



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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Kusama in the 'spot'-light: Yayoi Kusama sets the record for NGV's highest attended ticketed exhibition with more than 570,000 visitors

NGV International | 15 December 2024 to 21 April 2025



28 April 2025: NGV's Yayoi Kusama exhibition has welcomed a **record-breaking 570,537 visitors** to the blockbuster presentation making it the most visited ticketed exhibition ever staged in the Gallery's history.

The Melbourne-exclusive exhibition has welcomed more than half a million visitors over the past four months since opening on 15 December 2024. This monumental achievement is a resounding testament to the unparalleled creativity of Yayoi Kusama, one of the most respected and influential contemporary artists living and working today.

Closing on 21 April, the exhibition welcomed art enthusiasts from across Australia and the world with more than 24% of visitors who attended the exhibition coming from interstate or overseas, underpinning the importance of major cultural attractions to Victoria's \$40 billion visitor economy.

The exhibition celebrated the work of the iconic 96-year-old Japanese contemporary artist Yayoi Kusama, featuring 200 works spanning her near-nine-decade career, from early drawings made as a nine-year-old to her most recent infinity mirror room made in 2024 and debuted in Melbourne.

Yayoi Kusama was a major attraction for international visitors throughout the summer and played host to global superstars including pop stars Billie Eilish, Dua Lipa, Troye Sivan, and Finneas, Ferrari Formula One driver Charles Leclerc, tennis player Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and Chinese rapper Wang Ziyi.

Yayoi Kusama is the largest exhibition NGV has ever dedicated to a single living artist, traversing the entire ground floor of NGV International and spilling out onto the street with trees along St Kilda Road wrapped in pink and white polka-dots, a public installation titled *Ascension of Polka Dots on the Trees*. The exhibition is one of the most comprehensive retrospectives of the artist's work ever presented globally and the largest ever mounted in Australia.

Yayoi Kusama will leave an indelible legacy for the State's collection with the acquisition of two major works: the 5-metre-tall sculpture titled *Dancing Pumpkin*, 2020, supported by the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, and *Narcissus Garden*, 1966/2024, an installation of 1,400 glimmering silver spheres which pooled around the inside of NGV's Waterwall. *Dancing Pumpkin* will remain on display in Federation Court after the exhibition closes offering visitors to the NGV an opportunity to experience the magic of Kusama's work even after the exhibition has closed.

Narcissus Garden has been acquired through NGV's Annual Appeal which invites philanthropic contributions from the community to acquire a significant piece for the NGV Collection and ensures Kusama's seminal work will remain in Victoria for visitors to experience for years to come.

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The NGV sincerely thanks Decjuba Foundation, Shirley Hsieh and Susan Lin, Paula Fox AO & the Fox Family, Jasmine Brunner Bequest, the Neilson Foundation, Gwenneth Nancy Head Foundation, Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC, John Higgins AO & Jodie Maunder, King Family Foundation, the Neumann Auster Family, Chris Thomas AM & Cheryl Thomas, and donors to the 2024 NGV Foundation Annual Dinner and 2024 NGV Annual Appeal for their generous contributions.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Steve Dimopoulos said: 'This incredible visitation record is testament to Melbourne's status as Australia's cultural capital. We are proud to support the NGV, with these hundreds of thousands of visitors boosting our visitor economy and supporting local jobs and businesses.'

Minister for Creative Industries, Colin Brooks said: 'This record-breaking exhibition is a powerful celebration of creativity and a landmark moment for our state's cultural calendar. It underscores the NGV's global reputation for delivering world-class exhibitions that captivate audiences of all ages and highlights its position at the cutting edge of contemporary art presentation.'

NGV Director, Tony Ellwood AM said: 'We are overcome by the public response to the *Yayoi Kusama* exhibition from our community who have truly embraced the artist's work. We are thrilled to announce that we have welcomed a record breaking 570,537 visitors to *Yayoi Kusama* since it opened in December making this the most visited ticketed exhibition in NGV's history. We extend our deep thanks to Yayoi Kusama for sharing her singular vision and creativity with the NGV and our audiences.'

Yayoi Kusama was on display from 15 December 2024 - 21 April 2025 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

The next major exhibition at NGV will be the international-exclusive Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® blockbuster *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* opening on 6 June. The exhibition features more than 100 iconic paintings by artists including Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot and more.

The Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition, *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* is on display 6 June to 5 October 2025 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Further information is available via the [NGV website](#).

@ngvmelbourne #NGV #NGVYayoiKusama

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YAYOI KUSAMA IMAGES:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/860vqysp221xbvy5ljxu4/ABO2leJ18ttfcpVe_YdVw_s?rlkey=xmia0vtnjloa9g8t83tbw6al_y&st=y4wfkdf&dl=0

FRENCH IMPRESSIONISM IMAGES:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/wpuigw84th607q0luym9/AJ4Ns7o44IZmIZ976Cep_eM?rlkey=8cjz3jlnk1yxmhsmed4vo2orx&st=8s7bqbz9&dl=0

IMAGE CAPTION: *Yayoi Kusama* at NGV International, Melbourne from 15 December 2025 - 21 April 2025. © YAYOI KUSAMA. Photo: Jessie Obialor

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For their support of *Yayoi Kusama* we acknowledge:

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