set up an easel at home, and while she briefly entertained the idea of studying psychology, she knew she was destined to be an artist. Eaton's family fully supported her artistic aspirations, and their unwavering encouragement was crucial in helping her realise her dreams.

Majoring in painting at the Caulfield Institute of Technology, Eaton completed an associate diploma of art and design in 1970 and followed this with a diploma of education at Melbourne State College in 1971. She recalls that during the 1960s and 1970s, many female art students were not taken seriously by their male contemporaries. Driven by her unwavering passion and faith in her ability, Eaton remained undeterred, determined to be recognised for her talent and skill.

In 1974 Eaton moved to Perth, where she lectured in painting at Perth Technical School while maintaining her own artistic practice. Subsequently she took up a position at Canberra School of Art from 1980 to 1991, where she also lectured in painting. Through her teaching, Eaton aspired to impart the same values that she herself had welcomed from her parents: freedom, a sense of worth and an atmosphere of confidence without judgement. Although her teaching required great commitment, Eaton found it both nourishing and invigorating.

Concurrently, Eaton's own artistic practice developed with the creation of distinct bodies of work correlating with her personal experiences and evolving perspectives. Despite the diversity of her creative output, Eaton began to note a common thread that linked each artistic moment: the exploration of the grittier aspects of human existence. Across her fifty-year career, Eaton's versatile approach has seen her work incorporate a variety of media such as painting, drawing, photography, installation and video.

During her tenure at the Canberra School of Art, Eaton commenced studies in archaeology at the Australian National University (ANU). At first, she did not envision her academic pursuits and her art practice converging, but Eaton began to see her work increasingly take on an archaeology-inspired approach. She embarked on a series of collage drawings that explore the more desolate and darker features of Canberra's urban landscape.

While at ANU, Eaton found a book in the library that detailed crop fields and growing patterns in the United Kingdom. The book spanned pre-Roman to contemporary landscapes, and she was captivated by its observations of human history and the ways in which human agency has been inscribed in the landscape over millennia – the compression of time shown though printed images. Eaton drew inspiration from these representations of aerial archaeology and the surveillance of the landscape from above. This, in turn, led her to explore history-telling in her own work, shifting focus from cultivated landscapes to the architecture and depictions of darker, more hidden spaces – particularly the architecture of underground carparks. Eaton embarked on a new series of large-scale, nearly life-sized collage works – including *Canberra II*, 1982, held in the NGV Collection through the Michell Endowment – exploring these enigmatic spaces.

Eaton's impression of underground carparks is that these spaces are often imbued with feelings of unease and the uncanny. The plunge down the ramp while entering such facilities, coupled with the hard angles of the interiors and the interplay of artificial light and shadow, all contribute to an unsettling atmosphere. The internal structure of the carpark forms the physical design, but the light itself acts as a second layer of construction, illuminating the stark geometry of the engineering and resulting in a sense of architecture layered over architecture.

Across her career, Eaton's work has recurrently explored the complexities and contradictions of the world in which we live. In 1992 Eaton began teaching painting at the Victoria College of the Arts (VCA), before becoming the head of the painting program. This move marked another significant progression in her artist output. From the 1990s Eaton's focus shifted to scrutinising Australia's colonial past and present, as well as her growing concerns around social bigotry and racial inequality on a broader scale.

These people, 2006, typifies Eaton's critical examination of social issues during this period. Featuring a gloss enamel background, Eaton spray-painted on top a gridded structure that forms a frame around the central titular text: 'THESE PEOPLE'. At the time, Eaton was living in St Kilda, and she had become intrigued by a vitamin brand display at her local supermarket. As part of the marketing campaign, the cardboard packaging for the vitamin bottles had been inserted with flashing lights, which flickered to customers as they walked down the aisle.



Fascinated by the allure of the coloured lights, Eaton purchased some of the vitamin boxes. She incorporated two of the globes into *These people*, the flickering lights used to illuminate the text panel, emphasising the importance of the words to the viewer.

The most recent work by Eaton to join the NGV Collection is *OUTGO*, 2009. Eaton considers this piece to be one of her most significant works, as it exemplifies her ongoing artistic preoccupation with the complexities of living in a digital age, and how we engage with our digitised disembodied selves.

Meticulously executed, *OUTGO* features spraypainted, stencilled grids and carefully positioned dots that form a code of mysterious letters and symbols. The origins of these enigmatic markings stem from a corrupted code that occurred when Eaton was uploading an image of one of her paintings onto her computer, only to have the file incorrectly processed as a text file. This glitch in the digital realm became the catalyst for Eaton's exploration of the fragility and failures inherent in our data-driven world. The yellow and red shapes that burst out from the glossy black background are a deliberate device by the artist to mimic the pulsing of an LED screen, further commenting on loss of data and the failure in data communication that the artwork originated.

Eaton's work is marked by a strong social and political consciousness, as she seeks to give voice to important issues and express the intangible complexities of the human condition. Eaton's passion and artistic style are evident in her diverse body of work, and her hope is that her art and message continue to captivate and inspire her audience.

Beckett Rozentals is NGV Curator, Australian Art.

See *Janenne Eaton: Lines of Sight—Frame and Horizon* at Geelong Gallery from 24 May. Visit geelonggallery.org.au for more information.

The free exhibition features *OUTGO*, 2019, *These people*, 2006, and *Canberra II*, 1982, from the NGV Collection. The NGV warmly thanks the Michell Endowment for acquiring *Canberra II* for the Collection and Janenne Eaton for gifting *OUTGO*.

(pp. 80–81) **Janenne Eaton** *Canberra II* 1982. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Michell Endowment, 1983 © Janenne Eaton

(above) Janenne Eaton in her studio. Image courtesy the artist

EATON

24 May—
17 August
2025

Janenne Eaton:
Lines of Sight—
Frame and Horizon

Exhibition partners

Adroit Insurance & Risk

AWM Electrical & Data Suppliers

NGA

Geelong Gallery 2024 Annual Appeal campaign donors

Media partner

The Monthly
The Saturday Paper
7am

A Geelong Gallery exhibition

Janenne Eaton
Talisman for rain 2010
enamel paint on canvas
Private collection
Photographer: Mark Ashkanasy
© the artist



Dame Barbara Hepworth, *Oread*

Barbara Hepworth is one of the most celebrated female sculptors of the twentieth century. Her unique artistic vision proposed a new language of modern abstract sculpture, probing the interplay of spatial, formal and material unity to explore broader experiences of being in the world, particularly amidst landscape. This year, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of her passing, Hepworth's 1958 work *Oread*, acquired by the Felton Bequest, returns to display at NGV International.

Words by **Carla Dusevic**

In early 1953 Barbara Hepworth's eldest son, Paul, an RAF pilot, was killed in a plane crash. Stifled by grief, Hepworth fell into a deep depression, and she reached a rare artistic impasse within her prolific five-decade career. In a generous gesture to lift her spirits, Hepworth's patron and close friend Margaret Gardiner proposed the pair embark on an odyssey to Greece the following summer. From the luminous blue isles of Crete and the sweeping views of Santorini's caldera to the colossal architecture of Athens and Mycenae, Greece struck Hepworth with inspiration. She diligently recounted the trip in a notebook and sketchbook, now held in the Tate archives.[1] These pages are littered with drawings, poems, pressed flowers, evocative visions of landscapes, studies of Classical Greek sculpture, and encounters on sublime summits:

> Went on alone up the last steep ascent, but the wind was angry – ferocious. I fell, my hair was nearly whisked off my head – my clothes nearly torn off me. I bowed to the will of the gods and descended.[2]

The trip had a profound impact upon Hepworth's disposition, as well her artistic direction. Returning to her home-base at Trewyn Studio in St Ives, Cornwall, the sculptor set about creating a new suite of works – their titles derived from Greek locations – tunnelling directly into guarea tropical hardwood that Gardiner had arranged for her. In works like *Corinthos*, 1954–55, housed in the collection of the Tate, the tropical wood's unique chestnut-coloured sheen lends itself to the sensuality of its curves, containing the momentum of concave amphitheatres and hollow volcanic craters. In the essay 'A Sculptor's Landscape', published two years after the trip, Hepworth confirms:

> These forms were my experience there ... the embodiment of the sculptor's landscape. Timeless and in space, pure in conception and like a rock to hold on to, these forms in Greece have been a constant source of inspiration.[3]

During this period, subsequent works nodding to Greek myth and history emerge simultaneously with Hepworth's re-engagement with bronze. Diverging from her signature avant-garde approach to directly carved stone, Hepworth instead cast works from carved plaster. Distinct from modelling in clay, the swift building up of plaster, a process which she likened to 'covering the bones with skin and muscles', could then be carved back as hard plaster surface.[4]

A remarkable piece from this period, acquired by the Felton Bequest is currently on display at NGV International. *Oread*, 1958, refers to the mythical Greek nymphs found among grottoes and mountains. Placed on a plinth at eye level, the slender, soaring figure fans outwards, exalted. The sculpture is reminiscent of a nimble one-legged yoga pose: its arms drive up, energy rising through the body with a quiet force, while the crevasse running through offers a central balance. Encountering *Oread* in the round, our eyes level with its small base; the work appears to be teetering, yet it remains firmly poised. Eternally carved into the plaster cast, tactile indentations and ridges formed from the artist's nimble fingers, and the drag of tools scuffed and scratched surface bring a human touch to the mythic.

Turning through Hepworth's Greek sketchbook, nascent references to *Oread* are abundant: outlines and annotations of an amphitheatre's funnel echo the curling of its outstretched wings; triangular torsos traced from terracotta *kore* at the Palace of Knossos observe the enduring fascination with human form; drawn columns interspersed within diary entries are praised for their sturdy proportion. Even within the interleaves of pressed flowers, fig tree foliage folded at the lobe contains *Oread*'s curled extremities, the narrow leaf blade reaching upwards like the rising torso. Almost a direct colour match to her botanic sample, the soft green patina of the bronze trades upon the relationship of the figure in nature.



‘Eternally carved into the plaster cast, tactile indentations and ridges formed from the artist’s nimble fingers, and the drag of tools scuffed and scratched surface bring a human touch to the mythic.’

Carla Dusevic

(p. 84) **Barbara Hepworth** *Figure (Oread)* 1958. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1962 © Bowness. 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

(above) **Barbara Hepworth** *Eidos* 1947. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of the Samuel E. Wills Bequest to commemorate the retirement of Dr E. Westbrook, Director of Arts for Victoria, 1981 © Bowness. 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

While painters of the Romantic era featured the device of a *Rückenfigur* (‘back figure’), a figure seen from behind, looking over the edge of nature’s immensity, Hepworth offers *Oread* as the synthesis of human and landscape in sublime accordance. Reconciling one’s identification of self through immersion in nature, what emerges for Hepworth, in her own words, is ‘the form one feels within oneself’.[5] Years earlier, in 1952, Hepworth wrote: ‘I was the figure in the landscape and every sculpture contained to a greater or lesser degree the ever-changing forms and contours embodying my own response to a given position in the landscape.’[6]

A highlight of Hepworth’s trip was Delphi, the site of the ancient Temple of Apollo on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, which the Greeks deemed the centre of the world. In 1964, a decade on from her trip, Hepworth reflected:

> Perhaps I did not write in my notebook about Delphi because it meant so much to me. On a fair and glorious morning I managed to escape some 400 people and ascend the hill alone and in silence … Standing alone in the stadium, alone below Olympus, I felt at ease both physically and spiritually.[7]

Oread attests to this sense of serenity, which comes from not only being in the world renewed by sublime encounters, but also from the reprieve from grief – a heaviness shed and a spirit lifted. Hepworth’s remarks speak to the self-consciousness of grieving, and the slow emerging from the chrysalis of grief into the world. Though such a moment of hope might not be able to be articulated in words, it is certainly palpable in her works.

Carla Dusevic is NGV Project Officer, Curatorial and Collections.

See Barbara Hepworth’s *Oread*, 1958, on Level 2 at NGV International. The NGV warmly thanks the Felton Bequest for acquiring this work for the Collection.

ART FAIRS
TO ZEN GARDENS

Experience the art and architecture of Asia from timeless temples to thriving celebrations of the arts with Limelight Arts Travel’s carefully curated, small group tours:

- JAPAN’S ART ISLANDS AND THE SETOUCHI TRIENNALE, OCTOBER 2025
- SOUTH KOREA: CLASSIC TO CONTEMPORARY, OCTOBER 2025
- KYOTO & TOKYO: A TALE OF TWO CITIES, NOVEMBER 2025
- ARTSG & BANGKOK, JANUARY 2026
- HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI, MARCH 2026



LIMELIGHT
ARTS—TRAVEL

SMALL GROUPS | EXPERT LECTURERS | INSIGHT & INSPIRATION

(02) 8599 4201

limelight-arts-travel.com.au

BLUE OBSESSION

From the first synthetic pigments created in ancient Egypt to new hues discovered in the past decade, blue has been an important colour in art and decoration for millennia. Here, through works in the NGV Collection, we dive into the colour's unshakeable hold on artists.

Words by **Elisa Scarton**





(p. 89 left to right) **Todd McMillan** *Equivalent XII* 2014, from the *Equivalent* series. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014 © Todd McMillan, courtesy of Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. These digital records have been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

Todd McMillan *Equivalent II* 2014, from the *Equivalent* series. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014 © Todd McMillan, courtesy of Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. These digital records have been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

There is an old Swedish saying, *skita i det blåa skåpet*, which roughly translates to 'don't relieve yourself in the blue cupboard'. A colleague of mine explains that this odd expression is used to describe a situation in which you have truly landed yourself in hot water. Its origins are tied to nineteenth-century Sweden, when well-to-do locals began painting their cabinets a vibrant Berlin blue.[1] As the colour was more expensive than other colours such as red or ochre, blue-painted cabinets were reserved exclusively for finer pieces of porcelain, silver and lace. To sully such a space would have been quite the faux pas indeed.

Blue has long possessed a certain prestige. In early 2025, archaeologists at Pompei unearthed a sacrarium, or Roman sanctuary, whose walls were painted a rich blue. Hidden for more than two thousand years, the room is significant not only for how well its frescoes have been preserved, but also for the colour. Blue in ancient Rome was particularly hard to come by. Imported from afar, Egyptian blue was the first synthetically manufactured pigment in human history, designed to mimic the tones of the lapis lazuli and turquoise minerals so beloved by pharaohs and the ruling classes.

By painting the Pompeian sanctuary Egyptian blue, its Roman owners were making a statement, serving up a conversation starter for guests while broadcasting the fact that they could afford something most people could not.

In art history, the appeal of blue is global, from fourteenth-century Chinese porcelain to Islamic architecture and European Renaissance painting, in which the robes of the Virgin Mary were literally jewel-toned – rendered in ground lapis lazuli in a process that was difficult and costly. By the early nineteenth century, the colour had become more widely available thanks to the discovery of mineral-based cobalt blue, the spread of the artificial ultramarine, and, more importantly, the synthesis of Prussian blue.

Two centuries earlier, a German occultist by the name of Johann Konrad Dippel abandoned a recipe for an illicit elixir he believed could cure all human ailments. Thought to be Mary Shelley's inspiration for the character of Victor Frankenstein, [2] Dippel left his disgusting mix of wood ash and bovine blood in the workshop he shared with dye-maker Johann Jacob Diesbach. Diesbach accidentally added the concoction to a batch of crushed crimson beetles, iron sulphate and potash, and instead of the expected deep red, he soon produced what would be christened 'Prussian blue' in honour of its Berlin birthplace.

Were it not for this discovery, Katsushika Hokusai's *Great wave off Kanagawa*, 1831 (purchased by the Felton Bequest), would have been a very different work. The woodblock print, with its giant wave and unmistakable frothing tentacles poised to smash a boat below, is a study in Prussian blue. Despite Japan's strict ban on all imports, the colour found its way to Osaka and to Hokusai under the name *bero*, a derivation of the Dutch *Berlyns blaauw* (Berlin blue). Hokusai was one of the first Japanese artists to boldly embrace the colour, using it extensively to depict the depths of the water in *Great wave off Kanagawa* and atmospheric qualities more widely in his landscape scenes.

For contemporary artists the world over, blue is a natural choice. The colour of the ocean and sky, it is a means to convey infinitude and the vastness of the world around us. In Australian artist Todd McMillan's 2014 *Equivalent series* (purchased Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists), white clouds float across an almost uniformly blue sky. Inspired by Alfred Stieglitz's 1922 series of cloud photographs, McMillan used a historical printing process called cyanotype or 'sun printing', a camera-less photographic technique that uses a light-sensitive chemical solution to create images on paper, fabric and other surfaces. The technique produces a distinctive Prussian blue image, although in McMillan's *Equivalent* series the blue is softer, more natural, but no less captivating. The artist describes his process as an 'act of mediation', the photographs we see brought into being by holding the 'image of a cloud up to the sky'.[3]

Dhambit Munuŋgurr also seeks to echo the sky in *Blue pole*, 2020 (purchased with funds donated by Orloff Family Charitable Trust, 2020). After a car accident in 2005, the Yolŋu artist from Gunyuŋara was unable to grind ochres or use her right hand to paint but refused to give up her practice.[4] She received permission from Yolŋu Elders to use acrylics instead, which she applies on large bark canvases and



larrakitj (hollow-log memorial poles) with her less dominant hand. Initially she worked with the traditional Yolŋu palette of orange, red, yellow and black, as she had done before the accident, but soon she began experimenting. By 2019 she had found her own signature palette of gapan (sacred white ochre), ultramarine and pastel blue, electric and unexpected colours that reflect the essence and energy of the natural world, as well as the stories and legends of her Country.

Elsewhere in the NGV Collection, blue is contrapuntal. When used outside the realm of landscape painting, blue can be sweet and bitter, uplifting and melancholic. The expression 'feeling blue' is a phrase used to describe the emotion of sadness. The roots of the idiom stem from 'the blue devils' – the seventeenth-century name for the depression and hallucinations brought about by alcohol. British brothers and caricaturists George and Isaac Cruikshank would often depict these devils quite literally in their work as menacing blue critters. In the pair's 1820 etching *Tom and Jerry taking Blue Ruin after the spell is broke up*, however, we see not demons, but the main characters of Pierce Egan's novel *Life in London* – published in 1821 with accompanying colour illustrations by the Cruikshanks – partaking in a popular Regency-era alcoholic drink. The work is a commentary on both the allure and consequences of alcoholism during the era. The drink in question? Blue Ruin, the nickname for low-quality, often homemade gin with a bluish tinge that could make the drinker blind.[5]

Centuries later, French American artist Louise Bourgeois would ascribe an altogether more hopeful sentiment to the colour blue, writing: 'Blue means you have left the drabness of day-to-day reality to be transported into … a world of freedom where you can say what you like and what you don't like.'[6] That sentiment is expressed in her work *The song of the blacks and the blues*, 1989–96 (purchased by the NGV Foundation, 2015), as an ensemble of spiral forms appears to move and interact on a vivid blue background. Bourgeois often returned to the spiral in her work, with the form representing control, trust and positive energy, as well as the artist's own volatile temperament. This ambiguity was all part of the show, with Bourgeois noting: 'All my work is suggestive; it is not explicit. Explicit things are not interesting.'[7]

Before establishing himself as the 'painter of black and light' Pierre Soulages rippled the black surfaces of his calligraphy-like abstract paintings with subtle hints of colour, mainly ochre and blue.[8] In *Painting, 202 × 143, 6 November 1967* (*Peinture, 202 × 143, 6 novembre 1967*), 1967 (purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of The Eugénie Crawford Bequest, Founder Benefactor, 1998), we see three large black ovals, their liquid forms oozing beyond their horizontal confines to tinge a bold, thick smear of blue. The blue itself slowly distils as it moves down the canvas, decreasing in intensity from a deep black-blue to a far lighter shade that is smudged along its borders.

Between 1967 and 1973, Soulages added blue (and sometimes red) to works as a contrast to his beloved light-blocking black, but even he acknowledged the universal pull of a colour that has captivated artists and audiences for millennia. A colour that, unlike most, has its own mysterious emotional pull. As Soulages writes about this most metaphorical of colours: 'Yes! But this calm and rather soft blue is worth as much for its colour as for what it contributes in terms of the lighting of the black and white nearby!'[9]

Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator.

The NGV warmly thanks all those who supported the acquisition of the works discussed.

(left) **Dhambit Munuŋgurr** *Blue pole* 2020. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Orloff Family Charitable Trust, 2020 © the artist, courtesy of Buku Larrnggay Mulka

(right) **Pierre Soulages** *Painting, 202 × 143, 6 November 1967* (*Peinture, 202 × 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



Theophanes, the *Confessor*



The Gospel of Theophanes is the most significant work from the Byzantine period in Australia and was purchased for the NGV Collection by the Felton Bequest. Here, NGV conservators share the story of how this remarkable work was made, including which materials and techniques would have been used by its creator, Theophanes, the Confessor.

Words by **Ruth Shervington** *and* **Bonnie Hearn**

The Gospel of Theophanes is a deluxe rendition of the Four Gospels, which features intricate, ornate designs created using precious metals and minerals, inks and parchment. Acquired in 1960 by the Felton Bequest for the NGV Collection, this Byzantine illuminated manuscript is written in Greek[1] and was produced in Constantinople (current day Istanbul) c. 1125–50. It is believed to be written and illuminated, and funded, by the monk Theophanes, who is depicted beside the Virgin Mary on the frontispiece. This is a rare self-attribution, which is inscribed in gold ink[2] at the head of the frontispiece. The single-authorship of the manuscript is also unusual. As far as we understand, in this period manuscripts were produced in a workshop by individual scribes, rubricators and illuminators, funded by external donors. Theophanes further delights his readers with a rare treat as he is depicted offering a bejewelled bound book to Mary, the very same manuscript held by NGV today.

During the middle Byzantine period, animal skin, known as parchment, was used for manuscript writing. Preparing parchment involved removing the skin of an animal such as sheep, goat or calf, and soaking it in a caustic solution to soften and dissolve the hair. The wet skins or pelts were then scraped with a curved knife to remove excess hair and flesh. The skin was stretched on a frame while wet, further scraped and sanded, and then slowly,



gently tensioned. This was repeated over several days until the skin became thin and semitransparent, yet still pliable. Once dry, the skins were removed from their frames and cut into sheets, folded through the centre, to make book pages, also known as bifolia.

Conservators speculate *The Gospel of Theophanes* is made from calfskin, determined by the hair follicle pattern observed under high magnification.[3] Throughout the manuscript there are areas of small, round spots that indicate the axilla, or stretchy underbelly of the beast, and long mottled marks that are small scars of cuts bared by the animals when alive.[4]

A monastery in Constantinople would have purchased the blank sheets from a parchmenter, a purveyor of parchment.[5] In preparation for applying script, the parchment was ruled with incised lines to layout and draft the work ahead. Horizontal and vertical rulings that provide structure and spacing (such as columns and margins) are visible to conservators under raking light – that is light shone across the surface to reveal texture. One untrimmed folio reveals tiny pin pricks along the foredge, suggesting that the sheet was measured in this manner, before long-ruled lines were drawn using a sharp, blind instrument such as a stylus.

Once ruled, the scribe could begin work on the text, in this case using both gold and brown ink script with red ink rubrics. Gold was applied to the most important areas of the text. In these parts of the script conservators have also observed underlying red ink. The gold ink, also known as shell gold (pulverised gold mixed with a binder), meticulously traces the red script. The tracing appears well aligned and accurate, indicating to conservators that the two inks were likely drawn by the same hand. Once the red ink had dried, the overlaying gold ink would have been 'illuminated' by use of a burnisher (rubbing a stone over the ink). Together with the red undertones, the script visually livens to a bright, golden shimmer.

Most of the script was written in what conservators believe to be an iron gall ink. This ink was made from oak gall nuts, mixed in solution with iron sulphate, creating a tannic acid that produces a rich brown-black ink. Iron gall ink was used throughout the Western world from the ninth to the twentieth centuries, and it was notorious for corroding and damaging paper and parchment overtime. Luckily, Theophanes' ink has lasted the test of time so far, with conservators noting only microscopic loss and corrosion. Scattered throughout the manuscript text are red ink symbols known as rubrics. These would have been executed by the 'rubricator', who highlighted the text using headings, catchwords or marginalia, traditionally in red ink, after the scribe completed their work. Rubrics assist the reader, indicating important or significant points within the text. To the conservator's eye, the rubrics and red underlying ink appear to be the same formula and are likely an organic dye, possibly a Carmine dye extracted from the Kermes beetle[6]



An 'illuminator' is the artist who draws, paints and decorates the blank spaces and folios left purposefully untouched by the scribe. In this manuscript, Theophanes used lavish illuminations[7] for the frontispiece, Letter of Eusebius, Eusebian canons (canon tables) and the title page for each gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each gospel once had a full-page portrait illumination depicting the four evangelists adjacent to their titles.[8] Unfortunately, these have been removed at some point over the centuries and likely exist as a single folio yet to be rediscovered in another collection.[9]

NGV conservators recently undertook pigment analysis of the manuscript to further decipher Theophanes' painting palette. Non-invasive analytical techniques such as ultraviolet and infrared wavelength imaging can aid in visual identification of pigments, while use of minute X-ray exposure allows conservators to determine the elemental composition of pigments (known as X-ray fluorescence). For example, pure gold was detected within the illumination. Shell gold was used with painterly effect and gold leaf applied as a bold background on the frontispiece. The natural blue mineral lapis lazuli was used abundantly throughout the manuscript. Likely imported from Afghanistan, this pigment was valued comparably to gold at the time.

An array of beautiful yet toxic pigments were also identified, including a fiery bright red vermillion pigment (mercury sulphide), infrequent and delicate use of bright orange realgar pigment (arsenic sulphide) and, appearing in three different tones, lead pigment (lead white, red lead and less often a blackened lead, also known as lead sulphide). This diverse and colourful palette was carefully laid over preparatory brown ink underdrawings and blind incisions, which mapped out intricate geometric designs.

Once the manuscript was complete the folded pages would have been handed over to the binder. Very little evidence remains of the original binding as the manuscript is now bound in a red silk velvet cover (likely from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century). However, Theophanes gives us a clue as to how his manuscript was intended to be covered in the frontispiece illumination, that is extravagantly, with guilt boards lathered in precious jewels (known as a treasure binding). Conservators can connect only traces of this style of binding, finding few remnants of metalware likely used to secure heavy covers to the manuscript.[10]

If Theophanes did commission and make the manuscript, taking on the role of donor, scribe, rubricator and illuminator, then he set himself a tremendous task, committing an enormous amount of time and funds to his Gospel. Considering this, the saintly red halo circling his head is earned by the monk, who showed the utmost patience, dedication and multi-talent in the making of this rare and exquisite illuminated manuscript.

Bonnie Hearn is NGV Conservator of Paper and Ruth Shervington is NGV Senior Conservator of Paper. The NGV warmly thanks the Felton Bequest for acquiring this work for the Collection.

Theophanes *The Gospel Book of Theophanes* (c. 1125–1150) (*Tetraevangelion*). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1960. (p. 92) Folio 7v: Canon table (detail) (p.93) Folios 1v-2r: Frontispiece with Theophanes presenting his Book to the Virgin; Letter of Eusebius to Carpianus (p.94) Folios 4v-5r: Canon tables 3 / 4; Canon tables 4 / 5. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

& Sorrento Art Prize
&SAP25
28 June - 31 August 2025
$125,000 Main Prize

Adriane Strampp & Alice Pulvers & Alun Rhys Jones & Bill Perrin
Brad Gunn & Cameron Hayes & Carmel Wallace & Carolyn Cardinet
Charles Rocco & Christopher Langton & Christine Healy & Clare Brodie
Dagmar Cyrulla & Daniel Moynihan & Dave Sparkes & David Palliser
Faridah Cameron & Frank Duyker & Gail Hocking & Gareth Sansom
Geoff Overhue & Glenn Clarke & Graeme Altmann & Greg Somerville
Ines Cook & Irene Barberis & Jaq Grantford & Jason Waterhouse
Jim Pavlidis & Jo Mellor & Jon Cattapan & Joshua Cocking
Karen Napaljarri Barnes & Kate Briscoe & Kate Shaw & Kevin Chin
Lisa Roet & Marion Harper & Mark Cuthbertson & Martin King
Matthew Calvert & Matthew Quick & Michael Le Grand & Peter Westwood
Phillip George & Phillip HOWe & Richard Horvath & Robbie Rowlands
Robert Croft & Robert Lee Davis & Ruth Allen & Saxon Quinn
Sonia Payes & Stephen Haley & Stewart MacFarlane & Takahiko Sugawara
Tamara Dean & Warren Breninger & Yvonne Boag & Zac Bevan
andgalleryaustralia.net
See you by the Seaside



BOROONDARA ARTS

Australian Tonalism

A selection from the
John and Peter Perry Collection

TOWN HALL GALLERY
7 MAY TO 27 JUL 2025

Image: A M E Bale, 'Pompon Dahlias', c. 1936, oil on canvas, 56 x 46 cm.

HAWTHORN ARTS CENTRE
360 BURWOOD ROAD
HAWTHORN, VICTORIA

BOROONDARA.VIC.GOV.AU/ARTS

BOROONDARA

65 000 YEARS

A Short History of *Australian* Art

POTTER MUSEUM OF ART

OPEN 30 MAY 2025
FREE ENTRY

Potter Museum of Art,
University of Melbourne,
Cnr Swanston St and
Masson Rd, Parkville, Naarm.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



SUSTAINABLE FASHION 「WE THE MAKERS」 PRIZE

EXHIBITION DATES /
EXHIBITION OPEN ⟶ 14 JUNE - 30 NOVEMBER

OPENING HOURS /
NATIONAL WOOL MUSEUM

OPEN DAILY 10AM - 5PM
(CLOSED GOOD FRIDAY)

WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY
26 MOORABOOL STREET
GEELONG VIC 3220

VISIT OUR WEBSITE /
WETHEMAKERS.COM.AU

GEELONG CITY OF DESIGN

national wool museum

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

WANGARATTA
CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE AWARD
2025

$40,000 acquisitive award

A Kyamba Foundation Project

Wangaratta Art Gallery
56-60 Ovens Street,
Wangaratta, 3677
wangarattaartgallery.com.au

Rural City of Wangaratta

CREATIVE VICTORIA

24 MAY – 17 AUGUST

WANGARATTA CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE AWARD 2025

Mother's Day with NGV



Observations: Dress in Art and Design History
$49.95, Members $44.96

The third volume in this series of close observations of the rich and internationally significant NGV Collection, *Observations: Dress in Art and Design History* brings together the insights of global scholars, writers and curators to explore the dynamic relationship between fashion and societal change from the sixteenth to twentieth century.



Mother's Day High Tea
$85, Members $76.50

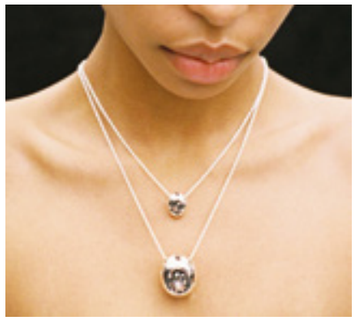
Celebrate Mother's Day with a tantalising selection of sweet and savoury treats, beautifully presented on a three-tiered stand with a glass of sparkling wine and a pot of tea or coffee, served in the NGV Tea Room.

ngv.melbourne/plan-your-visit/dining



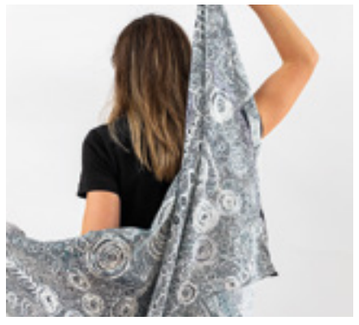
Maison Balzac Le Rouge range
From $39, Members from $35.10

Maison Balzac's Le Rouge range is the perfume of lipstick, nude powder, red velvet and fresh skin on one exquisite evening in Paris admiring the premiere performance of the Le Train Bleu Ballet in 1924.



Meadowlark Strawberry range
From $149, Members from $134.10

Abstract sterling silver jewellery inspired by summer's sweetest fruit, Meadowlark's Strawberry range includes a small and large necklace, ring and strawberry earrings designed by the independent studio based in Aotearoa, New Zealand.



Silk Twill Scarf - Betty Muffler, *Ngangkari Ngura* (*Healing Country*)
$199.95, Members: $179.96

Painted from above, Betty Muffler's *Ngangkari Ngura* (*Healing Country*), 2022, provides an expansive representation of Country from the perspective of the eagle, including significant sites such as waterholes and waterways. Here, it's reproduced on a beautiful silk twill scarf exclusively for NGV design store.



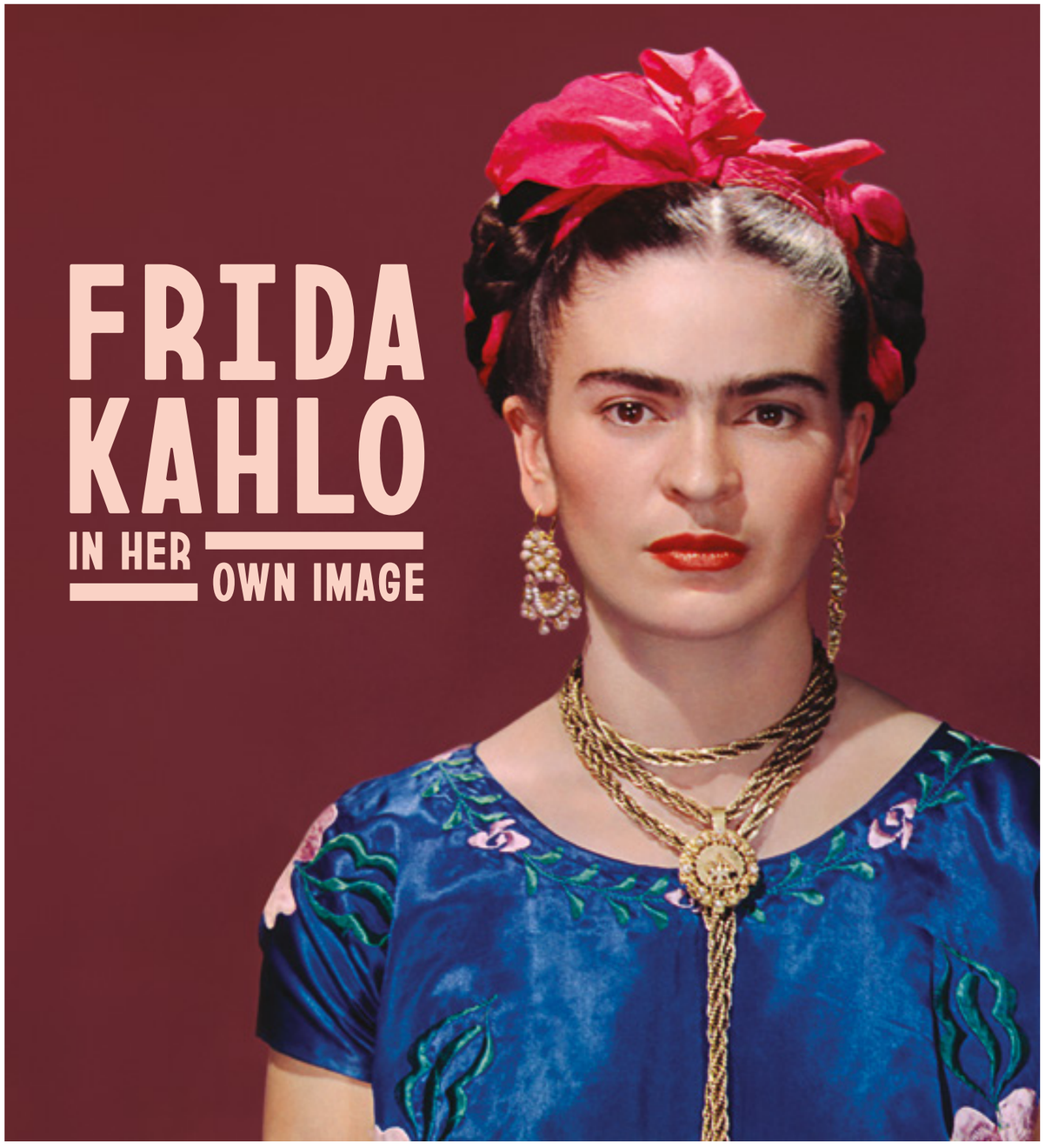
NGV Gift Membership
$115

Treat a loved one to an NGV Gift Membership. Membership includes discounted and priority entry to all NGV ticketed exhibitions, access to member-only after-hours events and much more.

ngv.melbourne/membership

Available instore or shop selected titles online at NGV design store via NGV.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.



15 March – 13 July 2025

Featuring Kahlo's personal belongings, clothing, make-up and art from the Museo Frida Kahlo for the first time in Australia.

Bendigo International Collections

Book online prior to your visit:
bendigoartgallery.com.au

BENDIGO ART GALLERY

MUSEO FRIDA KAHLO

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO · VICTORIA EVERY BIT DIFFERENT · LA TROBE UNIVERSITY · BALGOWNIE BENDIGO · BENDIGO TOURISM · Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation · Mercure HOTELS

Image: Frida Kahlo in blue satin blouse, 1939, photograph by Nickolas Muray © Nickolas Muray Photo Archives.
© 2025 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust. Av. 5 de Mayo No. 20, col. Center, alc. Cuauhtemoc, cp 06000, Mexico City.

@bendigoartgallery

BOTANICA
WORLD DISCOVERIES
Gardens • History • Art • Music • Culture

With 25 years' experience, Botanica offers an extensive range of unique itineraries. Travel in small groups, escorted by an expert Botanical Guide.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Order a copy of our brochure today!

Mediterranean Gardens and Wildflowers of Greece and Italy by Small Ship

Join Botanica's privately chartered Mediterranean voyage aboard MS Caledonian Sky to the shores of Greece, Italy and Malta. Be invited to private gardens on the idyllic island of Corfu, traverse Santorini, and see rarely visited Sifnos.

- 12-night cruise aboard MS Caledonian Sky and one nights' accommodation in a centrally located five-star hotel
- Airport transfers on first and last day, tipping, port taxes and porterage, plus 37 meals
- Spot wild orchids and various other wildflowers across the island of Crete
- Visit a range of Mediterranean gardens, from the experimental Sparoza garden outside Athens, to private gardens of Corfu, and the much-loved gardens of Florence Trevelyan and San Giuliano in Sicily
- Enjoy lectures on art and architecture by Kenneth Park and musical performances by soprano, Judith Dodsworth



BTAM14



Enjoy this 12-night small ship cruise from Athens to Malta. Botanica's privately chartered voyage aboard the MS Caledonian Sky explores the Greek islands of Santorini, Sifnos, Crete, Keflonia, and Corfu.

Expert Guides


Sophie Thomson Kenneth Park Colin Crosbie

14 Days, Athens to Malta
Departing 28 April 2026
From $17,995* pp, twin share
From $27,895* solo traveller

TBC Supply Australasia Pacific Buying Pty Ltd. ABN 44 004 681 619. ATIA accreditation #A10025. BOT.607

For more information, or to order our brochure, call 1300 305 202 or visit botanicatours.com



THINKING TOGETHER: Exchanges with the natural world

1 March – 8 June 2025

Introducing major new commissions by contemporary artists **Robert Andrew**, **Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan** and **Keg de Souza**, presented alongside video works by **Sorawit Songsataya** and **Tina Stefanou**, and paintings by the **Martu communities** of central Western Australia.

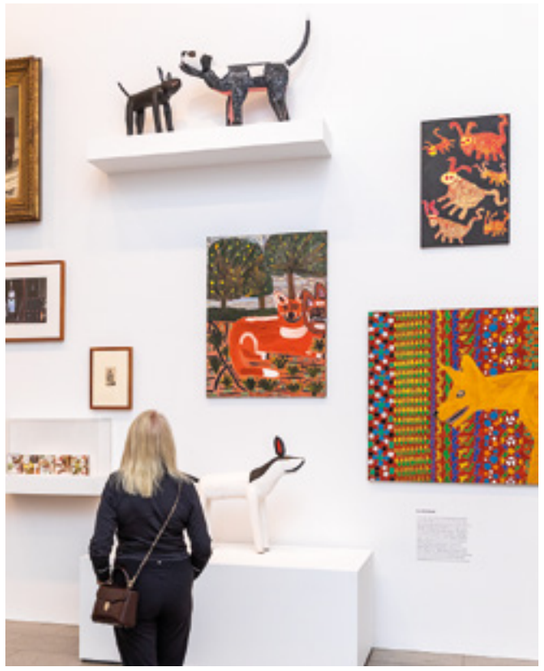
bundanon.com.au

BUNDANON

Ngamaru Bidu, J. Biljabu (dec.), Kumpaya Girgirba, Bowja Gaye Patricia Butt, Noelene Girgirba (Lanky) Oates , N. Taylor (dec.), Ngalangka Nola Taylor, Muuki Taylor, W. Taylor (dec.), *Kalyu*, 2014 (detail), synthetic polymer paint on linen. Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. © Martumili Artists/Copyright Agency, 2024

Closing Soon

Cats & Dogs
20 July



Installation view of *Cats & Dogs* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, until 20 July. Photo: Tobias Titz

From cattle dogs to lap dogs, divine felines to the black cats of superstition, *Cats & Dogs* explores humanity's deep connection to these animals through more than 250 works of art and design. Drawn from the NGV Collection and spanning all periods and media, this exhibition of cats and dogs in art and design reveals how our domesticated companions have long been a rich source of visual imagery – from ancient history to the present day.

The exhibition features works by contemporary and historical artists including Rembrandt van Rijn, Francisco de Goya, Albrecht Dürer, Pierre Bonnard, Eileen Mayo, David Hockney, Jeff Koons, Hulda Guzmán and more, alongside celebrated Australian artists, including Claudia Moodoonuthi, Trevor Turbo Brown, Atong Atem, Charles Blackman, Grace Cossington Smith and Nora Heysen.

See *Cats & Dogs* at the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia until 20 July.
For more information about this exhibition and to purchase tickets, scan the code.

In the Next Issue

NGV Magazine
Jul–Aug



Vincent van Gogh *Houses at Auvers* 1890 (detail). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

In the July/August issue of *NGV Magazine* we explore the wonderful world of French Impressionism in celebration of the 2025 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,* which opens at NGV International on 6 June. With essays by curators and international academics, the issue examines some of Impressionism's most enduring themes and explores key artists featured in the exhibition, including Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Édouard Manet, Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot.

Also in this issue, we share new stories from the NGV Collection including a feature on *Still life with fish and seafood*, 1650, by Giovanni Battista Recco, and an interview with 2025 NGV Indigenous Fashion Commission artists Peggy Griffiths and Cathy Ward.

People

The opening of *Martin Grant* and more at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and NGV International.



Simone LeAmon, NGV Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture, Nipa Doshi 2025 MECCA x NGV Women in Design recipient, and Gemma Savio, NGV Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture at NGV International. Photo: Annika Kafcaloudis



Martin Grant and Beverly Grant at the opening of *Martin Grant*. Photo: Jessie Obialor



NGVWA Committee with **Yayoi Kusama's** *Flower Obsession* 2016–17, purchased, NGV Women's Association, 2018, at NGV International. Photo: Gena Ferguson



Polly Borland and family at the opening of *Martin Grant*. Photo: Jessie Obialor



Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, Janet Whiting AM, President of the Council of Trustees, NGV, Christine Barro, Martin Grant and The Hon. Ben Carroll MP, Deputy Premier of Victoria at the opening of *Martin Grant*. Photo: Jessie Obialor



Martin Grant and Katie Somerville, NGV Senior Curator, Fashion & Textiles at the opening of *Martin Grant*. Photo: Jessie Obialor



Felton Bequest Committee Members Fred Grimwade, Christine Clough, Carol Schwartz AO and Felton Bequest Committee Chair Rupert Myer AO at the Felton Bequest Handover Event of **Morita Shiryū's** *Kanzan* 1969. Felton Bequest, 2025. Photo: James Morgan



Donna McColm, Assistant Director, Curatorial and Audience Engagement, NGV welcomes guests to the opening of Top Arts 2025 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Matto Lucas



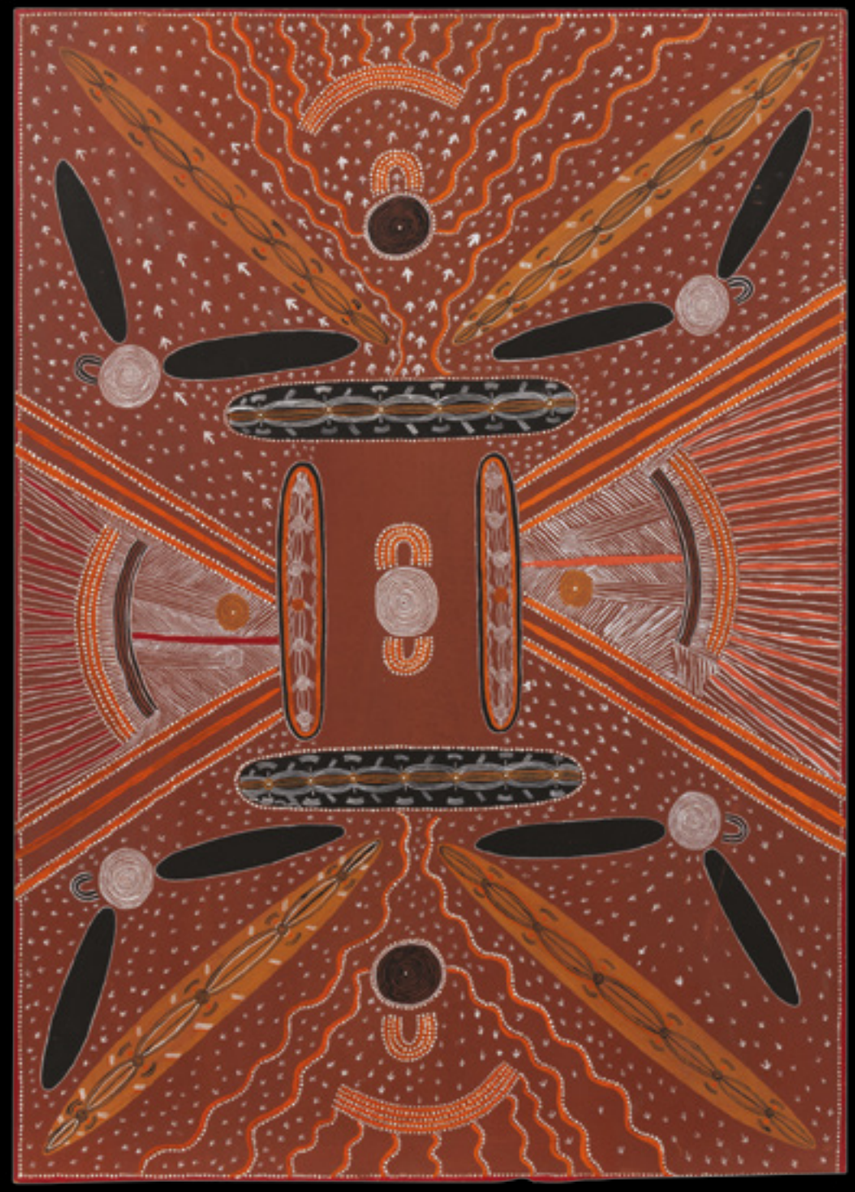
Michele Stockley, NGV Head of Learning, Delphine Byrne, Graphic Designer, Independent Schools Victoria, Anne Smith, Principal Consultant, Independent Schools Victoria, and Dr Merinda Kelly, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University at the opening of Top Arts 2025 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Matto Lucas



Sarah Hunter, Managing Director, Officeworks (NGV Principal Partner) welcomes guests at the opening of Top Arts 2025 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Matto Lucas

SIGNIFICANT

An international exhibition of Australian First Nations art



D C

MELBOURNE | SYDNEY | NEW YORK

7 May – 3 July 2025

DLANCONTEMPORARY.COM.AU

KAAPA TJAMPITJINPA c. 1926 – 1989
Budgerigar Dreaming 1972
synthetic polymer paint and earth pigments on composition board
91 × 64 cm

What's On



Gülsen Özer and **Aarti Jadu** *Listening with the Mountain Body* 2025 © Gülsen Özer and Aarti Jadu. Photo: Fergus Floyd

DRAWN FROM THE COLLECTION: HIGHLIGHTS AND HIDDEN GEMS
From 1 May
VENUE Duldig Studio, East Malvern

A new selection from the Duldig Collection showcases sculptures, paintings and prints by Karl Duldig and Slawa Horowitz-Duldig. Selected sculptures and works on paper document Duldig's Holocaust memorials and reveal his approach to this challenging theme, while a series of coloured ink pieces from the 1960s highlights the breadth of art by Horowitz-Duldig and the couple more broadly as modernist cultural influencers in Melbourne.

duldig.org.au

JANENNE EATON: LINES OF SIGHT—FRAME AND HORIZON
From 24 May
VENUE Geelong Gallery, Geelong

Janenne Eaton is an eminent Australian artist whose work critically engages with some of the most pressing humanitarian and cultural debates shaping our lives today. Eaton's paintings and installations explore environmental, historical and political concerns and the impact of a globalised, digital ecology on the individual, on communities and on nature. Geelong Gallery is delighted to present the first major survey of Eaton's extraordinary practice, through works spanning more than four decades.

geelonggallery.org.au

NGURRAK-AL MARRAM-U / BODY OF THE MOUNTAIN
From 24 May
VENUE Burrinja Gallery, Upwey

Curated by Gretel Taylor with Gülsen Özer and Wurundjeri Traditional Custodian Mandy Nicholson, *ngurrak-al marram-u* responds to the artists' experience of Corhanwarrabul (the Dandenong Ranges) through performative and visual media. The exhibition considers what it means to 'listen to Country' through diverse perspectives from the likes of Aarti Jadu, Rebecca Murray, Mandy Nicholson, Jill Orr, Gülsen Özer, Laki Sideris, Gretel Taylor and Tammy Wong Hulbert.

burrinja.org.au

RITUALS: GIFTS FOR THE GODS
From 30 May
VENUE Hellenic Museum, Melbourne

Unveil the mysteries of ancient Greece in a never-before-seen exhibition, curated by the Hellenic Museum in partnership with the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Featuring 119 remarkable objects on loan from 17 state museums in Greece, *Rituals* is an exploration of powerful traditions, treasured objects, and humanity's enduring desire to commune with the divine.

hellenic.org.au/rituals

With thanks to the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV).
Visit pgav.org.au for more exhibitions.



Slawa Horowitz-Duldig *Reclining figure* c.1972. Collection of Duldig Studio

65,000 YEARS: A SHORT HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN ART
From 30 May
VENUE The Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne, Parkville

This exhibition examines the rise to prominence of First Peoples' art across Australia in the face of colonisation and proclaims the importance of Indigenous knowledge and agency. The exhibition features more than four hundred artworks, including important public and private loans and new commissions.

potter-museum.unimelb.edu.au

CEZANNE TO GIACOMETTI: HIGHLIGHTS FROM MUSEUM BERGGRUEN / NEUE NATIONALGALERIE
From 31 May
VENUE National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Cézanne to Giacometti: Highlights from Museum Berggruen / Neue Nationalgalerie marks the first time works from this internationally significant collection will be seen in Australia. The exhibition presents a journey through the dynamic changes in European and Australian art in the twentieth century.

nga.gov.au/exhibitions/cezanne-to-giacometti

CLAY ON COUNTRY – CERAMICS FROM THE CENTRAL DESERT
Until 22 June
VENUE Central Goldfields Art Gallery, Maryborough

Clay on Country is a celebration of clay, community, culture and creativity from the central desert region of Australia. The varied works reflect Ancestral stories, contemporary experiences and settler histories alongside the joys and challenges of making with clay, the push and pull of the medium and myriad results of an engagement with this most tactile of materials. Organised by Artback NT, *Clay on Country* is presented by Central Goldfields Art Gallery in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

centralgoldfieldsartgallery.com.au

DAVID HOCKNEY 25
Until 1 September
VENUE Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

This exhibition brings together more than four hundred works from 1955 to 2025, including paintings from international, institutional and private collections, as well as works from the artist's own studio and foundation. Also on display, *The second marriage*, 1963, from the NGV Collection.

fondationlouisvuitton.fr

List of reproduced works and end notes

(cover)
Japanese
Uchikake Kosode with windy seashore and fishing scene (late 18th century) (detail)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Janet Whiting and Phil Lukies, 2024

p. 4
(top)
Elizabeth Keith
Blue and white 1925
Ai to shiro 青と白 (detail)
colour woodblock
27.5 × 37.5 cm (image)
29.5 × 41.0 cm (sheet)
edition of 100
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated
by an anonymous donor, 2020
© Estate of the artist

(below)
Robert Mapplethorpe
American 1946–1989
Irises 1986, printed 1987
photogravure
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM
and Family through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program, 2025

p. 5
Rick Amor
Blue neon red light 1970-1971
oil on canvas
163.2 × 129.8 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented by the artist under the terms of the National Gallery of Victoria Travelling Scholarship, 1971
© Rick Amor/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

p. 10
(below)
Jeffrey Smart
Winter carnival, Viareggio (1989)
oil on canvas
52.9 × 117.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Ginny Green, Sandra Bardas OAM family, Vicki Vidor OAM and Bindy Koadlow in memory of their parents Loti Smorgon AO and Victor Smorgon AO through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2014
2014.338
© The Estate of Jeffrey Smart

p. 11
Agnes Goodsir
(Woman reading) (c. 1915)
oil on canvas
71.0 × 91.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented through the NGV Foundation by John and Suzanne Playfoot, Governor, 2001
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

p. 14
Katsushika Hokusai
The great wave off Kanagawa (c. 1830)
from the *Thirty-six views of Mt Fuji* series
1826–33
colour woodblock
25.7 × 37.7 cm (image and sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1909
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

p. 15
Suzanne Valadon
Nude with drapery 1921 *(Nu à la draperie)*
oil on canvas
73.0 × 54.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022

pp. 16–17
Robert Mapplethorpe
American 1946-1989
Irises 1986, printed 1987
photogravure
86.4 × 81.3 cm (image)
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2025

p. 18
Andy Warhol
Robert Mapplethorpe, 1983
Polaroid Polacolour ER Photograph
10.8 × 8.6cm
Collection of The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh.Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc

p. 21
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
Officer and waitress (*Offizier und kellnerin*), 1915
oil on canvas
95 × 82cm. Proposed acquisition, 2025 NGV Annual Appeal.

p. 22
Kay Sage
Other answers 1945
oil on canvas
40.7 × 33.1 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
John William Fawcett Bequest, 2025
© 2025 Estate of Kay Sage / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

p. 24
Lee Miller
Kay Sage, 1946
Woodbury, Connecticut
© Lee Miller Archives, England 2025. All rights reserved. leemiller.co.uk

p. 27
(top to bottom)
Toyen
(Untitled) (1947)
from the *Cache-toi, Guerre! (Hide, War!)*
portfolio 1947
zincograph
25.7 × 35.7 cm (image)
30.5 × 39.0 cm (sheet)
ed. 86/300
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton
Bequest, 2022
2022.1300.1
© ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022.
© Copyright Agency

Toyen
(Untitled) (1947)
from the *Cache-toi, Guerre! (Hide, War!)*
portfolio 1947
zincograph
25.8 × 35.9 cm (image)
30.5 × 39.0 cm (sheet)
ed. 86/300
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton
Bequest, 2022
2022.1300.5
© ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022.
© Copyright Agency

Toyen
(Untitled) (1947)
from the *Cache-toi, Guerre! (Hide, War!)*
portfolio 1947
zincograph
25.8 × 35.7 cm (image)
30.5 × 39.0 cm (sheet)
ed. 86/300
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton
Bequest, 2022
© ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022.
© Copyright Agency

p. 30
Frits Thaulow
Norwegian 1847–1906
River view c. 1890–1900
oil on canvas
53.3 × 66.0 cm
Deposited by the Trustees of the White Fund, Lawrence, Massachusetts
Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Photography © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

p. 33
Paul Signac
Gasometers at Clichy 1886
(Les Gazomètres. Clichy)
oil on canvas
65.0 × 81.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1948
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. 34
Claude Monet
French 1840–1926
Road at La Cavée, Pourville 1882
oil on canvas
60.3 × 81.6 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Bequest of Mrs. Susan Mason Loring
Photography © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved.

pp. 38–39
Issey Miyake
Ikko Tanaka (after)
Sharaku 2016
(a) polyester (coat) (b) vinyl, nylon (bag) (c) acrylic, chromed metal, synthetic cord (necklace) (d) acrylic (bangle) (e) acrylic (haircomb) (a) 105 × 88.0 cm (coat) (b) 32.5 × 26.0 × 17.8 cm (bag) (c) 36.7 × 11.9 x 0.6 cm (necklace) (d) 9.4 × 9.4 × 0.9 cm (bangle) (e) 11.9 × 8.1 × 0.7 cm (haircomb)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by the Hon. Michael Watt and Cecilie Hall, 2016
© Miyake Design Studio
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 40
Japanese
Katabira Furisode, summer kimono with falling snow scene (early 19th century–mid 19th century) (detail)
ramie, paste resist yuzen dye
180.0 cm (centre back)
117.5 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Cecily and John Adams, 2024

p. 41
Japanese
Uchikake Furisode wedding kimono with pine, bamboo, plum, and cranes (early 19th century–mid 19th century) (detail)
satin silk, shibori tie dyeing, embroidery, gold thread
177.5 cm (centre back)
131.0 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Michael and Emily Tong, 2024

pp. 42–43
Japanese
Katabira Kosode, summer kimono with bouquets and scattered fans (early 19th century–mid 19th century)
ramie, suri-hitta imitation tie dye design, gold and silver thread
183.5 cm (centre back)
126.0 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Dr Peter Chu, 2024

p. 44
(top)
Japanese
Indigo summer kimono with wisteria flowers Meiji period 1868–1912 (detail)
cotton
135.0 cm (centre back)
117.5 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by
The Late Hon. Michael Watt KC and Cecilie Hall, 2023

(bottom)
Japanese
Uchikake Furisode wedding kimono with pine, bamboo, plum, and cranes (early 19th century-mid 19th century) (detail)
satin silk, shibori tie dyeing, embroidery, gold thread
177.5 cm (centre back)
131.0 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Michael and Emily Tong, 2024
2024.90

p. 45
(top)
Japanese
Girls kimono with, flowers, butterflies, pine trees and flowing stream design c. 1960 (detail)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Forthcoming gift of Pauline Gandel, 2025

(bottom)
Japanese
Hitoe kosode, kimono with themes alluding to eight Noh theatre plays late Edo period (detail)
gauze satin silk, paste resist dye, embroidery, gold thread
167.0 cm (centre back) 124.0 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Jennifer Lempriere and Michael Pithie, 2024
2024.94

p. 46
(top)
Japanese
Uchikake Kosode with a falconry scene and Heian period imperial cart amongst flowers (c. 1800) (detail)
crepe silk, paste resist dye, embroidery, gold thread
180.5 cm (centre back) 128.0 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Geraldine Buxton, 2024

(bottom)
Japanese
Katabira Kosode, summer kimono with bouquets and scattered fans (early 19th century-mid 19th century) (detail)
ramie, suri-hitta imitation tie dye design, gold and silver thread
183.5 cm (centre back) 126.0 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Dr Peter Chu, 2024
2024.92

p. 47
top
Japanese
Noh theatre robe, Atsuita (late 18th century–early 19th century) (detail)
(Nōshōzoku Atsuita 能装束厚板*)*
silk, gilt-paper, silk thread
143.0 cm (centre back) 155.4 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest in honour of Allan Myers AC KC President of the Council of Trustees of the NGV, 2012

(bottom)
OJU Shogetsu
Honour of education: Dressmaking 1890 (detail)
colour woodblock
(a-c) 36.4 × 72.5 cm (image) (overall) (a-c) 37.0 × 73.2 cm (sheet) (overall)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Sidney Myer Fund, Governor, 1994
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

p. 48
Japanese
Indigo summer kimono with tigers Meiji period 1868–1912 (detail)
cotton
139.0 cm (centre back)
126.5 cm (cuff to cuff)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by
The Late Hon. Michael Watt KC and Cecilie Hall, 2023

pp. 52–53
Ronnie Tjampitjinpa
Papa dingo – near Kiwirrkurra 1996
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
137.0 × 264.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield, 2025
© Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency

p. 55
Wingu Tingima
Minyma Tjuta (Seven Sisters) 2006
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
138.0 × 205.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Supporters and Patrons of Indigenous Art, 2006
2006.356
©Wingu Tingima/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

p. 57
Johnson Eziefula
A covalent one II 2022
synthetic polymer paint and charcoal on canvas
152.5 × 121.4 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Matthias Arndt through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024
© The artist and The ARNDT Collection

p. 59
Johnson Eziefula
Never Apart 2023
acrylic and charcoal on canvas
© Johnson Eziefula
Courtesy of MARUANI MERCIER, Belgium
© The Artist

p. 60
Indian
Maharana Ari Singh II (c. 1765)
opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper
21.0 × 11.0 cm (image)
26.5 × 16.6 cm (sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1980
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

p. 63
Mithram
Folio from a Bhagavata Purana: Yashoda nursing the child Krishna (c. 1525-1550)
opaque watercolour on paper
14.0 × 22.4 cm (image)
18.1 × 24.1 cm (sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1976
AS26-1976
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

p. 65
Indian
Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas garden (c. 1708–1710)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1980

p. 66
Indian
Maharana Jawan Singh bathing with his sardars (c. 1835)
opaque watercolour and gold and silver paint on paper
42.5 × 28.8 cm (image)
48.8 × 35.5 cm (sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1980
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Gordon Darling Foundation

p. 72
(top)
Hans Heysen
A cottage bunch 1930
oil on canvas
46.3 × 38.7 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift from The L. W. Thompson Collection, 2004
© Hans Heysen Estate/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

(bottom)
Sybil Craig
Flowerpiece medley (1960)
oil on cardboard
61.3 × 50.6 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1978
A1-1978
© Estate of Sybil Craig
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of The Vizard Foundation

pp. 76–77
David Hockney
The second marriage (1963)
oil, gouache and collage of torn wallpaper on canvas
197.8 × 228.7 cm irreg.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented by the Contemporary Art Society of London, 1965
1525-5
© David Hockney
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. 80–81
Janenne Eaton
Canberra II 1982
graphite and carbon on paper on canvas
161.0 × 226.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Michell Endowment, 1983
© Janenne Eaton

p. 84
Barbara Hepworth
Figure (Oread) (1958)
bronze
68.8 × 41.4 × 8.6 cm
ed 5/7
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1962
© Bowness
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. 86
Barbara Hepworth
Eidos (1947)
stone, synthetic polymer paint
(a-b) 37.2 × 50.7 × 28.2 cm (overall)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with the assistance of the Samuel E. Wills Bequest to commemorate the retirement of Dr E. Westbrook, Director of Arts for Victoria, 1981
© Bowness
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. 88
(left)
Todd McMillan
Equivalent XII 2014
from the *Equivalent* series
cyanotype
75.0 × 50.0 cm (image)
82.5 × 57.0 cm (framed)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014
2014.1977
© Todd McMillan, courtesy of Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

(right)
Todd McMillan
Equivalent II 2014
from the *Equivalent* series
cyanotype
75.0 × 50.0 cm (image)
82.5 × 57.0 cm (framed)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014
2014.1974
© Todd McMillan, courtesy of Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest

p. 90
Dhambit Munuŋgurr
Blue pole 2020
synthetic polymer paint on Stringybark (Eucalyptus sp.)
350.5 × 38.0 × 31.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Orloff Family Charitable Trust, 2020
© the artist, courtesy of Buku Larrnggay Mulka

p. 91
Pierre Soulages
Painting, 202 × 143, 6 November 1967 1967
(Peinture, 202 × 143, 6 novembre 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
1998.35
© 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

pp. 92–94
Theophanes
The Gospel Book of Theophanes (c. 1125–1150)
(Tetraevangelion)
brown and gold inks, tempera and gold leaf on parchment, modern crimson velvet binding
24.2 × 17.4 cm (folio)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1960
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

p. 101
Vincent van Gogh
Dutch (worked in France) 1853–90
Houses at Auvers 1890
oil on canvas
75.6 × 61.9 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Bequest of John T. Spaulding (48.549)
Photography © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved.

p. 106
Gülsen Özer and Aarti Jadu
Listening with the Mountain Body, 2025
Materials: Installation with sound design; socially engaged, place-based practice; rhyodacite and anthropic rock
each approx. 50 × 30 × 30 cm on plinths.
(Collection: N/A)
© Gülsen Özer and Aarti Jadu, Image credit: Photo by Fergus Floyd.

p. 107
Slawa Horowitz-Duldig
Reclining figure, c.1972
pen and coloured inks
53.0 × 35.5 cm
Inv. No. 3229
Duldig Collection

ENDNOTES

pp. 16–18
Robert Mapplethorpe
1. Robert Mapplethorpe, interview by Janet Kardon, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1988, p. 25.

pp. 22–24
Other answers
1. Salomon Grimberg, 'Review of *Kay Sage: Catalogue Raisonné* by Stephen Robeson Miller', *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2019, p. 48.
2. Quoted in Elisabeth F. Sherman, 'Kay Sage's *Your Move* and/as Autobiography', *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2011, p. 128.
3. Judith Suther, *A House of Her Own: Kay Sage, Solitary Surrealist*, University of Nebraska Press, 1997, p. 71.
4. Quoted in Suther, p. 74.
5. Albert Frankenstein, untitled art notice, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 March 1941.
6. Suther, p. 103.

pp. 26–28
Toyen
1. Teige, 'Deset let Surrealismu', in Ladislav Štoll and Karel Teige (eds), *Surrealismus v diskusi*, Knihovna Levé fronty, Prague,1934, pp. 8–9.
2. Karla Huebner, 'In pursuit of Toyen: Feminist biography in an art-historical context', in *Journal of Women's History*, spring 2013, p. 16.
3. Lucy Ives, 'Mythic Being', *Artforum*, < https://www.artforum.com /features/lucy-ives-on-the-art-of-toyen-251416/>, date accessed March 2025.
4. André Breton, Benjamin Péret & Jindřich Heisler, *Toyen*, Editions Sokolova, Paris, 1953, p. 80.

pp. 30–36
Lasting Impressions
1. François Thiébault-Sisson, 'About Claude Monet', Le Temps, 8 Jan. 1927, reprinted and trans. in Charles Stuckey (ed.), *Claude Monet: A Retrospective*, Park Lane, New York, 1986, p. 346.
2. Claude Monet, letter to Frédéric Bazille, Dec. 1868, in Richard Kendall (ed.) and Bridget Strevens Romer (trans.), *Monet by himself: Paintings, drawings, pastels, letters*, Macdonald Orbis, London, 1989, p. 26.
3. Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé, 15 Feb. 1882, in Kendall (ed.), p. 100.
4. Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé, 4 Apr. 1882, in Kendall (ed.), p. 102.
5. Monet, letter to Paul Durand-Ruel, 18 Sep. 1882, in Kendall (ed.), p. 102.
6. Monet, letter to Paul Durand-Ruel, 7 Mar. 1883, in Kendall (ed.), p. 105.
7. Gustave Geffroy, 'Claude Monet', *La Justice*, 15 March 1883, reprinted and trans. in Stuckey (ed.), p. 97.
8. ibid.

pp. 52–54
Ronnie Tjampitjinpa
1. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of genocide research* no. 8, vol. 4 (2006): 388. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240. date accessed 8 March 2025.
2. 2. Paul Hasluck, "The Policy of Assimilation" (paper presented to the House of Representatives, Canberra, April, 1961), 2. https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/catalogue_resources/18801.pdf date accessed 8 March 2025.

pp. 60–68
Descendants of Sun, Moon & Fire
1. Rajputana means 'Land of the Rajputs' and was a region in north-west India that included many of the Rajput kingdoms. Today it mainly makes up the present-day Indian state of Rajasthan. See Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria: A Collection Acquired Through the Felton Bequests' Committee*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1980, p. 7.
2. M. S. Randhawa & John Kenneth Galbraith, *Indian Painting: The Scene, Themes and Location*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969, p. 67.
3. Trees and plants revered by Hindus as sacred include the *tulsi* (holy basil), *pipal* (sacred fig), *bilva* (Indian bael), *vata* (banyan), *amra* (mango), *nim* (lotus), coconut, and *kusha* (sacred grass). See Captain A. H. Bingley, *Handbook on Rajputs*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 2006, p. 145.
4. Randhawa & Galbraith, p. 67.
5. The Jaipur court was known as Amber from the fourteenth century to 1727. In that year, a new capital was built and named Jayapura, and was later known as Jaipur, a transliteration of Jayapura.
6. Babur ruled several kingdoms as he moved from Central Asia to India: Ferghana (1494–97), Samarkand (1497–98), Ferghana (1498–1500), Samarkand (1500–1501), Kabul (1504–26), Samarkand (1511–12) and, finally, Mughal India (1526–30). For more about Babur's conquests, see *The Babur-nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, trans. W. M. Thackston, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1996, or many earlier versions with various translators.
7. *The Confluence of the Two Seas*, or *Majma-ul-Babrain*, is a book on comparative religion authored by Dara Shukoh (1615–59). It was one of the earliest works to explore both the diversity of religions and a unity of Islam, Hinduism and other religions. The book was authored as a short treatise in Persian in 1654–55.
8. See John Guy & Om Prakash Agrawal, *Palm-leaf and Paper: Illustrated Manuscripts of India and Southeast Asia*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1982.
9. Although the use of paper allowed flexibility in the format of manuscripts, it is interesting to note that early examples maintained the long horizontal format that was a natural constraint of painted manuscripts on palm leaves.
10. The *Bhagavata Purana* is a chronicle of the avatars or incarnations of Vishnu. Books ten and eleven outline his eighth incarnation as Krishna.
11. Topsfield, p. 9.
12. Terence McInerney, *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016, p. 18.
13. Topsfield, p. 9.
14. Randhawa & Galbraith, p. 67.
15. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, vol. 1, The Society of the Resuscitation of Indian Literature, Calcutta, 1902, p. 434.
16. ibid. p. 138.
17. Randhawa & Galbraith, p. 75.
18. *Gopika* are the female form of *gopi* cow herders and were famous for their unconditional devotion to Krishna, as described in the *Bhagavata Purana*.
19. The year 1858 marks the end of the Indian Mutiny, also known as the great uprising of 1857, or the First War of Indian Independence. After the British victory and the reconquest of northern India in 1857–58, the Mughal dynasty was deposed and the last Mughal emperor sent into exile to Burma, where he died soon afterwards. The British parliament took over from the British East India Company and India formally came under the rule of the British Crown. This led to the various kingdoms that had sided with the British or that had kept out of the confrontation being permitted to retain their identity, albeit under the indirect control of British officials called Residents.
20. The British East India Company was originally a private company granted a Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600, and it commenced trade with the 'East Indies'. Its success in extracting concessions from native rulers eventually led to its de facto control over much of modern India between 1757 and 1858.
21. Captain C. J. Brookes, *History of Mewar*, Lewis Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1859, p. 38.

pp. 70–74
Floribunda
1. Huss E, Bar Yosef K, Zaccai M. *Humans' Relationship to Flowers as an Example of the Multiple Components of Embodied Aesthetics*. Behav Sci (Basel). 2018 Mar 1, < https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5867485/ >, date accessed 15 Feb 2025
2. Popular in Europe in the 16th–18th centuries, A Wunderkammer, or 'cabinet of curiosities', was a room or display case filled with extraordinary objects from art, nature, science, and culture. Over time, they influenced the development of museums and scientific classification.
3. Bunjil Place opened in 2017 and includes an outdoor community plaza, theatre, multipurpose studio theatre, function centre, library, gallery and City of Casey Customer Service Centre.
4. These ideas are expressed in the NGV curatorial file notes for Azuma Makoto

pp. 76–79
A Marriage of Styles
1. Derek Tibbles, 'Mr and Mrs Clark and Blanche', *Ambit*, no. 227, 2017, p. 66.
2. David Hockney, Hans W. Holzwarth and Jean-Pierre Gonçalves de Lima (eds), *David Hockney: A Chronology*, Taschen, 2020, p. 35.
3. Nikos Stangos (ed.), *David Hockney by David Hockney: My Early Years*, Thames and Hudson, 1988, p. 89.
4. Mark Glazebrook, *David Hockney: Paintings, Prints and Drawings 1960–1970*, Lund Humphries, 1970, p. 31.
5. David Hockney, *Pictures*, Nikos Stangos (ed.), H. N. Abrams, 1979, p. 22
6. David Hockney, quoted in 'Queer British Art 1861–1967', *Tate*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/queer-british-art-1861-1967>, date accessed 8 March 2025.
7. Battye, John Christopher. "David Hockney;' Art and Artists, April 1970, 51.
8. 'Obituary: Gp Capt Peter Townsend', *The Independent*, 20 June 1995.
9. Jason Smith, '*The second marriage*', in *Masterpieces: Six Centuries of Paintings from the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia*, National Gallery of Victoria, 2000, p. 195.
10. James A. W. Heffernan, 'Hockney rewrites Hogarth: A gay rake progresses to America', *Art on Paper*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1999, pp. 56–103.

pp. 84–86
Dame Barbara Hepworth: *Oread*
1. Hepworth's Greek sketchbook was later published in the *festschrift* for the art historian J. P. Hodin, a friend of hers: see 'Greek Diary: 1954–1964' in *European Critic: Essays by Various Hands Contributed in Honour of his Sixtieth Birthday*, Cory, Adam and Mackay, 1965. The text can be accessed online via the Tate Archive, under the title *Material Relating to Greece*, 1954–64.
2. Barbara Hepworth, 'Delos', in *Material Relating to Greece*, p. 22.
3. Barbara Hepworth, quoted in *Barbara Hepworth: Drawings from a Sculptor's Landscape*, Alan Bowness (ed.), Cory Adams and Mackay, 1966.
4. Barbara Hepworth, quoted in *The Complete Sculpture of Barbara Hepworth 1960–69*, Alan Bowness (ed.), Lund Humphries, 1971, p. 7.
5. ibid.
6. Barbara Hepworth, quoted in, Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings, Lund Humphries, 1952, p.20.
7. Hepworth, 'Delphi', in *Material Relating to Greece*, pp. 3–5.

pp. 88–91
Blue Obsession
1. Shipley's, Neil. 2018. "Swedish Expressions: To Shit in the Blue Cupboard." Watching the Swedes. July 13, 2018. <https://watchingtheswedes.com/2018/07/13/swedish-expressions-to-shit-in-the-blue-cupboard>, date accessed 9 April 2025.
2. Galloway, Lindsey. n.d. "Germany's Most Monstrous Castle." BBC. https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20161018-germanys-most-monstrous-castle, date accessed 9 April 2025.
3. Wyk, Susan van, ed. 2023. Photography: Real and Imagined. Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, p.24.
4. "Triennial Conversations | Dhambit Munuŋgurr: In Conversation with Myles Russell-Cook | NGV, 2023, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/multimedia/dhambit-munuŋgurr>, date accessed 9 April 2025.
5. the. 2017. "What Is the Origin of the Term 'Blue Ruin' for Low-End Gin?" English Language & Usage Stack Exchange. July 21, 2017, <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/401067/what-is-the-origin-of-the-term-blue-ruin-for-low-end-gin>, date accessed 9 April 2025.
6. "10 Quotes That Prove Louise Bourgeois Was a Lady Boss." 2019. TheArtGorgeous. July 15, 2019, https://theartgorgeous.com/10-quotes-prove-louise-bourgeois-lady-boss, date accessed 9 April 2025.
7. "MoMA | Louise Bourgeois: The Complete Prints & Books." 2017. Moma.org, <https://lb.moma.org/themes/spirals>, date accessed 9 April 2025.
8. "Lvhart." 2019. Lvhart.co. 2019, <https://www.lvhart.co/journal/understanding-the-enduring-allure-of-pierre-soulages-outrenoirs>, date accessed 9 April 2025.
9. ibid

pp. 92–94
Theophanes, the Confessor
1. The manuscript is written in miniscule Byzantine script by one hand. M. Manion, *The Felton Illuminated Manuscripts in the National Gallery of Victoria*, Macmillan Art Publishing, 2005 p. 25.
2. Ibid. p. 27.
3. Follicles appear large and homogenous in size and are distributed evenly across the skin, which is characteristic of calf skin.
4. The manuscript contains 254 folios, that is approximately 127 bifolia measured at ~24.2 × 34.8 cm. Based on the average useable area of a calf skin, ~56 x 81 cm, one skin could yield four bifolia if minimal trimming (a common bookbinding practice) has occurred. Depending on the quality of the skin, it is possible that only two to three bifolia from one calf was usable, which would increase the number of calves slaughtered for a manuscript of this length and size to forty to sixty.
5. Monks, being the primary creators of liturgical manuscripts, may have played a role in preparing parchment at some stage, however during the early Middle Ages parchment was more likely manufactured on a commercial scale and sold to scriptoriums. J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1992, p. 36.
6. Kermes beetles are indigenous to southern Europe, due to proximity and their established use as dye product at the time, they may have been used as a colourant. The cochineal insect is another dye source possibility, producing a similar vibrant red. It was harvested across northern Europe and known to be traded during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Stella Panayotova (ed.), *Colour, The Art & Science of Illuminated Manuscripts*, Harvey Miller Publishers, London, Turnhout, 2016, p. 62,
7. The Latin term *illuminare* means 'to enlighten or illuminate'. Therefore manuscript and miniature paintings, especially those embellished with gold or silver, are referred to as illuminations. M. P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts, A Guide to Technical Terms*, J. Paul Getty Museum and The British Library Board, 1995, p. 69.
8. Each Gospel title page shows evidence of media offset – i.e. transfer of ink – that would have corresponded to the portrait on the once-adjacent folio.
9. From the eighteenth to twentieth century, it was not uncommon for European art dealers to have folios separated from books so that they could be sold as individual artworks, especially for non-Western material.
10. Conservators have captured small metallic marks on the first blank folio (f.1r, back of the frontispiece) and one of the last blank folio (f.252v) at the back of the book. These marks may be offset from nails or metal wire used to secure jewelled board covers to the manuscript.

THE NGV WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS.

MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES® *FRENCH IMPRESSIONISM FROM THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON*

PRESENTING PARTNER

MELBOURNE
EVERY BIT DIFFERENT

PRINCIPAL PARTNER

KENNEDY

EXHIBITION PARTNER

MFA Boston
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

PREMIUM PARTNER

HSBC

MAJOR PARTNERS

EY

Qantas

CGU

LEARNING PARTNER

The University of Melbourne

PARTNER

CORRS CHAMBERS WESTGARTH

SUPPORTERS

Moët & Chandon
France 1743
CHAMPAGNE

YERING Station

Dulux

TOURISM PARTNERS

Hilton
MELBOURNE LITTLE QUEEN STREET

MELBOURNE AIRPORT

V/Line

LEARNING PATRON

KRYSTYNA CAMPBELL-PRETTY AM & FAMILY

MEDIA PARTNERS

QMS

Herald Sun

smoothfm 91.5

BROADSHEET

valmorgan

ROCK POST -ERS

TORCHMEDIA.

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF

Australian Government
International Exhibitions
Insurance Program

CREATIVE VICTORIA

CÉZANNE PICASSO TO KLEE MATISSE GIACOMETTI



HIGHLIGHTS FROM MUSEUM BERGGRUEN/ NEUE NATIONALGALERIE

Pablo Picasso, *Dora Maar with green fingernails (Dora Maar aux ongles verts)*, 1936, Museum Berggruen, Neue Nationalgalerie—Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz © Succession Picasso/ Copyright Agency, 2025, photo: © bpk/ Nationalgalerie, SMB, Museum Berggruen/Jens Ziehe

31 May – 21 Sep 2025

NATIONAL GALLERY
Only in Kamberri/Canberra
Book now

NGA

ORGANISING PARTNERS

MUSEUM BERGGRUEN
Neue Nationalgalerie
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

CBR CANBERRA
7 2 7

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Australian Government
International Exhibitions

MAJOR PARTNERS

Qantas
Maddocks

PRINCIPAL PATRON

TIM FAIRFAX AC