



# MEDIA RELEASE

## NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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## Saddle Up: NGV Celebrates Year of the Horse with Vibrant Festivities for Lunar New Year 2026

NGV International, St Kilda Road | Sunday 22 February 2026 | FREE



**22 January 2026:** Showcasing an exciting, free line up of dragon dances, Chinese Beijing opera performances, paper flower folding and mahjong games, the National Gallery of Victoria's annual Lunar New Year celebrations return in honour of the Year of the Horse.

Made possible with the support of HSBC, visitors to NGV International will enjoy a range of free, drop-in activities for all ages including creative workshops, talks, performances and tours of the NGV Collection. A highlight of the day will be **Fuzhou style dragon dances** from Hong De Lion Dance Association, a traditional performance representative of bringing good fortune, power, prosperity and wisdom to the community for the new year. Viewers will be captivated by the dragon's enthralling chase of a pearl, synchronised to the rhythmic beats of traditional Chinese drums and music.

Within the Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, audiences will be transported to the enchanting world of **Chinese Beijing Opera** with mesmerising performances. Wearing elaborate, vividly hued costumes (Xingtou), the opera performers will bring to life the centuries-old art of Peking Opera (Jingju), sharing historical narratives and folk tales through a blend of music, dance, and iconic instruments.

Throughout the day, a special Lunar New Year menu will be available in the Great Hall, with delicious refreshments including chicken, prawn and vegetarian dumplings, milk and fruit bubble teas and sweet buns with custard, taro and red bean fillings.

Visitors exploring the **NGV Collection of Asian Art** can immerse themselves in the rich soundscapes of guzheng performances by Melbourne-based composer and musician, **QiQi**, whose mastery of the traditional 21-string Chinese zither highlights the warmth and expression of the guzheng's 2,600-year heritage. For those wishing to try their hand at Mahjong, casual games will also be held, welcoming all experience levels.

Teens are invited to enjoy **paper flower folding** workshops, inspired by the many depictions of blossoms within the NGV Collection. As for younger guests, there will be drawing workshops to decorate the bridle, saddle and breastplates of a paper horse based on a horse sculpture made over 1700 years ago during the Western Jin dynasty in the NGV Collection. Asian-pop hits will dazzle the dance floor of the NGV children's exhibition *Let's Party! Fashion for Kids: Designed by Danielle Brustman*, where kids can host their own dance party in celebration of the New Year.

The Lunar New Year program joins NGV's summer calendar of events and exhibitions, including blockbuster *Westwood | Kawakubo*, which pairs two of the most influential fashion designers, Vivienne Westwood and Rei Kawakubo, as well as *Women Photographers 1900-1975: A Legacy of Light*, which celebrates the images, lives and stories of more than eighty women artists from around the globe.

NGV will also offer complimentary **tours and talks of the NGV Collection** in both Mandarin and English where visitors can discover how the symbol of the horse has been a constant source of inspiration to artists across the

globe from ancient times to modern day. For fashion lovers, Mandarin and English tours will also be offered in the new display *Works by Christian Dior in the NGV Collection*, showcasing one of the most iconic fashion houses of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Attendees of the Lunar New Year program will receive **red envelopes** which they can gift their friends and family and spread prosperity, good fortune and well-wishes for the new year.

**Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said:** 'We are honoured to provide a platform for the rich traditions and cultural heritage of our community with our annual Lunar New Year celebrations at the NGV. This program has become a highlight in our cultural calendar, and we welcome guests of all ages to celebrate the Year of the Horse with us.'

Lunar New Year at the NGV is on Sunday 22 February at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Entry is FREE. Further information is available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au)

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**Images:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/tvr88ej5try2yf54xkzwx/APafzB4YIY40QtogRLT-ENc?rlkey=u3ol3j1p0y4cmv4b3p2g2w7x9&st=573cvpn4&dl=0>

**Image Caption:** Dragon dances at the NGV Lunar New Year Celebrations 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Tim Carrafa

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