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Rembrandt

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Salvador Dalí *Mae West Lips Sofa*, 1937–38
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Melbourne Art Book Fair 2018.
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Every effort has been made to obtain accurate information for this publication. The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the NGV. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain names of people who have passed away.

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

(cover) **Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn** *Self-portrait in a cap, wide-eyed and open-mouthed* 1630 (detail) Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam Transfer, 1816 (RP-P-OB-697) Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

FROM THE NGV

More than 350 years after his death, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn remains one of the most recognised names in seventeenth century Dutch art. A gifted storyteller and a highly observant, experimental artist, Rembrandt was a proponent of new techniques and technologies at the time including etching and printmaking. He would come to be admired for his nuanced and evocative narrative scenes and portraits including a lifetime documenting his own journey through his many self-portraits. The NGV holds a significant collection of Rembrandt works, particularly works on paper, and we feature many of these alongside major international loans in the exhibition *Rembrandt: True to life*, the subject of this issue's cover story. We gratefully acknowledge Major Partner Macquarie Group and Media Partner Broadsheet for their generous support of this exhibition.

Also showing at NGV International, the NGV brings new light to the winter days with *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Madhavi*, for the 2023 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces season. A lover of light and a master of colour, French artist Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) celebrated everyday, intimately domestic scenes and interior details through his luminous paintings, tapping into a cultural moment at the turn

of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that author Dr Georgina Downey in her essay for *NGV Magazine* describes as: 'pivotal shifts in what we think of as interiority... a preoccupation with domestic space'. In this issue, we are also pleased to feature Tehran-born French architect and designer India Mahdavi on her experiential design for *Pierre Bonnard* and the common ground that brings the two creatives together. Thank you to our co-exhibition organiser and Exhibition Partner the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Presenting Partner Visit Victoria, Premium Partner HSBC, and Major Partners EY, Telstra, Qantas, Net-a-Porter, Sustainability Partner Acciona and Learning Partner, The University of Melbourne.

In other news, I am excited to share with you the artwork at the centre of this year's NGV Annual Appeal, Salvador Dalí's iconic *Mae West Lips Sofa* 1937-38. As one of only five in existence, this is an extraordinary opportunity to bring a major piece of Surrealist art into the NGV Collection. We would be grateful for your support for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and you can read in-depth about the work and Dalí's inspiration for its creation on page 30.

We remember the late Dame Vivienne Westwood, whose works feature currently in the NGV Collection on Level 3, NGV

International, and it is a delight to introduce you to Ellis Rowan (1848–1922) through a recent acquisition of a folding screen featuring her hand-painted *Australian wildflowers* c. 1890, kindly supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family.

We also celebrate highlights of the Melbourne design calendar – Melbourne Design Week, Melbourne Design Fair and Melbourne Art Book Fair – all coming up in May. Enjoy highlights of this year's festival program within this issue of *NGV Magazine*. We acknowledge the generous support towards Melbourne Design Week from our Major Partners Mercedes-Benz and Telstra, and our Design Partner RMIT University. Melbourne Design Week is part of the Victorian Design Program, an initiative of the Victorian Government and we gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the program and encourage you to visit the extensive range of exhibitions, events and programs on offer this year.

Please do take the time to see these exhibitions, events and artworks, and I hope your *NGV Magazine* reading enriches your experience of them.

Tony Ellwood AM
Director

The places we call 'home' have influenced, informed and inspired art the world over. In this issue of *NGV Magazine*, we continue our coverage of the landmark exhibition *Melbourne Now*, on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia until 20 August, by inviting five artists to reflect on how the Melbourne has served as their muse, and how the ingredients of everyday life, whether it be shopping lists or suburban streets, can be a font of inspiration.

Life – or more precisely, the afterlife, is the focus of NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator Elisa Scarton's interview with contemporary artist Shaun Gladwell on page xx. Gladwell's latest work, also on display at *Melbourne Now*, is a participatory Extended Reality (XR) experience with a deeply affecting, 'out-of-body' nature. It

was made possible with the support of a Research Partnership with Deakin Motion Lab, Deakin University.

From the NGV Collection, we celebrate the dynamic work of contemporary artists and designers on display. Artist Takahiro Iwasaki speaks to former SBS radio producer Miyuki Watanabe to celebrate the return to display of *Reflection model (Itsukushima)* 2013 and the work's impact on the artist. The large-scale suspended sculpture, acquired by the Felton Bequest in 2014, depicts the Shinto shrine of Itsukushima, reflected by the tidal flats of Japan's Inland Sea near the artist's childhood home. On page 92, NGV curator Sophie Oxenbridge takes readers on a tour of another powerful contemporary artwork now on display, Louise

Bourgeois's *Cell (glass spheres and hands)*, 1990–93, supported by the Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest. And, we acknowledge the groundbreaking fashion of Dame Vivienne Westwood (1941–2022) through a brief history of her most revolutionary works held in the NGV Collection, and now on display at NGV International.

We hope you enjoy these stories and more drawn from the NGV Collection in this issue of *NGV Magazine* and discover the works on your next visit.

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

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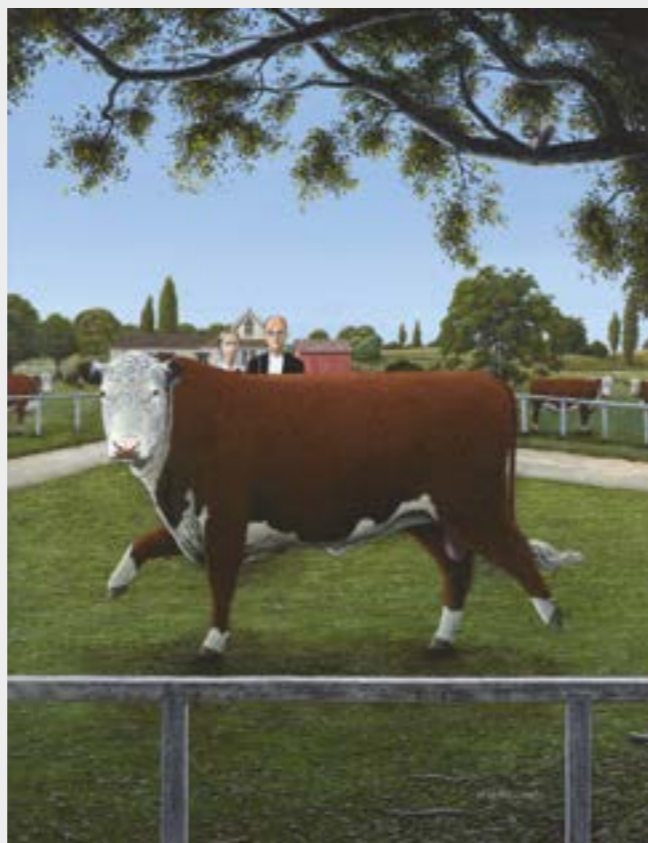
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The Hermann & Inge Thumm Collection

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Kenny Pittock works with ceramics, painting and drawing to elevate and celebrate everyday life. He often uses humour as an entry point to discuss serious topics.

MATTHEW CLARKE

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Matthew Clarke is a painter, printmaker and sculptor whose unique work is distinguished by his neo-expressionist aesthetic, vibrant colours and sense of spontaneity.

SANJA PAHOKI

Melbourne

Sanja Pahoki uses photography, neon, video and text to make nuanced observations on everyday life. Her practice frequently explores the nature of the self and the role of anxiety.

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COVER STORY

REMBRANDT

True to Life



During his lifetime, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (1606-1669) produced a vast body of paintings, drawings and prints. His originality was unprecedented, and he established new expressive and technical repertoires for each of the media in which he worked. The NGV is fortunate to hold the most significant Rembrandt collection in the Southern Hemisphere. It includes two paintings by the artist and a third produced in his studio, along with 130 etchings and two drawings. From 2 June, a new exhibition at NGV International titled *Rembrandt: True to Life* will feature more than 100 of these etchings alongside important loans from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; The Louvre Museum, Paris; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn *Abraham Fransen, apothecary c. 1657*; etching, engraving and drypoint on Japanese paper, 4th state. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Proposed acquisition, 2023

ALL ABOUT ABRAHAM FRANCCEN

Abraham Francen was an apothecary and close friend who supported Rembrandt during the years of financial turmoil preceding his bankruptcy in 1656. Here, NGV Senior Curator, Prints and Drawings, Cathy Leahy shares the story of an etching of Francen that will be featured in the *Rembrandt: True to Life* exhibition. A rare, early state impression, the work has recently become available for the NGV to acquire.

BY CATHY LEAHY

Rembrandt first established his reputation in Amsterdam in the 1630s through portraiture, becoming the most sought-after portrait painter in the city. He continued to make important portrait paintings and etchings at various points in his later career, and in the 1650s produced a number of etchings of friends and associates that are exceptional. An exciting opportunity has arisen to acquire one of these for the NGV's Rembrandt collection: a rare, early state impression of *Abraham Francen, Apothecary*, c. 1657.

Abraham Francen was an apothecary and close friend who supported Rembrandt during the years of financial turmoil preceding his bankruptcy in 1656. It has been suggested that Rembrandt etched the portrait in gratitude. Francen had acted as witness for Rembrandt, collected debts on his behalf from 1653 and continued to assist the artist and his children in business and personal matters for many years. While not a wealthy man, Francen shared Rembrandt's passion for collecting and was later described as a 'grand amateur' whose enthusiasm for prints was so great he had been known to go without food or drink to secure works he coveted.

Rembrandt has chosen to depict Francen as a collector, showing him in rapt contemplation of a print in the intimate surrounds of his chamber.

Francen is seated before a window through which light filters, softly illuminating the sheet in his hands, the large print album on the table and the paintings on the wall. Just visible in the shadowy depths on the table is a skull, an allusion to Francen's profession, and a small oriental statue, which reveals the collector's taste was not confined to Western art. The treasured objects that surround Francen reveal much about his interests and intellectual pursuits and provide a rare glimpse into the environment of the cultivated collector in seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Rembrandt himself was a voracious collector who had an extensive collection of art, exotic artefacts and natural objects; this evocative etching is especially valuable for the insight it provides into the artist's own feelings about collectors and collecting.

By the 1650s Rembrandt had developed an elaborate etching technique and achieved innovative pictorial effects that were greatly admired by his contemporaries. He combined etching with engraving and rich passages of drypoint to build areas of deep shadow. He further enhanced the tonal range and expressive power of his prints by manipulating plate-tone, selective hand-wiping and, as in this impression, the use of luminous, warm-toned Japanese papers. The fall of light in this print focuses attention on Francen's face, his deep absorption in the

sheet he studies so intently and the other objects of his passion.

The etching is also noteworthy for its unique horizontal format and for the numerous states that reveal how Rembrandt changed the composition as he worked, refining details of Francen's pose, his chair and the window. This very rare impression is from the fourth state where trees are now visible through the window and the curtain has been completely removed, the chair altered and the position of Francen's right hand changed. *Abraham Francen, Apothecary* is an important print by Rembrandt that celebrates the arts, collecting and the life of the mind. It is a superb example of the artist's powerful late style and is a highly desirable addition to the NGV's collection of Rembrandt's etchings.

SEE *REMBRANDT: TRUE TO LIFE* ON GROUND LEVEL, NGV INTERNATIONAL FROM 2 JUNE. NGV MEMBERS ENJOY DISCOUNTED ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION AND NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS HAVE UNLIMITED COMPLIMENTARY ENTRY. TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE VIA NGV.MELBOURNE

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CATHY LEAHY IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

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Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn *Abraham Francen, apothecary* c. 1657 (detail); etching, engraving and drypoint on Japanese paper, 4th state. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Proposed acquisition, 2023



COVER STORY

PORTRAIT OF THE WHITE-HAIRED MAN

The NGV is privileged to bookend Rembrandt's career with two exceptional paintings: his early Leiden panel *Two old men disputing*, 1628, and the late *Portrait of a white-haired man*, 1667, his second-last known portrait.

BY LAURIE BENSON

The attribution of Rembrandt's *Portrait of a white-haired man* has never been questioned, has been supported by more than one hundred years of reputable scholarship and has been included in many exhibitions around the world.¹ It received particularly glowing assessments from experts in 1951 when it was acquired by the Felton Bequest for the NGV and at the time it was the most expensive painting ever purchased for an Australian gallery.² Its acquisition was recommended by A. J. L. McDonnell, the London-based Adviser to the Felton Bequest, who was enthusiastically supported by fellow Adviser Sir Kenneth Clark, director of the National Gallery, London, and distinguished art historian Ellis Waterhouse. Upon its arrival, it garnered rare universally positive responses from the usually hypercritical Australian press.

Although Rembrandt faced personal, financial, and other challenges late in his life, his powers as an artist clearly did not diminish. The is evident in this remarkable portrait, painted so late in his career that Rembrandt could well have been excused for 'phoning in' the commission. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. This is a dynamic, brilliantly executed painting in which Rembrandt creatively applied methods he had developed over many decades, and shows that he was still experimenting in his art.

Through his consummate technique and using a deceptively subtle composition, Rembrandt invested vitality and movement into what could have been just a static, front-on image of a man seated in a chair dressed in black. He has used the classic triangular portrait composition formed by the head and hands, but that is

where the conventional approach ends. Rembrandt enhanced the dynamism of the figure by radically departing from realism; in fact, he seems to move towards abstraction here. He has enlivened the man by slightly twisting his seated body, and his right shoulder is higher than his left. The roughly sketched-in chair that is mainly visible at the left appears parallel to the picture plane, which makes the placement of the sitter's hands, particularly his left hand and elbow physically impossible, yet he looks comfortable and relaxed. Rembrandt has exaggerated the foreshortening of the subject's arms, yet the left hand projects further from the picture plane than his right and is more carefully modelled than his barely defined and dimly lit right hand. As art historian Albert Blankert observed, Rembrandt did this to avoid static symmetry in what is ostensibly a frontal pose.³ By deceptively defying reality, Rembrandt reinforces the figure's movement, hence life.

The stark contrast in brushwork across the entire painting also invigorates the composition and the figure. Areas that Rembrandt does not want the viewer to focus on are roughly painted with boldly applied brushstrokes of dark paint. For instance, the man is holding a black hat under his left arm, which is now barely, if at all, visible to the naked eye. The brightly illuminated face is rendered with a complex application of many rapid strokes with a broad brush thinly loaded with paint that only makes sense when viewed from a distance. Rembrandt carefully placed details with a fine brush, harking back to the techniques of the Leiden Fijnschilder painters, a method and tradition he knew well and practised as a young man. In certain places he also

flipped around a small brush and used the hard end to incise lines into the wet impasto, something he did in *Two old men disputing* painted around forty years earlier. These final scratches are rapidly scribbled and appear to flicker as light catches the raised edges of the paint. This seems to make the sitter's silver and white hair move, and Rembrandt appears to have revelled in the expressive qualities afforded by his ample wavy locks.

It was once thought that the right side of the painting was cut down, but analysis of the canvas has revealed scalloping on the edges caused by its initial stretching, which proves it has not been reduced.⁴ Rembrandt used the device of suggesting a life beyond the frame by not completing the sitter's right hand – an old, but very effective, method. Finally, he painted a partly seen red curtain that provides some relief to the eye in what could have been a dark void of a background.

Portrait of a white-haired man exemplifies Rembrandt's brilliance by combining a radical composition with an assured technique honed by decades of practice at the highest level. He had also not lost his capacity to convey character and personality in his portraits. Our unknown white-haired man has been captured in a moment of wistful contemplation as he looks directly at the viewer, but also past us with a slightly glazed focus. *Portrait of a white-haired man* is a work by an artist with a lively mind still pushing the limits of his craft.

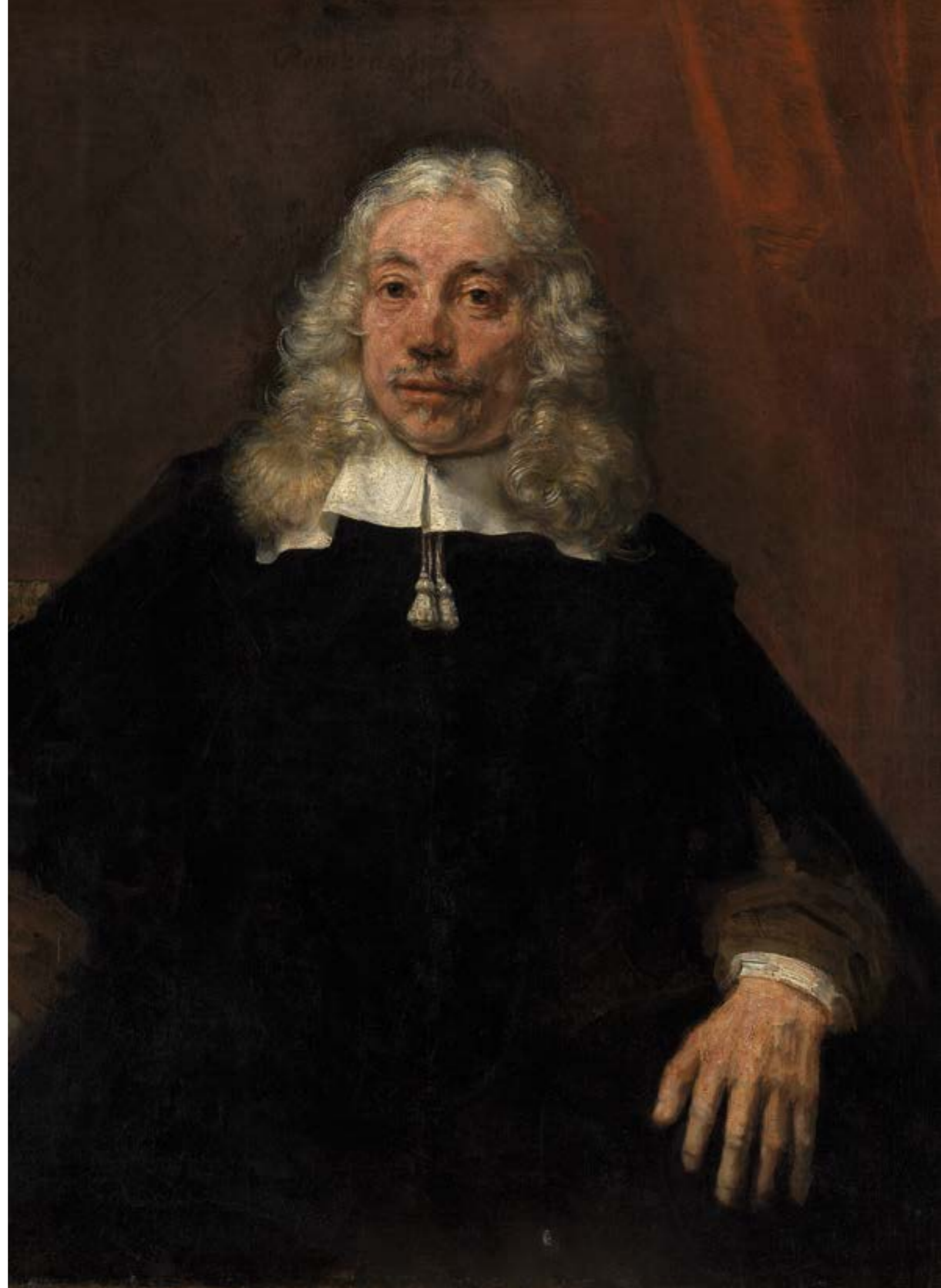
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LAURIE BENSON IS NGV CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL ART

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE FELTON BEQUEST FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK FOR THE NGV.

(right) Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn *Portrait of a white-haired man* 1667; oil on canvas. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1951



COVER STORY

Conversations with Rembrandt

The seventeenth century Dutch tradition of hyperrealistic painting meets with the twenty-first century rise of artificial-intelligence ‘chatbots’ in this imagined conversation with Rembrandt. Art history professors Paul Crenshaw and Amy Golahny introduce an exchange with Rembrandt on his life and work via ‘ChatRembrandt’, ‘ChatRBT’ for short.

BY PAUL CRENSHAW AND AMY GOLAHNY

Paul Crenshaw (PC): Amy, it’s wonderful to be here with you in the NGV’s exhibition *Rembrandt: True to Life*. We’re standing in front of the artist’s 1659 *Self-Portrait* from the National Gallery in Washington, DC. What do you think of it?

Amy Golahny (AG): It’s an amazing painting, both in the style and in the expressiveness. He looks really anxious, seriously concerned.

PC: I wonder, have you used this new artificial intelligence program called ChatGPT? You can pose questions and it scans the internet to craft an intelligent and seemingly natural answer. I wonder what it would say about this particular selfie by Rembrandt.

AG: Let’s ask it!

PC: ChatGPT replied, ‘In the painting, Rembrandt portrays himself as an ageing and wise man, with a solemn expression and a sense of introspection. The use of light and shadow in the painting is also noteworthy, as it creates a sense of depth and texture that adds to the painting’s overall realism’.

ChatRembrandt (ChatRBT): Well, that’s a very bland description!

AG and PC: What?

RBT: There was a lot going on in my life!

AG: Wow! We always knew that painters tried to make their portraits so lifelike that they could speak, but it’s really true!

RBT: Yes! Ask me anything! I can give you more precise answers than that other chatbot.

PC: Well, okay, tell us more about what was happening in your life at that time.

AG: Yes, why do you have bags under your eyes and why is your mouth tightly pursed? You seem exhausted, maybe even worried about something, judging by your clasped hands.

RBT: Yes, there’s a reason for that! When I painted this in 1659, I had just gone through a terrible bankruptcy. All my art and valuable collection of paintings, prints, drawings, sculpture, shells, coins, books, arms and armour, textiles, and other wonderful objects had to be sold at auction.

AG: What caused you to go bankrupt?

RBT: In retrospect, the biggest problem was that I bought a grand house in Amsterdam. Even though I was very successful and my fame was spreading far and wide, I never fully paid off

the house. It then needed repairs, and I had to borrow a lot of money from some friends, like my friend and patron Jan Six, and some other associates who were not as kind to me. I also had spent a lot of money on my own collection of art and curiosities from around the world, but it was all to better inspire my art! I was forced to sell all of my collected possessions in the bankruptcy!

PC: Were there other contributing factors in your personal life?

RBT: At that time, I also had a lot of personal turmoil in my family.

My beloved wife Saskia had died shortly after my son Titus was born, in 1642. I needed someone to take care of my newborn son, and brought a woman named Geertje Dirckx into my household to care for the young baby as a wetnurse. She lived with me for several years, and we grew close, but we had a falling out. My affections had turned to a younger woman who was also a servant in my house, Hendrickje Stoffels. Things ended badly with Geertje, and after a court battle, I was obliged to pay her a generous annual sum that contributed to my financial concerns. However, Hendrickje and I got along very well, and a daughter, Cornelia, was born to us in 1654. That too was a problem, though, because I couldn’t marry Hendrickje. Due to the terms of my former wife’s will, I would have had to turn over a large amount of my possessions to Titus if I remarried. So Hendrickje and I were living together out of wedlock, and that was considered sinful by many of our neighbours.

AG: What happened after the sales of all your possessions?

RBT: Then I lost my house!

AG: That is so sad; what did you do then?

RBT: I had to move across town, renting quarters in a poorer area. It wasn’t prestigious, but it did have some nice features—a new amusement park was built nearby, with mazes and moving sculptures, fountains and pubs. It was pretty popular with locals and foreigners.

When we moved, my son Titus broke my large mirror that I used for most of my self-portraits. He was crossing a bridge and it cracked!

PC: So it seems there were many dreadful and sad events weighing on you when made this

Self-Portrait. It must have been distracting, and you must have had a hard time concentrating on painting.

RBT: Yes, there were some lean years, but I still had many people all over Europe praising my work and paying high prices for it! I sent a painting as far as Sicily to a major collector. He was Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina, who was so enamored of my painting (*Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*, 1653, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) that he then sought out four Italian artists to paint figures to go with it, to make a series. I later sent two more paintings to him (*Homer*, 1663, Mauritshuis, The Hague, and *Alexander the Great*, 1661, now lost, but possibly the painting in Glasgow City Museum). The Medici in Florence also wanted my paintings! Despite all the turmoil, I think that in the 1650s and 1660s, I produced some of my greatest work in both painting and printmaking.

AG: Can you tell us about some of your prints and why you consider them some of your greatest?

RBT: My 1648 etching representing Christ’s earthly ministry, preaching to the crowds and healing the poor and needy who had faith, sold for more than 100 guilders! It was an extraordinary price for a print in my time, when most prints sold for less than one guilder. And to this day it is still known as *The Hundred Guilder Print* because of its monetary value. That’s ironic, because the theme of what is represented is the opposite—the ones who earn Christ’s love and find salvation should give up their worldly concerns, and those who have many possessions in this world will find it difficult to get into the kingdom of heaven. As Mathew 19 says, “The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.”

The most discerning art lovers recognised how unusual the tonal range was in this print, because I densely shaded some portions and then left some areas flooded with light, with only lines against the light paper. In some early impressions, I also used very subtle plate tone—leaving a bit of ink on the surface of the plate during the printing process, to add unique aspects to each sheet. Collectors also enjoyed the complexity of the subject matter, and the variety of people and expressions that I put into it. It was extraordinarily rare, because I refused to print many copies – and some of them I gave away as gifts, or traded them for other precious objects. Also, part of what made some impressions special was that I experimented with various papers. I liked the shimmering, warm tint

of Japanese paper, which is made from the bark of the Gampi shrub. The bark had to be harvested and processed, and it was very labour intensive, so the paper was very expensive.

PC: How did you get this Japanese paper?

RBT: Among the European nations, the Dutch had exclusive trading rights with Japan. This type of paper first came to Amsterdam in the mid 1640s, and I managed to acquire more than half of all that was available. It absorbs the ink in a totally different way than European paper. Nobody recognised its potential in the way that I did – it totally transformed my printmaking process.

Following the success of *The Hundred Guilder Print*, I used the fragile but expressive technique of drypoint to make two of my most monumental prints, *The Three Crosses* and the *Ecce Homo*, or *Christ Presented to the People*. Drypoint is a technique of scratching directly upon the copper plate with a tool that leaves a rough edge, called a burr. It is less precise than an engraving made with a sharp tool called a burin to incise lines, or an etching that uses acid to create grooves into the copper plate. The burr holds a lot of ink, and creates rich, velvety black lines in the earliest impressions. But it wears out quickly, so later impressions will have smoother printed lines. I wished to convey the emotional intensity of these subjects!

PC: So the Dutch were trading with Japan, but how much did the common Amsterdammer know about the global trading enterprise?

RBT: Many merchants of Amsterdam got fabulously wealthy by investing in the Dutch East India Company, and then also with the Dutch West India Company. In my city, you could find the finest spices, sugar, coffee, pearls, exotic plants with amazing medicinal virtues, shells, minerals and other curiosities. I once bought a conch shell at auction, and I paid more for it than anyone had paid for a single shell in forty years! The conus marmoreus shell that I owned and rendered in a print was a rare piece. These shells came only from the Far East, and they lived in shallow surf, so it was difficult to find them intact. Moreover, the animal that inhabited them had a stinger that was poisonous!

I also owned more than a hundred specimens of marine, amphibious and land animals. I had the opportunity to see a live elephant in Amsterdam, but I was not able to purchase it. I did own a stuffed bird of paradise, and two skins of a lion and lioness.

I had a great variety of weaponry from around the world that I used in my art. For example, in an early painting of Samson and Delilah (*The Capture of Samson*, c. 1629, Berlin, Staatliche Museen der Berlin, Gemaeldegalerie), I showed the soldier creeping forward holding a keris, a type of sword from Japan. In a later painting of Samson blinded (*Blinding of Samson*, 1636, Staedel Museum, Frankfurt), I used a spearhead from India. I had a Japanese helmet, an East Indian sewing box, a Turkish bow and powder horn, dozens of other Asian hand weapons, including arrows, javelins and bows, and a number of Chinese baskets.

So almost everyone in Amsterdam knew the glories of our trading empire, and the prosperity that it brought to us. But most of us weren't aware of the many atrocities that my compatriots committed abroad in their colonisation of foreign lands and peoples. In our conquest of the Banda Islands in Indonesia, we massacred several thousand people because they refused to give us a monopoly on trading their nutmeg and mace, which grew nowhere else in the world. We enslaved people in Brazil and the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations under brutal conditions, and our involvement in human trafficking from Africa and Asia was not commonly acknowledged in my time. We encountered not just goods, but also people from all over the world in Amsterdam—you could find traders from the Near East in their turbans and fine silks trading in our stock market, and in my own neighborhood there lived a community of black Africans and Moors. Some merchants tried to bring enslaved people to our land, but in Amsterdam slavery was illegal, and they quickly discovered their rights and options to live their lives in peace and freedom here.

PC: This is all fascinating! The theme of the exhibition at the NGV is 'True to Life', and I'm still amazed to be speaking to you through your self-portrait. Let's talk about how you made your work so tangible and naturalistic.

RBT: I started *Self-portrait* 1659 with a greenish-grey imprimatura layer, to get a medium tone on the surface of the canvas. Then I sketched in the basic form in brownish –grey tones in what is sometimes called a 'dead-colour' stage. From there, I leave many of the areas that will be in shadow thinly painted, whereas the lighter areas I build up with a thicker application of paint. In order to achieve the finest *houding* – an overall cohesion of the illusion of the person's presence –



one has to balance the contrasts of light and shadow, the intensity of the colour, the foreshortening and recession of forms in space, and the overlaying of forms in the composition. In my manner of painting, inspired directly by *geest*, or the spirit, the handling of the paint is key. Some areas that are thinly painted and dark in tone sink to the background, while other areas that are bright and roughly rendered pull forward. This makes a painting *krachtig* – forceful in its illusion! It is a *trompe-l'œil*, as the French say, a triumph over the eye!

AG: Tell us more about how you've built up the paint in *Self-portrait* 1659.

RBT: I apply the paint with multiple layers, and follow the form of what I am representing with the movement of my brush. So, the hair appears light and airy because I swirled the brush in a

curving motion as I painted. But notice the highlights. These are made in two different ways. Using a narrow brush I painted strands with a bright ochre, but then with the wooden tip of the brush, while the paint was still wet, I incised highlights exposing the thinner layer of grey underpaint.

And look into my eyes! I moulded the paint like a sculptor working in clay! You can see the grey from the priming layer, that establishes the middle tone. I painted dark brown shadows in the deepest recess of the eye socket. The eyelid is made with strokes of ochre, pink and more grey, giving a vibration of warm and cool juxtapositions in the flesh. I overlapped many curving strokes to represent my drooping eye bags, and then I came in with a brighter downstroke from my eyebrow to give an indication of a sagging bit of flesh. I put that on the side more in the light, and from a distance it helps to pull that eye forward and the more distant eye to recede. From up close you see it as a blotch of paint, but from afar it coalesces into a powerful illusion. I sometimes told my clients not to stand too close to the pictures in my studio, because the smell of the paint would bother them, but really it was to make this point, that one can appreciate them from near and from far.

PC: Rembrandt, it has been fascinating to talk to you!

RBT: Thank you!

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Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn
Self-portrait 1659; oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC Andrew W. Mellon Collection. Photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

COVER STORY

The people behind the

PORTRAITS

Rembrandt's prints were highly collectable within his lifetime and over the centuries they have passed through the hands of many admirers, collectors, scholars and restorers. Each print contains material evidence of its past and the NGV's impression of Rembrandt's *Three heads of women: one lightly etched* (c. 1637) contains many stories beyond the tender observations of his wife Saskia. Technical examination of the print by the NGV's Paper Conservation studio revealed much about how it was made and its journey from production in Amsterdam in the 1630s to its acquisition by NGV in 1961 through the Everard Studley Miller Bequest.

BY LOUISE WILSON

To produce *Three heads of women: one lightly etched* Rembrandt would have applied an acid resistant waxy ground layer to the surface of a small sheet of copper purchased from a coppersmith. Using an etching needle, the studies were drawn directly onto the plate, scratching through the ground

to expose the copper below. To make the lines deep and wide enough to hold printing ink, the plate was exposed to salts in vinegar or nitric acid, which etched any areas of the plate not protected by the ground. The longer the plate was exposed to acid, the wider and deeper the lines became, enabling them to hold more ink





once it came time for printing. The lines on the study on the lower left corner of the print are more lightly printed than those in the other two studies, indicating Rembrandt used varnish to cover this area after a brief period of etching while the other studies were exposed to the acid for longer.

Printing ink (which was either prepared in Rembrandt's studio or purchased from a commercial printer) was made by combining charred organic material, such as bone or charcoal with an oil binder. After applying ink to the surface, the plate was wiped clean with a cloth leaving behind the ink in the recessed etched lines. The inked plate was positioned face up on Rembrandt's printing press and a dampened sheet of paper followed by a pressing felt were placed on top before all were passed under the roller to make the impression.

Three heads of women: one lightly etched would have entered the market not long after being pulled from the press. Condition has a profound impact on the value of prints and from the beginning of the sixteenth century, to help preserve their collections, collectors attached prints to decorative mounts or arranged them in albums according to artist, art school or subject matter. Print collections are not static, and over the centuries, mounts were removed, and albums dismantled for a variety of reasons including their preservation. Mounts and album pages were usually made from poorer quality raw materials than the paper Rembrandt used, and these became acidic and discoloured over time. When *Three heads of women: one lightly etched* is viewed under ultraviolet (UV) light, areas along the left and upper edges fluoresced in correspondence with locations where paste was applied to adhere the print to an album page or mount.

There are also some small spotted stains on the sheet which absorb UV light, appearing darker than under normal light. Known as 'foxing spots' they are thought to be caused by contaminants such as metals or microbial growth introduced at the time the paper was made and as such, they transport us to one of the papermills operating in the 1630s that supplied Rembrandt with paper. Rembrandt was working at a time

when all paper was made by hand using plant fibres such as flax and cotton which were sourced from old rags. 'Rag and Bone' men would visit neighborhoods pulling a cart, calling out for people to bring their unwanted rags such as worn-out clothes for which they were paid a small sum. These were sold to a rag merchant who supplied paper mills where they would be taken to the rag sorting room for processing. Clothing often had metal attachments such as eyelets, hooks, or buttons, and these were removed before the rags were processed to make paper. If a rag sorter had a lapse in concentration, tiny metal fragments would be dispersed through the pulp and years or centuries later, these could cause foxing spots to appear on the paper. Paper is made by dipping a rectangular frame with a sieve-like surface into a vat of pulp. Once the sheet is formed, it is turned face down onto a woollen felt to begin the drying process. The dampness of the felts created an ideal environment for mould growth which could transfer to the paper and create irregular-shaped foxing spots in years to come.

Tracing provenance is an important part of print scholarship. Two past owners added their marks to the verso of *Three heads of women: one lightly etched*: one using a black ink stamp (this owner has not yet been identified) and the other signing their name 'P Mariette'. This signature has been identified as belonging to Pierre Mariette II, one of the most prominent dealers in Old Master prints in Europe. Infrared and UV examination revealed the Mariette signature was written using iron gall ink which was made by combining oak gall nuts with iron sulphate and gum arabic. Mariette would have dipped a quill pen made from a feather into the ink, his writing initially appearing black before fading to a pale brown colour over the following centuries.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, four generations of the Mariette family were highly influential in the fields of print publishing and connoisseurship, helping build some of the great collections of Europe and encouraging Robert Hecquet to publish the first book on print restoration in 1751. *Three heads of women: one lightly etched*

is a tangible link to Rembrandt and the history of papermaking, collecting and connoisseurship while also connecting the NGV to the historically important Mariette family.

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LOUISE WILSON IS NGV CONSERVATOR OF PAPER.

(p. 27) **Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn**
Three heads of women, one lightly etched
c. 1637; etching, 3rd state. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1961

(left) **Abraham Bosse** *Pulling a print from a timber press in Treatise on the ways of engraving on copper...* 1701, first published 1645; illustrated book: letterpress text and etched illustrations. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1962

MAE WEST'S LIPS

SALVADOR DALÍ

Through the 2023 NGV Annual Appeal and with the help of the community, the NGV hopes to acquire one of only five of Dalí's iconic sculptures, *Mae West Lips Sofa*, manufactured in 1937–38. Here, Dr Ted Gott explores the origins of the series.



Salvador Dalí first travelled to the United States in 1934, and from that point onwards he was to remain fascinated by American culture, and by Hollywood in particular. It is not surprising that he was also drawn to the American actor Mae West – by 1935 West was the highest paid female actor in the United States, and was widely known, as was the innuendo of her film and stage work, which appealed greatly to Dalí's Surrealist sensibility.

In 1934–35, Dalí created a gouache composition over a photograph of Mae West cut from a commercial magazine, which he titled *Mae West's Face which May be Used as a Surrealist Apartment*, now held in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. The work imagined an entire room modelled from the actress's facial features, in which her platinum blonde hair was hung over a curtain rod to provide drapes framing the room, her eyes were formed by two framed pictures, her nose became a fireplace, and her lips became a two-tone sofa (the seat in bright red, matching the star's lipstick, with gold fringing). This was a classic example of a new manner of seeing that Dalí called his 'paranoiac-critical method', and which he defined as the 'representation of an object which, without the slightest figurative or anatomical modification, would at the same time be the representation of another absolutely different object'.

Mae West was already an international celebrity by 1928. In 1926 she wrote, produced, directed and starred in a play, *Sex*, which was performed more than 370 times on Broadway before being closed on obscenity grounds by the New York Police Department. Her next play, *The Drag*, in 1927, was a provocative study of contemporary homosexuality that never made it to Broadway, being shut down by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, after out-of-town seasons in Connecticut and New Jersey. These controversies ensured that Mae West performed to packed houses in the following years, even if her plays received lacklustre reviews. In 1932 West made her first film for Hollywood, starring alongside George Raft, who famously commented that: 'She stole everything but the cameras'. West's comedic talent, and clever use of sexual innuendo tested the boundaries of censorship rules, and saw her films become hits around the world.

Edward James was a wealthy British poet who inherited his fortune from his parents, as well as their country estate at West Dean in West Sussex. He converted one of the buildings on this property, Monkton House, designed for his parents by Sir Edward Luytens in 1902–03, into a private Surrealist pleasure retreat, filling it with his collection of Surrealist art. James was a notable patron of both Salvador Dalí and René Magritte, and also supported the Surrealist magazine *Minotaure*. James was Dalí's principal patron in the years 1937–38.

In 1936 Dalí stayed at James's London residence in Wimpole Street, and during this time two of the Surrealist movement's greatest 'objects' or sculptures, were conceived. It is thought that while eating lobsters with James, Dalí threw aside an empty lobster shell, which landed on a telephone, bringing to life the now legendary *Lobster telephone*.

Around this same time Dalí and James brought dramatically to life the central part of Dalí's work, *Mae West's Face which May be Used as a Surrealist Apartment*, specifically the actress's lips in the form of a sumptuous red sofa. James funded the

production of five *Mae West Lips Sofas* designed by Dalí to be manufactured in three variant designs. Three of these, a pair in red wool and a single in pink satin, were produced for James's London home. The sofas made for James's London residence are now held in the collections of the Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, Brighton; the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and the Edward James Foundation, West Dean, West Sussex. A separate pair, also in red wool but with elaborate black woven fringing emulating the epaulettes worn by matadors and featuring three green felt appliqué shapes, suggestive of caterpillar larvae, were produced by the interior designers Green & Abbott for the dining room at Monkton House. James placed the pair on either side of the fireplace, emulating the composition of Dalí's *Mae West's Face which May be Used as a Surrealist Apartment*. Both of these sofas remained in place at Monkton House until 2016. One of the pair of sofas is now held in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Its companion is the exciting subject of the 2023 NGV Annual Appeal. This work is the last of Dalí's five iconic sculptures, *Mae West Lips Sofa*, manufactured in 1937–38, to remain in a private collection. With the support of our community, this iconic sculpture will join the NGV Collection for the enjoyment of generations to come.

DR TED GOTT IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL ART.

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(pp. 30–1) **Salvador Dalí** *Mae West Lips Sofa* 1937–38 (1938). Proposed Acquisition. NGV Annual Appeal, 2023

(p. 32) Salvador Dalí (left) with Edward James, c. 1935 © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala – Salvador Dalí, DACS 2020 © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí. VEGAP/ Copyright Agency, 2023

(pp. 34–5) **Salvador Dalí** *Mae West Lips Sofa*, 1937–38 (1938) pictured in the dining room at Monkton House, West Dean, West Sussex. The dining room at Monkton House. Elizabeth Whiting & Associates © Alamy Stock Photo



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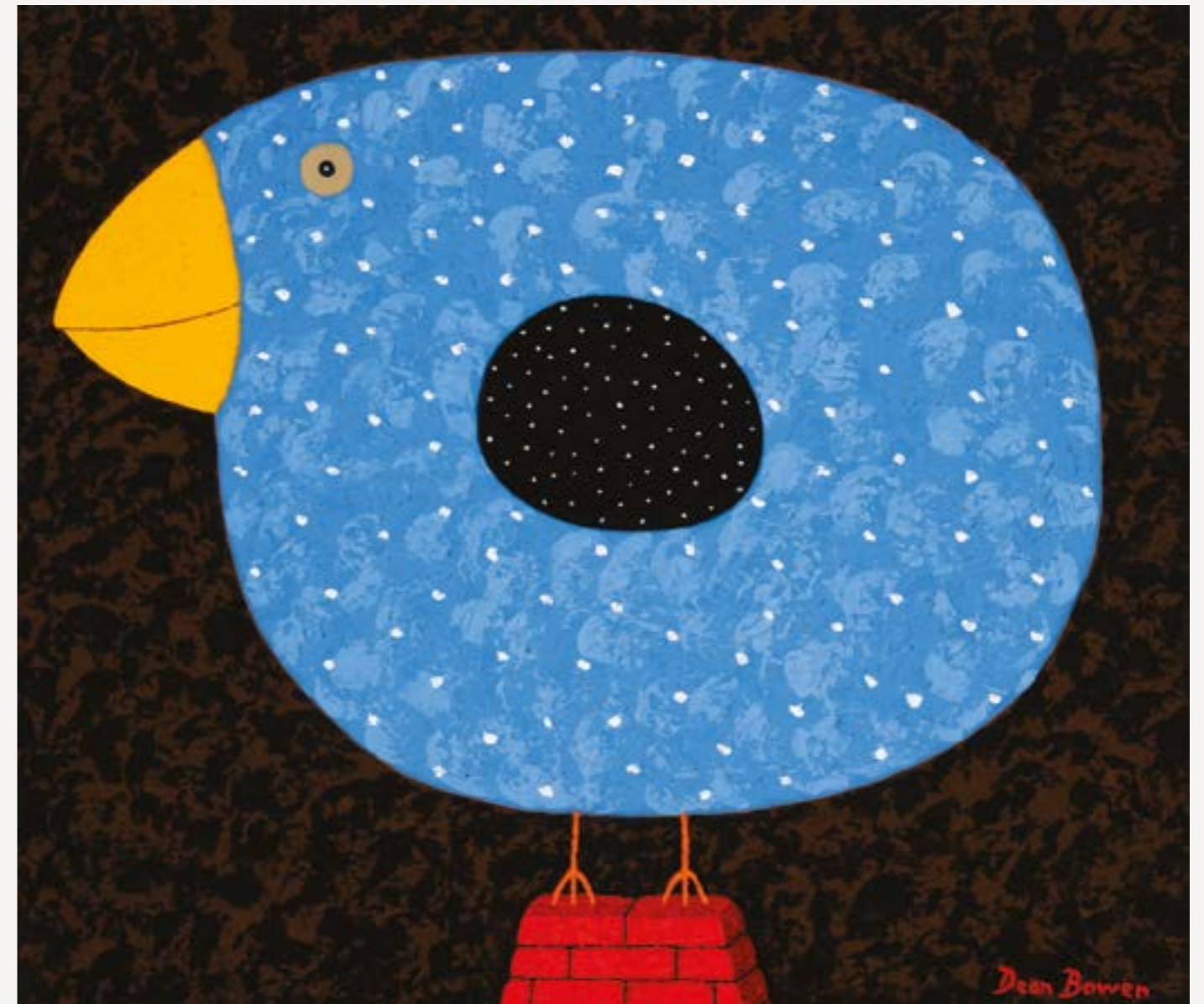


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EXHIBITION

INDIA MAHDAVI

THE JOY OF DESIGN

Paris-based architect and designer India Mahdavi is fuelled by a desire to create spaces and objects that elicit joy and happiness. Exclusively for *NGV Magazine*, Mahdavi shares a glimpse into the origins of her design practice and how she conceived of the unique and immersive scenography for the NGV's 2023 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition, *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*.

BY MEG SLATER



‘It is really about the experience you can offer, rather than just decorating.’

———INDIA MAHDABI

Architect and designer India Mahdavi has been described as a ‘virtuoso of colour’ and a ‘possessor of perfect chromatic pitch’.¹ She is also a master of form and texture. Combining these foundational design elements, she has produced immersive environments across the globe – from the copper-walled, sunshine yellow interior of London’s Sketch gallery and restaurant, to the near-hypnotic, striped and undulating space she created in Toulon, France, to display the Centre Pompidou’s twentieth-century design collection.

Mahdavi was born in Tehran to an Egyptian mother and Iranian father, and spent her childhood travelling the world. She lived in the United States, Germany, the south of France and Iran, before settling in Paris in her teenage years. In 1999, after studying abroad and working as the artistic director for French interior architect and furniture designer Christian Liaigre, Mahdavi established her design studio, located in the rue Las Cases, in Paris’s seventh arrondissement.

Since opening her studio she has explored (and often merged) the worlds of architecture, interior design, furniture design, fashion and exhibition design. Her creations have earned her awards and honours across the globe, including repeatedly being named among other leaders in architecture and design in *Architectural Digest’s* annual AD100 list. In 2017, her combination stool and end table, *Bishop*, entered the permanent collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

I had the opportunity to meet with Mahdavi and discuss her life, career, design approach and experience working as the scenographer on the forthcoming *Pierre Bonnard* exhibition at the NGV, which opens on 9 June. Our conversation began with an insight into why Mahdavi chose to pursue a career in architectural design. Her answer is surprising:

I did not choose [a career in architectural design]. I wanted to become a filmmaker. I was passionate about movies. I skipped class to see movies two, sometimes three times a day. But at that time, there was only one school in Paris that offered [a film program], and it was a postgraduate program, so I had to start with something else. I decided to go to architecture school [at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris], with no intention of becoming an architect. I nearly dropped out several times, because I thought it was too practical for me. It was also a very masculine environment at the time, very macho, so I was not very excited about it, to be honest.

Then I went to New York, and I started taking classes on product design, graphic design and furniture design [at the School of Visual Arts, Parsons and Cooper Union]. These classes introduced me to something more tactile, more emotional.

I went back to Paris and started working with a design firm called Christian Liaigre, and I stayed there for about seven years. I loved the different pace. With furniture, you can produce something in a month, or a few months, depending how quickly you can work on it. Or you can design an entire interior in six to nine months. This timeline is much more suitable for me.

Today, the way I work is very close to the film industry. Many of the environments I create are very cinematic. They have the same intensity. They are saturated with life. There is an extra reality, in a way.³

Beyond a love of film and creating cinematic environments, Mahdavi’s design approach is characterised by several guiding principles, including the use of colour, texture and pattern to transform and animate spaces and objects. During our conversation, it became clear that her openness to collaborating with project teams and responding to her surroundings is also central to her creative process:

In general, I think that your environment has an impact on your mood, right? I like to bring a sense of joy and happiness to whatever I do, because it puts you in a good mood. So, really, that’s my approach, in general.

But specifically, when I start a new job, I never have a preconceived idea of what I want to do. I try to remain as open as possible. Things come to you when you are in a location, when you are with a client. So I really remain as open as I can, and I try to grab the ‘here and now moment’, to take my design somewhere. Wherever it takes me – that is what I am interested in.

Locality and the people I work with are incredibly important to me. I try to take a lot from them.

Despite this unified design approach, Mahdavi, like anyone else, has experienced challenges in her career. When asked about the most difficult project she has worked on, she sat with the question for a while, beginning her answer and pausing several times:

Funnily enough, the most challenging projects are the ones that allow you the most freedom. You do not know where to start. The more constraints you have, the easier it is. It is answering a precise question versus answering an open question. When the question is very specific, your answer can be quite short.

She went on to provide an example of a project with an almost impossibly open brief in 2018 she was invited to participate in Homo Faber, a biannual event staged at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, which presents the work of leading international artisans and designers. An exhibition, *Imaginary Architecture*, was presented as a part of the event, for which Mahdavi was asked to demonstrate ‘what can be achieved when the finest European craftsmanship is put in the service of imagination’.⁴

Where do you start? What do you say? I was constantly thinking, ‘what am I going to do?’ I tried focusing on how I work, and what I like. Then I made it more personal. I thought, ‘why don’t I create two pavilions, using very different materials [and using different artisanal techniques] that will express imaginary situations’. It is the idea of a home, but it is not a home. It could be a living room, but it is not a living room. How, through the materials, do you take the environment to another level?

Mahdavi’s answer to this question took the form of two imagined spaces. The first, *Henri Rousseau Forever*, as its title implies, was influenced by the work of French painter Henri Rousseau (1844–1910), renowned for his flat depictions of lush jungle scenes. Using rattan, she created an abstracted winter garden featuring wall panels reminiscent of the ferns, lotus flowers and other tropical vegetation pictured in many of Rousseau’s paintings. The second, *Merry-Go-Round*, was a circular, richly upholstered space. Inspired by the exhibit’s setting in Venice, Mahdavi chose to use colours (blues and greens), fabrics (Italian velvet and satin) and imagery (a school of fish) representative of the sea surrounding the ‘floating city’:

While my response may seem straightforward, it was very challenging to come to that answer, and it only came because I actually asked myself a question. Sometimes I write what I am trying to say first. I prepare a little scenario. I almost write the press release before it starts.





Mahdavi adopted a similar approach when preparing to design the spaces for the *Pierre Bonnard* exhibition at the NGV. She began by immersing herself in Bonnard's work. Part of this process involved seeing his work in situ at the Tate's 2019 exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory*. Mahdavi described the experience of seeing Bonnard's work en masse, and how she was struck by his fascination with, and use of, colour, scale and domestic subjects:

I remember being impressed by two or three things. The first and most immediate was his use of colour in a very meaningful and subjective way. The second is that he invites you into his home, and so, there is something very intimate about his work. A very domestic, intimate relation, I think. The third is the scale of his paintings. Some of them were very large, so you really feel that you are in the room, looking at his dining table, looking out the window with him.

The spaces Mahdavi has created for the NGV exhibition defy the contemporary 'white wall' gallery. Using wallpapers based on abstracted details from Bonnard's paintings, as well as furniture, carpets and apertures that evoke doors and windows, Mahdavi has injected what she describes as 'hints of domesticity' into spaces visitors would not typically associate with the home. The result, as she explains, is a rich visual landscape in which to view Bonnard's work:

I think that maybe audiences here are not as familiar as the French are with Pierre Bonnard. He is not a painter that has been seen as much as Matisse or Picasso, so I think you

really have to enter his world. I wanted his world to be part of the experience: to bring you into his own home, through an abstraction of the home or a domestic environment. I want audiences to understand the intimacy of his work, the domesticity of his work.

At the end of our conversation, Mahdavi described her time working on the scenography for *Pierre Bonnard* as being personal, almost like having a creative conversation, with the artist:

I feel I have been speaking to Bonnard [...] It is a conversation, going back and forward with his work. I have been diving into his work, and using his work to feed the exhibition design.

MEG SLATER IS NGV CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION PROJECTS.

SEE *PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI* ON GROUND LEVEL, NGV INTERNATIONAL, FROM 9 JUNE. NGV MEMBERS ENJOY DISCOUNTED ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION AND NGV PREMIUM MEMBERS HAVE UNLIMITED COMPLIMENTARY ENTRY. TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE VIA NGV.MELBOURNE.

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(pp. 38–9) **India Madhavi True Velvet** – collection of coloured and printed velvets for La Maison Pierre Frey
Photo © Philippe Garcia

(p. 41) **India Mahdavi** (designer), RED Valentino Sloane Street, London, 2016.
Photo © courtesy of RED Valentino

(above) India Mahdavi's studio featuring elements used to prepare the *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* exhibition. Paris December 2019.
Photo © Antoine Doyen



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THE INTERIOR SPACE

In his lifetime (1867–1947) Pierre Bonnard was acknowledged as a modern master of the domestic landscape – the bathtub, the sitting room, the dining room and the veranda. Of the more than one hundred artworks coming to NGV International for the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition from 9 June, the greater number, and the finest, are set within the interior. Why? Art historian Dr Georgina Downey explores Bonnard's fascination with everyday life at home.

BY DR GEORGINA DOWNEY

F

For Pierre Bonnard, the ordinary, domestic, intimate, interior provided boundless opportunities for his lifelong pursuit of the 'adventures of the optic nerve'.¹

From the late 1880s,

from his membership of the Nabi Brotherhood (with Édouard Vuillard, Paul Sérusier, Maurice Denis and Theodore Roussel) to his magisterial final interiors at Le Bosquet, Bonnard's concern was consistently with the domestic interior – its scenes, its hidden emotional currents and its essential mystery.

Interiors (that is, views within rooms) of women and men in houses, and his own speculative looking beyond rooms through windows into landscape, account for a huge percentage of Bonnard's subject matter. However, representing the interior in his painting practice was only one element in the broad and deep engagement he had with the domestic realm over a lifetime. Correspondingly, he also had a

discernible aesthetic interest in the decoration of his own homes.

But why? In the West, by the turn of twentieth century, the domestic interior was emerging as the 'universe' of the modern individual. Two of the great thinkers of the age had pronounced it thus. In 1917, to rapt audiences in Vienna, Sigmund Freud had explained how the Unconscious works, by using a simple analogy to rooms: 'let us therefore compare the system of the Unconscious to a large entrance hall ... adjoining a drawing room ... [and on the threshold between] ... a watchman performs his functions'.² Not long after, the philosopher, Walter Benjamin claimed that for the nineteenth century individual; 'the interior, represents the universe ... [it is his (sic)] box in the theatre of the world'.³

Thanks to both, we saw pivotal shifts in what we think of as interiority. So, during the final years of the nineteenth century in France, when the young Bonnard was forming his ideas as an artist, his 'world' was undergoing a preoccupation with inner space. This preoccupation with domestic space as a significant locale of thought and experimentation, not only drove revolutions in psychological medicine, it also drove consumer culture, the commodification of things; the ever

more sophisticated forms of mass production and marketing of objects and goods for the home.

In the fine arts in France, this preoccupation with interiority was expressed as a deep concern with the meanings contained within a personal habitat or dwelling. Not only was the interior undergoing a revolution, but also, at the same time that Bonnard was entering the art world, the interior had its own art movements, into which he was swept. The Intimiste, Symbolist and Decadent movements in France were at their height.

Both the Intimistes and the Symbolists were a radical 'counter-culture' who emerged in the twilight years of the nineteenth century. They rejected the science and rationalism of the new technological and industrial age, along with its associated style of Naturalism in the visual arts. Instead, the Intimistes, Symbolists and Decadents considered that modern individuals operated on an existential spectrum; and that there are other realms, worlds, powers 'out there' just beyond the limit of ordinary vision and that was the job of art, among other disciplines, to reflect upon and hint at the Unknown. They were drawn thus to depicting 'threshold zones' in the

home; doorways, window, the uncanny effects of light and dark. The threshold zones; windows, doorways; alcoves; were conceived by the nineteenth century Decadents and Symbolists [both in the visual and literary arts] as interstitial spaces. And they were about connecting the Unknown worlds to the Known ones of ordinary vision via these particular cross-over zones. Essentially, they were architectural openings, both within the material realm of the standard modern flat or home, but also relayed to the Imaginary realm. Encountering a threshold zone for an

occupant, might mean, they've moved from one space to another, or it might mean the embrace a different psychological 'mein' or state'. Threshold Zones were thus openings to the Great Unknown, they were also access points, weak points in terms of security.

These zones have actually defined our horror/thriller and visual culture throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. They often appear in later Bonnard interior views.

In the West, by the turn of twentieth century, the domestic interior was emerging as the 'universe' of the modern individual

—DR GEORGINA DOWNEY

Accordingly, as a young artist in Paris in the 1880s and 1890s, Bonnard had designed experimental theatre sets for the Symbolists' Théâtre de l'Œuvre, incorporating the 'threshold' zones. In 1895 he had also designed commercially for the interior, with a stained glass window for Siegfried Bing's radical 'Maison de l'Art Nouveau', a kind of 'House of Tomorrow' for Parisian audiences, where showrooms were set up like apartments and decorated with furniture, paintings, sculptures and prints.

Additionally, from the period of his life as a young artist, to his late marriage in

1925, Bonnard had also rented and furnished, or bought and furnished, numerous of his own interiors, all in his own tasteful, idiosyncratic style, from the Parisian garrets of his youth, to villas in West Paris, to his country house at Vernon, Giverny, the charming 'Ma Roulotte' ('my caravan').

So by the time Bonnard and his life partner, Marthe, decided to settle at one house rather than rotating through many, Bonnard had already had a lengthy

engagement with all aspects of the interior, from the mystical, to the commercial. When Bonnard purchased their ultimate home in 1926, 'Le Bosquet', a little two-storey house in the Riviera village of Le Cannet, just above Cannes, he was poised to produce his magisterial late interiors.

Upon moving in to the Le Cannet house, the couple only made a few changes to the villa; Bonnard commissioned a new bathroom, replete with green and white tiles, and asked the carpenter for more built-in storage space in the downstairs and upstairs dining rooms.

Their home at Le Cannet was decorated, as we know from accounts from friends and family, and from photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Brassai and Gisèle Freund, in a 'modest' yet arty fashion. We can see from his own post-1925 Le

Bosquet interiors, that Marthe and Pierre surrounded themselves with simple and honest, almost 'folk' furniture pieces, made from cheaper wood, and often over-painted in the same pastel tones that seem to have sprung from Bonnard's own palette.

Recognisable also among their smaller belongings, were their tabletop 'treasures'. The treasures were a humble array of dishes, jugs, platters, coffee pots and so forth, furnishings and 'swapped' artworks with friends, which followed the Bonnards everywhere from Paris to regional France.

The beauty to Bonnard of the treasures was that he was so familiar with them.

They appear over and over again in many of Bonnard's tabletop and interior views. They were also crucial to the way he liked to work, which was from written notes and sketches in his diary. He would then begin to paint from memory, across a number of wall-pinned canvases simultaneously. Bonnard said he could never paint a 'new' 'treasure', an incumbent gifted bowl or a plate, until he really 'got to know it', and could thence 'forget it' and paint it entirely from memory.

Let's look, for example, at *White interior*, 1932 (Musée de Grenoble, Grenoble). This painting depicts the upstairs sitting-dining room at Le Bosquet. This is a room that featured a pretty fireplace, slightly smaller than the one in the main downstairs dining room. In the painting, the actual dimensions of the room seem stretched to almost span it from left to right, incorporating the back cupboards as tall rectilinear planes of varying shades of white, reminding us of overlapping 'flats' on either side of a stage.

The spatial field in *White interior* is 'much wider than the human eye could normally see'.⁴ It's also a richer and denser visual array than we might ever have absorbed with a glance, which reminds us of Bonnard's desire to represent familiar rooms as if seen 'all of a sudden'. On the table we may recognise some of the 'tabletop treasures'. You might need to step right up close to surface of a painting, and then step a few paces back and squint, and then repeat, much as Bonnard himself did, as a kind of to and fro 'dance', similar to his own bodily gestures while making the paintings.

Bonnard's array of quotidian table top objects, even when blurred, generally

functioned as recognisable actors in a recurrent scenario of shared meals. Their primary role was to counterbalance 'the power of the centre [of the picture]'⁵ as well as to tone down the emotional intensity of our viewers' relationship with figures in the composition, by making the humans somehow subsidiary to the visual complexities of the tabletop. 'Treasures' here include the white coffee set, the white tablecloth, a brownish-orange glazed teapot, an orange jam jar,

seeing these objects 'all of sudden', but as they have been absorbed and remembered. Accordingly, the 'meal' itself, looks hazy and speculative and the foods we might expect – bread rolls, salads, meat – the five food groups – rarely, if ever, appear together. The visual array itself provides food for the eye and mind. Thus within this ordinary and commonplace meal, Bonnard succeeds with great mastery in teasing our perceptions across the tabletop, as if it were a kind of space-time continuum.



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DR GEORGINA DOWNEY IS A VISITING RESEARCH FELLOW IN ART HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

a tall-sided glass fruit bowl, a little bowl of colourful modern 'faience', and a green jug with wildflowers.

Pushing up into the lower left-hand third of the composition, we see the back of a folksy russet-hued dining chair, and what is possibly a tray hanging over the edge of the white-clothed table. Almost impaled on this perspectival tip, we see Marthe, in the act of reaching down to pet or feed a small black and white cat.

Since Bonnard never painted directly from the motif, he is not, of course,



(p. 47) **Pierre Bonnard** *The window* (*La Fenêtre*) 1925. Tate, London. Presented by Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill through the Contemporary Art Society, 1930. Photo © Tate

(above left) **Pierre Bonnard** *Coffee* (*Le Café*) 1915. Tate, London. Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the NACF, 1941. Photo © Tate

(below left) **Pierre Bonnard** *White interior* (*Le Cannelé*) (*Intérieur blanc*) 1932. Musée de Grenoble. Acquired, 1933. Photo: Ville de Grenoble / Musée de Grenoble – J. L. Lacroix

(p. 49) **Pierre Bonnard** *Dining room overlooking the garden* (*The breakfast room*) (*Salle à manger sur le jardin*) 1930–31. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Given anonymously, 1941. © 2023. Digital Image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala, Florence



MELBOURNE NOW

ISSUE ONE

NAARM NOW!

Dr Russell Kennedy Academic Head, Art and Design, Deakin University

As identified by the NGV, Melbourne's multidimensional, transdisciplinary and intercultural expression is integral to its current make-up and future trajectory.

The 2023 *Melbourne Now* exhibition prompts the ongoing question: How has Melbourne changed over the past ten years? Advances in technology, social media engagement and pandemic-related behavioural patterns have all impacted the way we live. Technology has certainly had a major impact on the production and delivery of creative content; however, for me the greatest paradigm shift has occurred in the appreciation of Indigenous representation. The systems for sharing cultural knowledge in creative practice have improved dramatically, especially in the fields of design and architecture. Ten years on, Melbourneans appear to have an elevated awareness and general understanding of Indigenous cultural contexts and sensibilities as they relate to place and the identities of the city, state and country.

Indigenous creative expression has noticeably moved beyond the artistic artefact to a broader application of knowledge embedded into the design processes of community, government and private sector projects, particularly those requiring the exemplification of place. As a researcher in the field of cultural representation and design advocacy I have observed this trend building over the past decade. This paradigm shift has undoubtedly been influenced by thought-provoking initiatives such as Reconciliation Australia's Recognise campaign (2012–17), the Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017) and the ongoing Treaty in Victoria process, which commenced in 2016. The Koorie Heritage Trust move to Fed Square in 2015 has increased visibility and helped create awareness. All of this has occurred since *Melbourne Now* 2013.

In 2023 Indigenous representation is far more visible and knowledge sharing processes better understood. The NGV has played an important role in elevating and celebrating Indigenous culture in a way that fosters an understanding of its contemporary status within the broader Australian identity. NGV exhibitions and forums since 2013 have certainly contributed to the public pedagogy required to facilitate such change. The maturation of community attitudes has subsequently created increased demand for visible Indigenous representation in design. This phenomenon prompted us at Deakin Universities to investigate best practice processes and develop protocols to guide design practitioners on how to engage respectfully with the custodians and owners of cultural knowledge. The research activity was motivated by the emergent belief that if we change the way we look at things, then the things we look at need to change.

This ongoing activity focuses on developing, defining and refining processes that can assist designers (non-Indigenous and Indigenous) working on projects involving cultural representation. A tangible outcome of this Deakin University research has been the creation of the multi-award-winning Australian and International Indigenous Design Charters. The International Indigenous Design Charter was officially launched in 2017 at the World Design Summit in Montreal, Canada. The Australian launch of the International Indigenous Design Charter took place at the Koorie Heritage Trust as part of the NGV's 2018 Melbourne Design Week program. The impact of this research over the past six years has been significant. Both the Australian and International Indigenous Design Charters have been recognised in multiple awards programs, including the Australian Good Design Awards and Victoria's Premier's Design Awards.

Use of the International Indigenous Design Charter has increased dramatically since its launch. It has been embedded in design briefs, particularly within design competitions and submissions for major civic projects in Melbourne and beyond. Widely embraced by designers, architects and their clients, the Charters have been endorsed as best practice documents by the Design Council of Australia (DCA) and the International Council of Design (ICO). The Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) also advocates the use of the Charter. For example, the AIA regarded the Charter as integral to the development of the INBETWEEN exhibit at the ITh International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Architecture Biennale. INBETWEEN, co-curated by Tristan Wong and Jefa Greenaway (Waiwani/Kamilaroi), presented a powerful set of works from across Australia and the Pacific region. Wong and Greenaway identified the Charter as an important tool to enable the appropriate demonstration of architecture's capacity to strengthen cultural connections and understanding between non-Indigenous and First Nations peoples.

The NGV itself incorporated the International Indigenous Design Charter into the competition brief for the NGV Contemporary which, once completed, will be Australia's largest gallery dedicated to contemporary art and design. The NGV also expressed its commitment to engaging with the Traditional Owners of Southbank and First Nations peoples working across the creative arts, exemplified by the appointment of curator, artist and consultant, Maree Clarke as a special adviser to the project. Maree is a proud Yorta Yorta / Wamba Wamba (Mutti Mutti) / Boonwurrung woman who has regularly exhibited at the NGV over the past decade. With the oversight of Tony Elwood, Director of the NGV, Myles Russell-Cook, Senior Curator, Australian and First Nations Art and team; Ewan McEoin, Senior Curator Contemporary Design and Architecture and team; NGV Trustees; and the NGV Executive Management Team, the Gallery continues its commitment to highlighting the expression of Indigenous knowledge through creativity.

Melbourne Now 2023 includes over 300 artists, architects, designers and creative practitioners. This landmark exhibition will also host *Gathering Space: Ngargee Djeembaana*, a collaboration between senior Boonwurrung Elder Dr Narweet Carolyn Briggs AM and Palawa built-environment practitioner Sarah Lynn Rees. This installation and associated activities provide a tactile experience of more than fifty-five materials that aim to broaden cultural understanding by highlighting knowledge connections and the multi-sensory nature of the materials as they relate to place. The poetics of place, along with history and memory, were key themes of the inaugural *Melbourne Now*. Although the Indigenous conversation forms only a part of the 2023 exhibition, Indigenous themes continue to talk directly to the ever-evolving cultural landscape of Naarm, now known as Melbourne.

Naarm Now ... Then and Always!

Russell Kennedy is Senior Lecturer in Screen and Design at Deakin University and a key participant in the development of the Australian and International Indigenous Design Charters.

the more things Susie Anderson

A moment to appreciate the quiet work of time. How far I've come since the pain of seeing you hold hands with someone else on Gertrude Street, finding refuge in the sprawling roots of a Moreton Bay fig in the Exhibition Gardens to exercise every last feeling on the phone to my friend who said you were nothing. That era was Boudifich and Barrett heartbreak, mapping my heartbeat on top of this city. When I moved here to find love, I was a cardigan-clad liner, calloused index finger from smoking rolls and flipping through zines. These days I un-map the place and ride my bike down streets which were once cruce. Cruise alongside eels in the gutter, imagine them big like worms from *Dune*. At traffic lights I stop and look up, not down at my feet, and see old Barak's face keeping watch on his Country. Lately non-Aboriginal people are much more interested. In who you are, where you come from. Now they care about where they live, play, create on Kaffin lands.

I'm back in Melbourne now, and things have changed. Susie Anderson is a descendant of the Wiripai and Wambai Wambai people of Western Victoria. Her poetry and non-fiction have been published widely, both online and in print.

MELBOURNE NOW

ALICE PUNG

One of the most striking scenes in Helen Garner's third volume of diaries, *How to End a Story*, is when she finds a designer hat in a box – a hat not intended for her – and destroys it in a cathartic rage. The unbearable lightness of expensive things!

On a tram last week, I watched you hold the ribbon handles of four cardboard bags with only three fingers, while browsing your phone. I did not know you, but I wanted to grab your pale, lovely fist, raise it to the air and declare victory, because you seem like the sort of person who'd nonchalantly walk empty-handed out of Chanel after disembowelling the tissue paper out of their display letter bags.

A decade ago, down the 'Paris' end of Collins Street, I would sometimes bring along a little sketchpad and pencil and draw what I saw in the windows of Dior, or Gucci, or Ballo, before going into my office, where I'd look at a computer screen for more hours of my day than I

NOW AND THEN

Emily Bitto

MELBOURNE THEN: inaugural Melbourne Now exhibition opens 'red hot houses' retail shops in CBD for climate action I have been back in Melbourne for 7 years. I think it finally feels like home super El Niño predicted restaurant in CBD I keep dreaming about locking myself out of the house I wonder what it means sign whale flies above Melbourne baby elephant dies at Melbourne Zoo White Night state schools will absorb 30,000 new students by 2023 an enormous change, and completely new skill set, will be required of me, going from being a writing teacher and often alone introvert type to naming and running a bar! Beyoncé films video in Brunswick Freys black 150 blazes across the state worst conditions since Black Saturday sausage dogs overtake crowsodies as most popular breed Marcell mine fire clouds region with toxic smoke I don't feel pressure to move or have

ALWAYS TONY BIRCH

When the colonial surveyor Robert Hoddle was appointed to plan the streets of Melbourne – a design that would become known as the 'Hoddle Grid' – his instructions were to regulate not only the chaotic Port Phillip colony that had sprung up east of the mouth of the Birrarung (Yarra) River from 1835, but to order a portion of Wurundjil/Kulin Country within a series of right angles and straight lines. The urban grid originally a formation of ancient cities, was used to fortify rulers against their enemies – often their own subjects – and the colonised nations that had invaded. Hoddle's grid would also have a series of symbolic links attached to it, sanctifying the 'greater of empire through naming, another half of conquest. Not only was the city named in honour of a British prime minister, and the colony a reigning monarch, royal blood was monumentalised in street names: King, William, Queen, Elizabeth. While Hoddle's own preference was for a grid of wide boulevards, the more chaotic back lanes, arcades and 'Bittle' streets (such as Little Collins and Little Bourke) did marginally save

the city from rubble by set square. Aboriginal people of the greater Kulin nation would not be banished from the city by the surveyor's eye alone. The forced dispersals of Aboriginal people would rely on violence, be it public hangings (two Aboriginal men from Tasmania, the Tanner-mimner-wai and Maunbooy-beemur, were executed in public in 1842), the bullet of legislation. The 1869 and 1886 *Aborigines Act*, in particular, both attempted to exterminate Aboriginal people by way of the colonial parliament. For over a century 'Melbourne' (in opposition to Indigenous Naarm) would attempt to disperse, destroy, ignore and forget about the existence of Aboriginal people. But the colonial project failed. Not only did Aboriginal people survive – we thrived. Be it the arts, activism or community organisations – and seemingly through sheer will – Aboriginal communities within Melbourne and across the state assert a self-determining identity, in both a practical and philosophical sense. In the past the message 'We're Still Here' may have been shouted as a demand, a plea. Today, it reflects a simple but powerful reality – yes, We're Still Here – and always will be.

3058: HATTON TO GAFFNEY

KIRSTEN KRAUTH

The blue cobblestones are cool as Merlin tries to drink out of every dirty puddle. It's 10 am on New Year's Day and a still-elegant young woman steps out of an Uber and lies down in the laneway, manoeuvring an artful corpse pose, as a roller door slowly opens to reveal a tiny yard full of close naked bodies sweating to the beat and drinking in the hot sun. While we're getting up, they're coming down, and they catcall and she takes her silver high heels off and slinks in before the door rolls down again. The sounds of a party and smashing plates come from the Elderly Citizens' Clubrooms, a building I always feel sorry for, an Edward Munch scream in grey brick. I peek into the darkened window: the room is full of older men and women sitting around tables. Their faces hold the love that friendship brings, the connections of family and heritage. It's the life making the racket – the cicadas, the sparrows, the bees, the winds and the dragons, the orchids and the blossoms, the feet of the grooves. I long to enter. A man in the cool shade of a tree in the Reserve does a tai chi dance, shaking his woolly hair. He lovingly lays his blanket out on the ground and although it's hot he pulls a second blanket over himself. Arms folded behind his head he contemplates the park as if he's the King of Colburg. The path has red-tiled lines the kids follow – horizontal and tangential, patterned for the feet, green, blue, pink, Hop, skip, jump. We walk past him, careful not to disturb.

Our friends tried to skate the ledge on A'Beckett in 2016. When I met G for the first time we were overlooking the docks from the stadium. Concrete muddles of sound. Videos we saw on YouTube. The Chinese man serenading opera to our camcorders along the river. The ghosts in the CV food court.

JAMIE MARINA LAU

In a hundred and nine days I'll show you this city

When we FaceTime you observe the light through the trees on my end, because it's summer and where you are it's winter. You never fail to tell me that this is called *Komoro* (sunbeams through trees). We called this spot *orange* because of how the trees glow. We called a spot *green*, on the side of the bridge where it's called. The suburbs give orange light. Because the sun screams, it's not like LA or Georgia where in the fall, the sunlight is a gentle hazy smile. The sun doesn't have a filter here. It's yelling. Screaming cicadas with the ever loud suns. Did you know the first story I ever wrote for a magazine was about an apocalypse? Probably because the sky turns so red here that it might occur to you quite often that one day it could collapse in from the pressure. When I take you to the spot where I finished writing my second novel, you'll see that it's not like the bats across Trimbull Hill's lake where I'm at a building that looks like an art deco. I was staying at Norma Redpath's sculpting studio, her steel machines, pads of paper with lead-scrawled recipes and Prada dust bags. The night I finished I was walking back with my notebooks and a full manuscript, passing by full tables under red awnings. Waitpeople suggesting to come in for a meal, glasses clinking, many kinds of accents. I was going to get groceries.

Jamie Marina Lau is a writer, multidisciplinary artist and the author of novels *Pink Mountain on Locust Island* and *Gunk Baby*. She is currently working on her third novel.

in hospitality industry from the deck of the house I'm staying in the water stretches to a hazy silhouette of skyscrapers that must be Melbourne but that appear to sprout up from the ocean like some kind of sci-fi waterworld 20,000 people rally in CBD for marriage equality Victorian car industry shuts down for good Leed Mayer stands down Edward and get stoned in Princes Park CBD's density overtakes New York City Minka Mora dies at 90 N gave birth today. I'm a twice anti. Two nephews. I can't imagine it yet – having Victoria Melbourne rejects who did I exist 6 months ago strawberries sabotaged Meghan and Harry visit Melbourne Bourke Street attacker kills owner of Pellegrino's fires out of control state's east Peil found guilty woke to another news story that a woman has been raped and murdered in Melbourne's north. She caught the 36 tram and got off at Bardsboro around midnight. I make me ST ANGE ANGRY 'Victoria Barrus from Dandenong to Dargo' Lawyer X client appeals sentence Courtney Herron murdered in Royal Park Brighton at risk from sea level rise greater glider habitat still being logged printed my manuscript draft today and got it bound at Officeworks. Brought it home in a box on the back seat with a bottle of gin Melbourne's Dan Andrews ends his unaided new assisted dying laws sacred birthing trees under threat from Western Highway Brae voted Australia's restaurant. Glow signs gone 2017 Easton Rebellion disrupts CBD Jon Faing's final show all 35 fires burn across Victoria billions of animals feared killed first case of new coronavirus in Melbourne 'prepare for pandemic' lockdown begins jigsaw sales at record high music and hospitality venues urge council assistance At the bar, F tells me he's struggling with lockdown. His housemates just sit around and get stoned in the lounge room. I miss the darkness of the club, he tells me. I laugh. 'Do you mean the literal darkness, or the metaphorical darkness?' Both', he says. 'Peil walks free' 900 cases in Victoria truck kills 4 police officers on NGV Bourke Street tragedy wage theft fire

Welcome to *Merri-bek*. The new signage radiates from council chambers, over the rocky country that the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders have reminded us was theirs all along – over the Moreland-slavery in Jamaican sugar plantations and, closer, the forced colonisation of traditional lands, towards the glitter of too-high-rise shadowing the climbing roses of prison walls. *Carious about what's behind the walls?* the sign asks, and the QR path leads to unenclosed bus retreats and weddings – perhaps the old ball and chain might fit. We reach the corner of Whatmore Drive and Success Lane. In the small room up the shopping centre escalators, describing the history of the place, the description of 'Division' – opened in 1970 for young offenders – has had a word carefully erased and re-typed. The word *overseas* has been altered to create *overseas*, highlighting the guard who watched over the prisoners at night. I trace the letters, raised slightly higher than the others, codified. Collect \$200 and go over Gaffney Street, where the bin chickens cling to the small, overpopulated island at Colburg Lake Reserve. They squabble and flap on top of each other and look back towards the walls of Peirbridge with the freedom to fly, they amass on this pocket of island, as if learning to be caged. The sour smell wades into the playground where the kids grove to climb to the top of the rocket slide, building speed on the flying fox until their legs start to drag on the ground. Merri's not interested in the birds because he's carrying a hard bread roll the size of a tennis ball in his mouth. An amount of cooing will get it out and his drool sultans on the walk back, so it's about half the size when we get home. He runs to the backyard to eat it before I can catch him.

Dr Kirsten Krauth is an author, poet and arts journalist. *Unwound a Heron*, her acclaimed novel, podcast and festival show, is based on the early 1800s music scene in Melbourne.

ON THE PAGE WITH STEPHEN BANHAM

To capture the essence of *Melbourne Now* in a font is no small task. *NGV Magazine* chats to Stephen Banham of Letterbox – the studio behind the official font of the exhibition.

NGV: Tell us a little about yourself. How long have you been working as a typographer?

Stephen Banham: Maybe I should firstly respond by explaining what a typographer even is. Typographers are concerned specifically with the design and composition of mechanically reproducible letters (typefaces) and sometimes, hand lettering. Over the last thirty-five years or so I have been gradually shifting from graphic design into becoming a typographer – combining the teaching, research, writing and, perhaps most importantly, the actual practice of typography. So far that's resulted in about twenty typefaces, eighteen books and now quite a few large, built typographic projects.

NGV: People tend to overlook the importance of a good font. How can the font make (or break) a project?

SB: Yes, you're right, the importance of the right typographic 'voice' is often overlooked. You can have the most beautiful imagery but if the typographic tone of the communications is off, then the integrity of the whole thing collapses. It's like somebody talking to you in an odd or unconvincing way. These days we specifically design typefaces to reflect a particular place (such as Brisbane's Anzac Square or permanent Metro Tunnel artworks) so that cultural association is really central to our work.

NGV: With that in mind, what story does the *Melbourne Now* font tell? How did the font come about?

SB: The typeface used for *Melbourne Now* is one of the very first we designed in 1998. It is called *Berber* (we used to name our typefaces after textiles) and was completely redrawn in 2011 with lots of additional features and ornaments. It's Melbourne-born and bred, having been designed in our studio in Flinders Lane, right in the middle of the city.

Berber came out of an interest in 'imperfect form' – typefaces that privileged expression and humanity over clinical, technical perfection. In that sense it's a perfectly appropriate typeface for representing the cultural breadth of a survey exhibition such as *Melbourne Now*. We're so happy to see it being used to reflect our own city.

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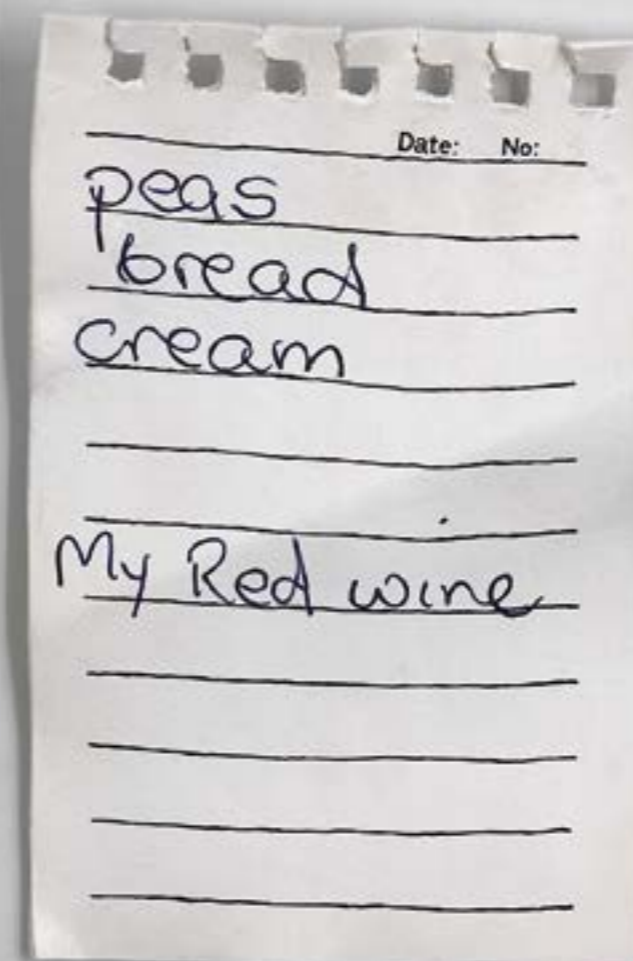
Melbourne Now broadsheet, issue 1, published by the National Gallery of Victoria, 2023



EXHIBITION

HOME AND THE EVERYDAY IN MELBOURNE

The places we call 'Home' have influenced, informed and inspired art the world over since the beginning of time, and *Melbourne Now*, on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia until 20 August, is no different. Here, *NGV Magazine* invites five of the exhibition's artists to share the story of how Melbourne became their muse.



52 CERAMIC REPLICAS OF SHOPPING LISTS FOUND WHILE WORK- ING IN A MELBOURNE SUPERMARKET

BY KENNY PITTOCK

I was fifteen when I first got a part-time job as a supermarket cleaner and trolley pusher, and I've now worked there on and off for more than half my life. Part of the job was getting rid of any rubbish left behind in the trolleys, it's usually just receipts and banana peels, but sometimes more interestingly, it's abandoned shopping lists. Rather than throw away the shopping lists I would instead read them and began to collect them. I now have a collection of more than 7,000 found shopping lists.

Most shopping lists are written quickly, unlike ceramics which is a very slow medium, and it's through this act of painstakingly replicating the lists in my studio that I allow myself the time and space to reflect on them. The shopping lists read like poetry and are often as revealing as portraiture. Despite their anonymity they're extremely intimate, providing a unique insight into the people we pass in the aisles.

The history of shopping lists is long, the British Library holds a shopping list from the tenth century written by Tibetan monks. There's also record of a shopping list from 1518 by Italian artist Michelangelo. It's believed Michelangelo sketched his shopping lists so that his assistants, who were often illiterate, were able to collect his groceries. It's possible that physical shopping lists may soon disappear as more people move towards writing them on their phones, even now shopping lists are often one of the few places people will write something by hand.

It's interesting to consider what we can learn about ourselves from this seemingly mundane ephemera surrounding our daily lives, presenting a reminder of how something so domestic and disposable can reveal so much of who we are and what our legacy might say about us to future generations. By creating a permanent tribute to a fleeting moment, the fifty-two ceramic shopping list sculptures presented in *Melbourne Now* reveal a portrait of our city, and a time capsule of Melbourne now.

Kenny Pittock *My red wine* 2022. Courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery, Melbourne
© Kenny Pittock and MARS Gallery, Melbourne



LOST IN MELBOURNE ZOO

BY MATTHEW CLARKE

I am an artist. My practice springs from two areas. One is technique. The other is inspiration, which springs from a place in my brain I can't visualise. This is often sparked by the most immediate things around me. They can be gigantic as a windfarm or as insignificant as a letterbox.

I have been making linocuts since school. I like soft warm lino and sharp cutting tools. I often partner with my mentor Glenn Morgan. For the linocut in *Melbourne Now*, Glenn and I worked together. Glenn led me through the technique of using several pieces of lino that print separately and fit together to give the print several colours.

In recent months, my time has been taken up with a commission for the Rising festival in Melbourne. I have partnered with my dad for this project, where we have made twenty plywood wallaby sculptures between 2.7 metres high and 1.8 metres high. *Rising* festival will place the wallabies in the Melbourne Arts Precinct in June. After the festival, the wallabies are going to government schools throughout Melbourne.

I love street art. I painted a mural in Adelaide's CBD 4 metres by 4 metres and I painted a mural on the front of the Warrnambool Art Gallery 12 metres by 4 metres.

After making twenty wallabies and numerous exhibitions featuring wallabies I am beginning to work on new themes as my dad and I are now a little weary of wallabies. We have been talking about birds and how travel inspires new themes.

My hero artists are Basquiat, ALO and Del Kathryn Barton. I have been represented by Mossenson Galleries for more than ten years. Lately I have been inspired by the work of Indigenous artists working out of the Tennant Creek Brio.

I am obsessed with my dog, playing chess and my Instagram page.

Matthew Clarke *Lost in Melbourne Zoo* 2022. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2022
© Matthew Clarke.



HOW TO LIFT ME UP, MUM WALKING IN DEER PARK, AND EXIT SIGN (FALLING)

BY SANJA PAHOKI

For the exhibition, *Slippery Images* at *Melbourne Now*, I am presenting three interconnecting works: *How to Lift Me Up*, 2022, *Mum Walking in Deer Park*, 2022, and a new neon work, *Exit Sign (Falling)*, 2023, which have been installed on a yellow-painted wall. *How to Lift Me Up* originated when my elderly mother, who lives on her own in the Western suburbs, called me because she had fallen during one of her morning walks. She told me that a stranger who was driving past had seen her fall and stopped to help her up. She told him that she was too heavy for him to lift her, but he said not to worry, that his wife falls over all the time, and he knew how to lift her. My mum was so impressed with his technique and how easily she was able to stand, she called me and Remie over to her unit in Deer Park to show us, I guess in case she fell again or if we ever needed to help someone else. I took my stereoscopic camera to photograph my mum demonstrating this technique. The photographs were taken in what my mum calls 'the sunny room' – an illegally built extension at the back of her unit where the ceiling was collapsing. Apart from not knowing exactly what the two people in the images are doing, I like the little

details in the photographs: the hoist in the background, which was holding the ceiling up, the doilies, the plastic tree-themed outdoor chair, and a Vučko thermometer – the mascot of the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Olympics – a souvenir from the old country.

For a long time, I have been interested in falling and the slow gravitational pull it exerts on the body towards the ground. In how babies transition from crawling to walking, and the subsequent reversal as we age from walking to falling and then back to crawling. In Joan Didion's book, *My Year of Magical Thinking*, 2005, she describes a moment when she tripped and almost fell on a footpath in NYC not long after her husband had died. She felt so insecure afterwards that she stopped wearing her usual shoes and only wore runners. I'll end this piece by quoting Laurie Anderson, whose song, *Walking & Falling* captures the sentiment in my work at *Melbourne Now*: 'You're walking. And you don't always realise it, but you're always falling. With each step you fall forward slightly. And then catch yourself from falling. Over and over, you're falling. And then catching yourself from falling. And this is how you can be walking and falling at the same time'.

Sanja Pahoki 022. Courtesy of Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne © Sanja Pahoki and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne



SUSPENDED IN TIME

BY ASHLEY PERRY

My contribution to Melbourne Now is a series of four photographs depicting different suburban settings across Melbourne's Eastern suburbs. The works have been placed adjacent to paintings by John Brack, *Collins St., 5pm*, 1955, and Jeffrey Smart, *Cahill Expressway*, 1962, within the twentieth-century Australian art collection, and it's a great privilege to think of them continuing in their own way the thematic concerns of these luminaries of urban expression.

Taken in 2020 and 2021 when Melbourne was under a series of lockdowns, the photographs show me examining my local environment in its new eerie emptiness. The places I captured – devoid of people and imbued with stillness – amplify the inherent quality of the moment in which the photographs were made, a moment when the city felt suspended in time.

I also felt a distinct therapeutic quality to my photographic practice during this period. It simply felt good to be outside and depicting aspects of my suburban world, albeit within the confines of a small radius. It allowed me to hone in on the underlying tension that exists between the natural world and built environment of the city's suburban terrain.

The landscape, a slippery term at the best of times, is difficult to fully comprehend as it embodies varied properties, material and symbolic, bound together. My hope is that the photographs point to the many ways the suburban environment expresses layers of meaning for the viewer, both in formal terms and via interconnected narratives that can be created between them, situated in the most recognisable everyday forms, sites and settings.

The suburban condition encompasses many things – from isolation, alienation and fragmentation – and in my photographs I hope it exists in equal parts via social, spatial, and temporal relations and operates in a similar way to the work of Brack and Smart.

By examining the landscape of suburban Melbourne from a detached perspective, my approach is influenced by the landscape photography of Paul Graham and Joachim Brohm, both of whom are concerned with documenting unembellished depictions of everyday space.

Ashley Perry *Sentinels* 2021.
Courtesy of the artist © Ashley Perry



THE OLD FASHIONED CASH REGISTER WITH THE OLD PAPER DOLLAR NOTES AND COINS, JADE HURLEY'S 20 GOLDEN OLDIES AND PANASONIC TAPE RECORDER FROM THE 1980s

BY LISA REID

My art is about childhood a lot. Memories I have from growing up and my family. I like making things look like the real thing. People have said that I'm like a laser jet printer.

I did art in primary school and high school. I made a ceramic Homer Simpson. Then I did some at Swinburne TAFE. I made platters out of ceramics with underglaze and clear glaze.

I've been at Arts Project Australia since November 2000. I started with 2D work and a year after I started making animation. I used to do plasticine animation. I started doing ceramics in 2008. I like learning to make different stuff, different mediums, something new.

My mum used to have a hairdryer like the one in *Melbourne Now*, titled *1950s vintage Sunbeam electrical hairdryer*, 2022, in the 1970s and 1980s. It was from the 1950s. I remember the blue cap, I wore it sometimes sitting on the chair in the lounge room, moving the switch, feeling the heat coming through.

My sister had the tape recorder in the 1980s. I made recordings of the radio on it. The big red button is a record button.

I used to play the tape in the car with my family. It's Jade Hurley. He had hits like *Peggy Sue*. It looks just like Jade Hurley.

Lisa Reid *The old fashioned cash register with the old paper dollar notes and coins* 2018.
Courtesy of the artist and Arts Projects
Australia © Lisa Reid and Arts Project Australia

I remember Jade Hurley from the Mike Walsh midday show on Channel nine. I used to watch it in the school holidays with Mum. I've also made a Dolly Parton tape. In my future works I'd like to make some more tapes and a tape case to store them in.

I enjoy making all different objects. To start a piece I make a template out of white paper, cardboard and masking tape. I trace around the object. I cut out all the pieces, and stick it all together, like making a paper pattern. I cut out slabs, using slips and crosshatch. I make the slabs leather hard – I put it up near the air conditioner. I use coils and add the sides. Then I add carving and detail.

It's a bit fiddly and complex trying to arrange all the separate parts. I choose colours copied from pictures and from the original object. I find pictures of the objects on the computer and buy things on eBay. I like the texture of the pieces.

When my aunty saw the pictures of my works she jumped – she couldn't believe her eyes!

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ON STAGE WITH ARTS PROJECT AUSTRALIA



Arts Project Australia (APA), a creative social enterprise that supports artists with intellectual disability, will take over *Community Hall* on 13 May. Project and Public Program Coordinator at APA, Anita Spooner, tells *NGV Magazine* more.

NGV: Can you tell us about the Arts Project Australia program in *Melbourne Now's Community Hall*?

Anita Spooner: Arts Project Australia (APA) is thrilled to be presenting a series of talks, workshops, screenings and live demonstrations by *Melbourne Now* artists Mark Smith and Lisa Reid, alongside a selection of APA artists and staff. We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to indulge in a full day 'takeover', bringing the APA studio to the NGV. Audiences of all ages and abilities are invited to watch, interact, learn and play in a safe, accessible and inclusive environment.

NGV: Some of our readers might not be familiar with APA. Can you tell us a little bit about how it came about?

AS: APA is a creative social enterprise that supports neurodiverse artists, promotes their work and advocates for their inclusion within the broader contemporary art sector.

Our mission is to see Australian neurodiverse artists at the centre of the national and international arts sector – recognised, earning income and thriving in their arts practice. Our studio is based in Northcote, and our gallery is part of the Collingwood Yards arts precinct.

NGV: Why is it so important for art to champion all voices and not just non-disabled or neurotypical ones?

AS: We believe that individual creativity triumphs over conformity. Neurodiverse artists have unique perspectives, subjectivities, art-making techniques and worldviews that are under-represented in the contemporary art sector, and challenge normative assumptions in a spectrum of ways. APA champions work that is original, unapologetic, true and joyful in the making. We advocate for access and inclusion in the arts sector for neurodiverse voices to be seen, heard, respected and celebrated.

NGV: Do you have a favourite artist or work in the NGV Collection to which you often return? Or a memorable exhibition?

AS: As the artist Mark Smith says, 'The most memorable exhibition I've seen at the NGV was Escher X Nendo's *Between Two Worlds* – it was an unexpected psychological journey'.

Lyn Young, Amani Tia and Paul Hodges in the Arts Project Australia studio. Images supplied by Arts Project Australia.

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Photography by Lucas Dawson

ON 'THE QUICK- ENING'

The Quickening is a photographic series artist Ying Ang began in 2019, exploring the transformation and lived experience of early motherhood and postpartum depression and anxiety. A moving meditation on 'matrescence', the work is on display as part of *Melbourne Now*.

BY YING ANG

There is a breed of bird called the Bower Bird. It searches for objects that are a particular shade of blue with which to build its home. Bic pen, blue bottle cap. Broken blue toy part.

I began *The Quickening* as an investigation of the idea of home and named it *Bower Bird Blues*. For nearly two decades, I had effectively lived as a nomad and exile. I had grown tired of being on the move and had, for the first time, met someone who I could see the spectre of a future with. *Bower Bird Blues* began with a clumsy, searching, visual construct of the every day. The photographs were set in the shifting seasons of suburban Melbourne, the lengthening of humid summer nights and misty mornings. We planned and plotted and eventually navigated our courtship, the wedding, the honeymoon and sure enough, that first hazy ultrasound with the surety of a rapid-fire heartbeat.

I didn't realise at the time that the idea of home was growing in tandem with this new life inside of me. I had thought that signifiers of home were made up of the burgeoning collection of house plants that I had never been around to keep alive before, the sharing of birthdays and the mutual navigation of family politics. It wasn't until the mewling child was cut from my body that my transformed perception of home emerged as something much more crucial, contradictory, essential and as much about the interplay of separate identities as the formation of a collective one. Home built itself around me when I became a mother. Home was a kind of bonding that moved through us bodily, a dependence that felt absolutely primal containing a borderless knowledge of each other's vulnerabilities.

My project, *The Quickening*, became a metaphor for this new-found knowledge of home and how matrescence became a driving catalyst. Before the advent of the ultrasound, 'the quickening' was a term used to describe the first flutterings of foetal movement and the true confirmation of new life in a woman's body. For me, it heralded the creation of a family and a home around my steadfastly solitary self. It was fraught in the way that all transformation is a howl, followed by the shift of tectonic plates and renewed calibration. I felt the change of matrescence coursing through me as a mercurial current and the world rearranged itself around this vortex of caregiving to the constant roar of white noise.

Five years on, I've since settled for my proverbial domestic cage. I've grown used to the view from behind these bars and have found a kind of happiness here – the rush and routine of the mornings, the drama of the evenings, punctuated by the episodic mania of work. When the nights start getting colder, cloud banks gather in the early dawn. I stir awake and the horizon is ablaze. It is a moving Rothko. In the foreground, my partner's warm body is a burnished outline. I have the best view in the house and it approximates peace.

My son's babyhood is now gone, lost to time and physiology, and with it, the long lonely nights and hours strapped to a whirring pump and roiling resentment. What remains is the soft roundness left in his cheeks and the shallowed dimples in his fists. The lists, the journals and the photographs keep the data, but the memory itself recedes like the recollection of a scent. What becomes more prominent is the length and breadth of the future stretching out and I begin to perceive time and legacy in a different way. History becomes more layered and the need to grasp it and to pass it on feels urgent, and I become, among other things, a conduit for those stories. I also feel love differently – like a biological imperative. My child seems to have this knowledge already. His love for us is also based on survival, and with that, deep companionship, shared dependency and kinship.

Today, I observed that at some point, the balance of care had tipped a little and my partner and I find our own refuge in the half moon of his embrace. This tiny interloper wedged himself in our lives, binding and destroying at the same time, all the while assuring us with the vitality of his needs and wants. The world falls apart and he is there. The world knits itself back together again and he is there, greeting us as sure and as constant as the dawn.

**'MANY SLEEP
THE WHOLE WAY
OTHERS SIT
STARING HOLES OF FIRE INTO THE AIR
OTHERS PLAN REBELLION:
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT
AWAKE IN PRISON, MY MIND
LICKED AT THE MATTRESS LIKE A FLAME
TILL THE CELLBLOCK WENT UP ROARING'**

—EXTRACT FROM *THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ANGER* BY ADRIENNE RICH FROM *DIVING INTO THE WRECK: POEMS 1971–1972* (NEW YORK, 1973).

YING ANG IS A PHOTOGRAPHER OF SOCIAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES. HER WORK *THE QUICKENING* IS ON DISPLAY WITHIN *MELBOURNE NOW* AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 20 AUGUST. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/MELBOURNE-NOW-2023

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Ying Ang *Untitled 2022* (detail)
from *The Quickening* series 2019–
Courtesy of the artist © Ying Ang



THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

For *Melbourne Now*, Shaun Gladwell presents a major commission that guides participants through a simulated de-escalation of life, from a slowing pulse to its flattening. Participants then experience universes both within and beyond the body.

BY ELISA SCARTON

It's a few days out from the opening of *Melbourne Now* and Shaun Gladwell is buzzing. The Melbourne-based contemporary artist looks every bit the freestyle skateboarder he once was, with the long grey beard that has become his trademark – the only outlier to his all-black attire.

Gladwell has taken a break from installation to chat to me. He's gracious, but eager to get back and I've put my foot in it right off the bat by admitting I'm terrified of his new work *Passing Electrical Storms* (2023).

'Oh', he says with a smile. 'I hope it's not terrifying as an experience. I had rather envisioned it to be meditative.'

Without giving too much away, gallery-goers are ushered into an all-blue space on Level 3 of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Removed from the other works in *Melbourne Now*, *Passing Electrical Storms* looks, quite deliberately, more like a posh operating theatre than a gallery installation, with hospital-style beds arranged in a hexagonal pattern, each accompanied by their own computer monitor.

When your turn comes, a guide shows you to one of the beds. They hand you a virtual reality (VR) headset, slip a heart rate monitor on your index finger and next thing you know, a team of virtual surgeons are failing to save you from cardiac arrest.

'It's really not too scary', Gladwell reassures me. 'It's not like everything goes dark, and then, there's [a] ghost. It's almost like a clinical, medical representation of a heart attack, like something you'd see on M*A*S*H.', he adds.

'After all while, you start to float away. It's a weird illusion where you feel like you're floating above yourself, but in actual fact, it's the image that you're seeing getting further away from you while you are stationary on the bed.'

Gladwell worked with the Deakin Motion Lab at Deakin University to design the extended reality (XR) simulation at the centre of *Passing Electrical Storms*. The work takes what is his career-long fascination with technology and the human body to another dimensional extreme.

'There's something magical about technology', he explains. 'Anything is possible. You can design a virtual reality where we die, float to the outer limits of the universe and then find an enormous human heart through which to enter. It's pretty bizarre. And I can't do that in any other medium. I couldn't do it in a graphic novel or through sculpture or painting. I needed this idea to be packaged in VR.'

For *Passing Electrical Storms*, Gladwell was inspired by the 1977 Charles and Ray Eames-directed documentary *Powers of Ten*, which he remembers watching as kid growing up in Sydney. In it,

the relative scale of the universe is depicted according to an order of magnitude based on a factor of ten, first expanding out from the earth until the entire universe is surveyed, then reducing inward until a single atom and its quarks are observed.

Gladwell calls this the 'cosmic zoom' – an idea he's paired with death and the beliefs we each hold about what happens next.

'There are so many different theories. So many different, beautiful, personal and dynamic ideas around what happens after death, and this work is certainly not prescriptive in any way. It's just a very open, poetic modelling of our bodies in relation to how massive the universe is', he says.

'Then, at a certain point in the simulation, we turn around and go back into the body, shifting into the microcosmic in what is basically my way of saying, "This goes on forever". Our lives, as individuals, don't go on forever, but the cycle of matter forming and then reforming is massive and infinite.'

It's easy to get bogged down in the science and technology that brings *Passing Electrical Storms* to life. The installation itself is space age and futuristic. The all-white monitors appear pretty high-tech to the untrained eye. Even the beds feel as though they've stumbled right out of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. But the layers of meaning behind the work are manifold and complex.

'OUR LIVES ARE ENORMOUS AND COMPLEX LIKE THAT, BUT THEN, WHEN YOU THINK, "OH, WOW, WE'RE JUST A TINY LITTLE PLANET IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, IN THE OUTER SUBURBS OF THE GALAXY", YOUR PERSPECTIVE SHIFTS. THAT INSIGNIFICANCE IS FREEING, COMFORTING, BUT ALSO TERRIFYING IN A SENSE.'

—SHAUN GLADWELL

Gladwell points to the French philosopher Blaise Pascal and the dread he described when thinking about himself in relation to the enormity of the universe.

'Pascal would often write about the sublime as something so big, it was terrifying', he explains. 'In a way, it's like a storm. From a distance, a storm is beautiful, but when you're in it, it's terrifying. The storm hasn't changed. Only our relationship to it.'

'Our lives are enormous and complex like that, but then, when you think, "Oh, wow, we're just tiny little planet in our solar system, in the outer suburbs of the galaxy", your perspective shifts. That insignificance is freeing, comforting, but also terrifying in a sense.'

Gladwell loves storms. They often serve as namesakes for his work; this one included. He's also fascinated by technology being so immersive, so encapsulating and engrossing, that you forget not only your body, but all the responsibilities of the world.

Passing Electrical Storms is only a ten-minute experience – any longer and you risk VR fatigue. A pulsing heartbeat keeps you tethered to your body, connected to the physical while you survey the outer limits of the universe, or as Gladwell puts it: 'I'm implying that we leave our bodies once we die, but we're not actually dead or I hope we don't actually die while we're in the thing.'

'When I do experience the death of my body, it would be quite beautiful to just go, "Okay, I've lost my individual life, but I've become a bit more connected in terms of my material". In other words, you're losing your individuality, but you're being absorbed back into the hole, as if were.'

Tempted as I am to discuss the afterlife with Gladwell, I can see he's keen to get back to his installation. He describes himself as an 'old school artist'. His work spans moving image, painting, photography, sculpture, installation, performance and virtual reality, but its foundations were laid at the Sydney College of the Arts and University of New South Wales' College of Fine Arts.

"These schools had a particular school of thinking," he explains. "We all said we resisted it and were individually transgressive, but we did get affected by it – or I did anyway. Basically, the viewer's interpretation is greater than the artist's interpretation.'

For this reason, Gladwell is eager to be off. He has a few more hours to finesse his vision before he relinquishes it to his adopted city and to anyone and everyone exploring *Melbourne Now*. Then it's on to the next challenge, something 'raw and weird', maybe rendered in Vegemite like in his student's day, or something 'more direct', like charcoal on paper. But he'll be around, every so often, until the exhibition closes, if only to hear about other people's experiences.

'I feel like I've been working on *Passing Electrical Storms* since I was a kid at school watching that original doco. That's literally how dear these references are to me.'

SEE *PASSING ELECTRICAL STORMS* ON LEVEL 3, THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA AS PART OF *MELBOURNE NOW* UNTIL 20 AUGUST. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, VISIT [NGV.MELBOURNE/MELBOURNE-NOW-2023](https://www.ngv.melbourne/melbourne-now-2023)

MELBOURNE NOW IS SUPPORTED BY MAJOR PARTNERS MACQUARIE GROUP, DEAKIN UNIVERSITY AND KENNEDY WATCHES AND JEWELLERY. SUPPORTERS DULUX AUSTRALIA, NEC, AND TOURISM PARTNER SOTIFEL MELBOURNE ON COLLINS.

ELISA SCARTON IS NGV SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR.

(left) Installation view of **Shaun Gladwell's** *Passing Electrical Storms 2023* on display as part of the *Melbourne Now* exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne from until 20 August 2023. Image: Sean Fennessy

(right) **Shaun Gladwell** *Homo Suburbensis 2020* (still) © Shaun Gladwell. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery

**10 June
- 20 August**

Wangaratta Contemporary Textile Award 2023

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Gillian Bencke, *Cope*, 2020/21 (detail), wool, silk, cotton, sequins, beads, brass, 130 x 253 x 0.1cm. Winner WCTA 2021. Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection.

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MORE INFO

EXHIBITION

私の作品を見ながら、海の向こうにある本当に海に浮いている社殿に思いを馳せてくればと思います。

'I hope that when you look at my work, you will think of a shrine that really floats on the sea beyond the sea.'

————TAKAHIRO IWASAKI

TAKAHIRO IWASAKI

私は自分の作品を通して、見ず知らずの人とコミュニケーションをとるのが楽しんだらうな。

'I enjoy communicating with strangers through my work.'

————TAKAHIRO IWASAKI

2014年のNGVでの最初の展示はアーティストとしてのターニングポイントでした。

'My first exhibition at the NGV in 2014 was a turning point for me as an artist.'

————TAKAHIRO IWASAKI

Takahiro Iwasaki is one of Japan's most innovative and skilful artists who creates intricately detailed models that reinterpret iconic historical buildings and contemporary Japanese cityscapes. His most acclaimed works are from the *Reflection model* series that focuses on Japanese sacred buildings and the reflections they cast in the water that surrounds them. Playing with this striking visual relationship, Iwasaki constructs precise three-dimensional models that are suspended in a way that combines the building with its illusionary reflection to create a single, complete form.

In 2013 the NGV commissioned the upcoming artist to produce his largest and most ambitious project to date. Taking eight months to produce at the Aomori Contemporary Art Centre in northern Japan, *Reflection model Itsukushima* was completed in 2014 and transported to Melbourne in fourteen parts for its debut exhibition. Since the creation of this career transforming work, the artist has taken to the world stage and represented Japan at the Japanese pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 2017 and exhibited globally.

A decade after this major Felton Bequest acquisition and as the NGV plans to exhibit the *Reflection model Itsukushima*, this time in a darkened gallery setting evocative of a moonlight viewing, Melbourne based Japanese art watcher, producer and speech pathologist Miyuki Watanabe caught up with the artist to discuss his recent life, career and creative pursuits.

BY MIYUKI WATANABE

Miyuki Watanabe (MW): When you were commissioned to create *Reflection model (Itsukushima)*, you were very much an emerging artist. How has your art practice evolved over this past decade?

Takahiro Iwasaki (TI): I made the *Reflection model (Itsukushima)* in 2014, which is the largest work of mine to date. In retrospect, it was a turning point for me as an artist. Since the exhibition at the NGV, two significant events have impacted upon me: one was being invited to exhibit my work at the Venice Biennale in 2017; and the other was the COVID-19 pandemic over the last few years, during which time I have not been able to work on my art so much. Several overseas exhibitions were cancelled. Now things are slowly going back to normal and I am planning to go to Hungary soon.

MW: How did the pandemic impact you as an artist, apart from the cancellation of exhibitions?

TI: I do two types of art activities that interact with each other. *Reflection models* are one pillar of my work where the artwork itself holds the viewer's focus in the space, but I also do other types of art activities similar to art residencies, where I go to a local area and make artworks with locally sourced and influenced materials, through which I communicate with the audience. Due to COVID-19, I could not travel to undertake this residency type of artwork in Japan, or internationally. Also living in the regional city of Hiroshima made things more difficult during the pandemic compared with large cities, such as Tokyo, where there is more of an art scene.

MW: Did the limitations of that period enable you to produce something new?

TI: The limitations increased my awareness as to how other people support me as an artist. I had always thought that I do most things all on my own when it comes to my art: managing, planning, creating and exhibiting. During the pandemic when things were so quiet with travel restrictions, there were still some galleries and art collectors who thankfully commissioned me to

create artworks. I also received the Takashimaya Art Award last year in Japan. I believe that the award was in recognition of my continuous work as an artist. Also some of my artworks have been re-exhibited during COVID-19, like this one at NGV. I was happy to hear that the *Reflection model (Itsukushima)*, which I made about ten years ago, was going to be exhibited again. I feel very appreciative that my existing artwork is creating new momentum on its own, and doing work for me even though I may not be able to go to places physically.

MW: Perhaps also it has been the culmination of your continuous effort over the past years that resulted in these opportunities and support?

TI: There has always been support from others throughout my career. For example, the initial exhibition at the NGV in 2014 was realised because NGV Senior Curator of Asian Art Wayne Crothers thankfully approached me. More recently, these contributions by others and the system of how the art industry works became clearer to me.

MW: Has your relationship with the *Reflection model (Itsukushima)* changed?

TI: Since the pandemic and the war in the Ukraine, materials and transport fees for *Reflection models* have skyrocketed. It is almost impossible to transport a *Reflection model* overseas currently. Also the cost for timber has surged three to four fold these days. So these days there are more barriers to continue creating *Reflection model* works. Therefore, I have been focusing on art residencies.

MW: How would you like the next generation of NGV audiences to interact with your work when it is exhibited again shortly?

TI: We don't know if things will return to how they once were. In this regard, an NGV exhibition of my work in 2014 might have been the last opportunity where an emerging artist, like myself



back then, was able to transport such a large fragile artwork from Japan to Australia. So I would like the audience to appreciate the rarity of the work from that perspective.

MW: I understand that the *Reflection model* was your first interactive artwork?

TI: That's right, in that sense, I would like the audience to enjoy the changes in perspectives in the space; the relationship between themselves and the model in space. Trying to change the perspectives by sitting down, walking around the model and walking close to it. Also, to ponder about a shrine floating on the water that exists on the other side of an ocean.

An architecture critic once told me that modern architecture only lasts around 100 to 200 years, which highlights the importance of having a solid model that will be left behind in this world long after the actual building is demolished. So, in this regard, my *Reflection model* of Itsukushima should be considered as another version of the actual Itsukushima Shrine. The actual Itsukushima Shrine is exposed to all sorts of natural elements, including typhoons.

MW: Even if something happens to the actual Itsukushima Shrine, your version of it remains, through the NGV Collection.

TI: That's right, my *Reflection model* of Itsukushima started living on its own in a different timeline and space to the actual Itsukushima Shrine.

MW: What excites you about being an artist?

TI: I like communicating with people ... well actually, I am not so good at chatting with people but I really enjoy communicating with people through my artwork, which is not bounded by the limitations of time and language. For example, when I saw

Monet's *Waterlilies* series, I could understand Monet's sense of painting just reflections on the water. Through his work, I feel like I am communicating with him over time. In the same way, it excites me to think that people are communicating with me through my work regardless of language and time differences.

SEE TAKAHIRO IWASAKI'S *REFLECTION MODEL* ON LEVEL 1, ASIAN ART TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS GALLERY, AT NGV INTERNATIONAL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK, VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/WORK/111512

MIYUKI WATANABE FORMERLY WORKED AS AN ACTOR, ARTIST, RADIO PRODUCER AND LANGUAGE INTERPRETER.

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE FELTON BEQUEST FOR ACQUIRING THIS WORK FOR THE NGV.

(p. 68) Takahiro Iwasaki. Image supplied by artist

(above and left) Installation view of **Takahiro Iwasaki's** *Reflection model (Itsukushima)* 2013 at the National Gallery of Victoria. Felton Bequest, 2014 © Takahiro Iwasaki, courtesy of the artist and Arataniurano Photo: Heath Warwick

MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK

YOUR GUIDE TO Melbourne Design Week 2023

Driven by ideas, Melbourne Design Week offers a platform for local and international designers, curators, educators, enthusiasts, thinkers and businesses to come together to share, show and sell new work. By equal measure, the program considers how design can be used as a force for good in an increasingly complex and precarious world.

Launching throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria, Melbourne Design Week celebrates the potential of design to transform our environment – from the inside of our homes to the entire planet. The ‘call to action’ for individuals and organisations to ‘Design the world you want’ – the theme of this year’s program – challenges audiences to think outside the status quo and confront the contemporary issues that encircle us: material access, climate disasters, social inequity and the cost of living. Spanning the eleven-day program, designers and makers alike are emboldened to demonstrate what design can do, what more it can do, and what it can do differently.

Here is your guide to some of the key events.

BY GEORGIA SMEDLEY

The Silo Project Presented by Josee-Vesely Manning

Housed in a former grain silo in inner city Melbourne, *The Silo Project* is a group exhibition that responds to the unique site it is housed in and forms an architectural intervention to a now obsolete industrial monolith. Currently the workshop and atelier for artists Roger Mitchell and Corey Thomas where large-scale commissions for artists such as James Turrell are fabricated, the silos represent implications of material obsolescence and industrial labour, urban “renewal” and gentrification.



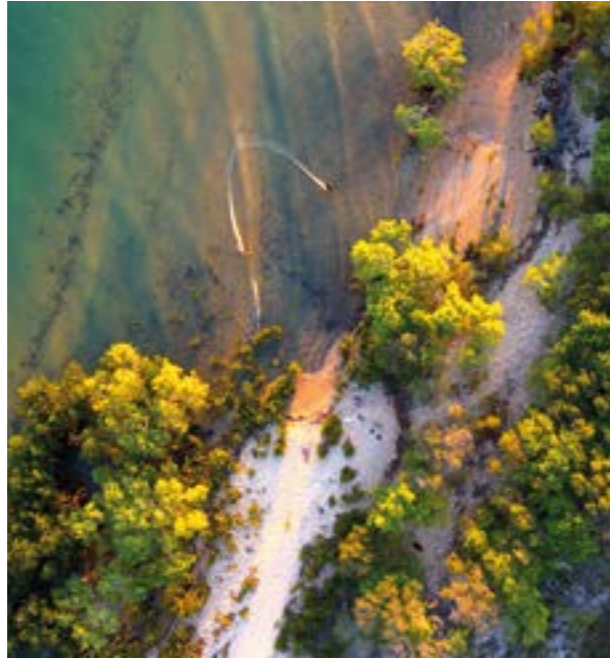
Kurunpa Kunpu / Strong Spirit Presented by Trent Jansen in collaboration with ArtBank

ArtBank presents *Kurunpa Kunpu / Strong Spirit*, an exhibition of collectable furniture designs produced as a result of a cross-cultural design collaboration between highly skilled wood (punu) artists Minyma Anangu woman Tanya Singer, Djabugay and Western Yalanji man Errol Evans and furniture designer Trent

Jansen. Over a three-year period, Singer, Evans and Jansen spent time in each other’s communities, learning from unique relationships with Country, family and community, and engaging with each other’s cultural practices and traditions.

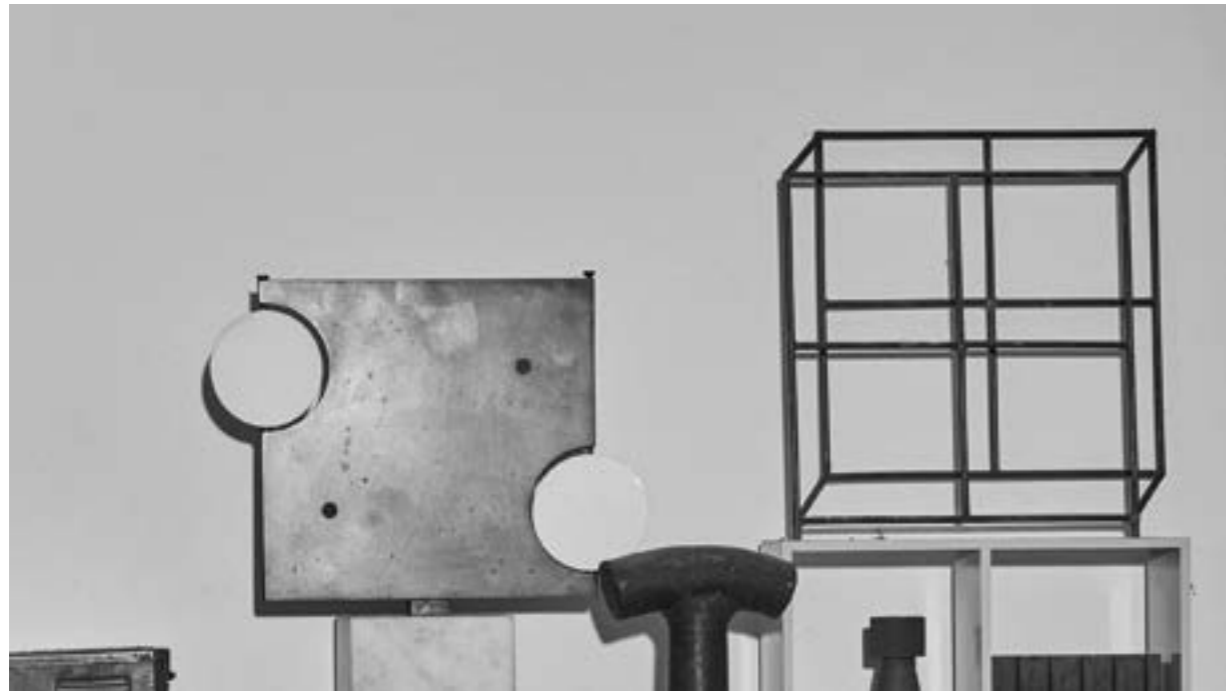
Agency Projects and Numbulwar Numburindi Arts (NNA) partner with Tait at their Fitzroy showroom in a series of talks, artists workshops and a live studio. Ghost nets, or 'fish killers' as they are known in Numbulwar, are discarded from commercial fishing vessels and travel thousands of kilometres through the ocean, harming vulnerable marine life and coral in the process. Often washing up on Numbulwar's shores, the nets are collected, cleaned, de-threaded and repurposed by community members of NNA.

This activation not only highlights the intricacy of the Numbulwar weavers' practice, but also encourages an exchange of knowledge and awareness of practices around the use of ghost nets in Indigenous communities to spark design-based responses and elevate awareness of this ongoing issue.



First Nations Design and the Ghost Net Dilemma Presented by Agency Projects in collaboration with Tait

Vitrine: Object and Identity Presented by Marsha Golemac



Curated by Marsha Golemac, *Vitrine: Object and Identity* is a group exhibition propelled by not only observing the tactility of an object, but the emotion it provokes. While the common language of design is often motivated by functionality and capability, this exhibition is an invitation to reflect upon the significance of objects and

how they can shape and reflect our identity. Residing in a quiet pocket of Collingwood, *Vitrine: Object and Identity* also offers an opportunity for visitors to engage and appreciate how the relationship between object, people, and place can act as a foundation for self-expression and creativity.

Wandering off-menu Presented by Long Prawn



Commencing at Banana Alley, guests joining this experience, are taken to places that no longer exist, examining what is deleted when new things are created. Long Prawn, through both historically grounded and newly invented foodstuffs, ask audiences to consider the ongoing impacts of how we eat, what is gained and what is forgotten. Like many central sites within a colonised landscape, the Birrarung has witnessed the vast overlapping of First Nations and introduced food systems.

From indigenous eel (*luk*) routes, banana ripening vaults, twenty-four-hour floating pies to floating restaurants, charcuterie on small boats and riverside 'barbies', Long Prawn offers a menu where no idea is off-topic, and where our minds bend like the river itself.

Symphonic Skateboarding Presented by Kirby Clark



Located in Alexandra Gardens, *Symphonic Skateboarding*, designed by Kirby Clark, captures the unique beauty of skateboarding through an installation of playful and colourful forms that create music when skated over. Designed with collective input from local skaters, this project challenges the past perceptions of skateboarding and showcases its diverse and inclusive future.

MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NGV AND RUNS 18-28 MAY. WE THANK PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, MAJOR PARTNERS MERCEDES-BENZ AND TELSTRA, AND DESIGN PARTNER RMIT UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT. FOR FULL EVENT DETAILS VISIT DESIGNWEEK.MELBOURNE

GEORGIA SMEDLEY IS NGV ADMINISTRATION OFFICER, MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK.

(p. 73 top) Silo interior.
Image: Josee Vesely-Manning

(p. 73 bottom) Kurunpa Kunpu / Strong Spirit render. Photo: Trent Jansen Studios

(p. 74 top) Numbulwar Country.
Photo: Numbulwar Numburindi Arts

(p. 74 bottom) Vitrine.
Photo: Annika Kafcaloudis

(p.75 top) Wandering OFF-Menu.
Photo: Long Prawn

(p. 75) Orthographic view of colourful skateboarding obstacles. Image: Kirby Clark

NEXT LEVEL DESIGN

Following from a successful first year and embracing a buoyant market for contemporary design, Melbourne Design Fair is gearing up to be an event to rival the best design fairs around the world.

BY PENNY CRASWELL

A shift is happening in people's homes across Australia. While, as a culture, we have been buying art and the occasional design classics (an Eames armchair perhaps, or a Parker table) for generations, there has never before been this much interest in collecting contemporary design. Across age groups, collectors are now investing in Australian furniture, lighting and design objects like never before, fuelled by a thriving design media and social media, too.

The good news for these collectors is that the work of hundreds of designers and makers will come together under one roof with Melbourne Design Fair 2023. The event is set to grow substantially from its inaugural presentation in a 700-square-metre warehouse in Abbotsford, and will now take up 3000 square metres at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 18 to 21 May 2023.

The fair is curated by the NGV and delivered in collaboration with the Melbourne Art Foundation, which also organises the Melbourne Art Fair. 'The first fair was a pilot', explains Simone LeAmon, Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture at the NGV. She says, 'We showed the work of 200 designers to more than 3500 people. As a proof of concept, the response, not only from the public but also from the sector, was so outstanding that it gave us the confidence to proceed.'

It's also excellent news for designers who are used to packing their bags and flying to design events such as Design Miami, Maison & Objet in Paris or Milan's Salone del Mobile to show and sell their work. This is the first equivalent event to be put on here at home, with a focus on collectable design, especially one-of-a-kind and limited-edition furniture, lighting, objects and jewellery design.

'In Australia we have an incredibly dynamic and vibrant independent design studio culture', explains LeAmon. 'Designers for the past decade have been presenting and exhibiting their work in fairs around the world, which requires enormous investment. The Melbourne Design Fair is all about delivering those creative and commercial opportunities here in Australia.'

As well as having individual designers sell their work directly to the public, there will be substantial exhibits by commercial galleries and dealers, plus Australia's strong network of design and craft organisations in each state and territory. There will also be international design on offer, plus some mid-century design, reflecting Australia's continued love affair with the style. LeAmon, herself, will curate a focused show on five female designers, and there will be dedicated space for emerging designers to showcase their talent.

Importantly, the Melbourne Design Fair curators recognise this is not only a commercial fair, but that it also provides opportunities for cultural education, stimulation of new ideas and creative cross-fertilisation – incredibly valuable aspects in their own right.

A fairgoer of old, LeAmon presses the point that design is never just functional or commercial, but should be regarded as cultural production. 'We're familiar with fairs', she says. 'They're cultural experiences. It's the discourse, the conversation, the ideas, the networking. Yes, [Melbourne Design Fair] is about trying to encourage sales and collecting, but we really see it as something capable of contributing to the conversation around design'. And these conversations can be the catalyst to more, and more, creative work.

Now Australia has the event we need to experience a world-class design fair at home. And it is one that is seamlessly suited to our particular design market: including those commercial galleries already championing design, Australia's dynamic and vibrant independent design studio culture, the thriving state and territory design and craft organisations, and more – all brought together under one roof. 'The idea was to develop a model for a fair that was a reflection of the industry in Australia', says LeAmon. 'It allows everyone to flourish.' And, with dozens of designers creating new work for the fair, as we speak (or write), it is bound to be fresh, inspiring and impactful.

MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NGV AND RUNS 18-28 MAY. WE THANK PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, MAJOR PARTNERS MERCEDES-BENZ AND TELSTRA, AND DESIGN PARTNER RMIT UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT. FOR FULL EVENT DETAILS VISIT DESIGNWEEK.MELBOURNE

WE THANK PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA AND DESIGN PARTNER RMIT UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF MELBOURNE ART BOOK FAIR.

THE NGV DEPARTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE HUGH D. T. WILLIAMSON FOUNDATION.

PENNY CRASWELL IS A WRITER, EDITOR AND CURATOR WHO SPECIALISES IN DESIGN, CRAFT, ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIORS.

Ballad of the BIBLIOPHILE

The histories of the collections of the NGV and State Library Victoria are inextricably woven together, a tapestry depicting the rich cultural scene that was established in the mid-19th century.

BY DR ANNA WELCH

In 1854, Anglo-Irish Protestant lawyer Redmond Barry was named president of the newly established board of library trustees and oversaw the laying of the foundation stone for what was then called the Melbourne Public Library. Two years later, in 1856, it opened its doors to that public – a radical experiment in free access to learning for all those aged over 14 with clean hands, no reader's pass required. In 1861, the National Gallery of Victoria was opened on the same site: a city block of art, learning and history.

The question of what makes a book rare is one we continue to ponder because there is no single answer. Today, a book could be treated as rare because of its age, its scarcity, its beauty, its fragility, or because we want to preserve a copy of it as part of our archive of the history of the book as a form. But this concept of rare books is a very recent one in Australia: it is only since the 1960s that librarians in cultural collections and university libraries have developed a shared methodology for treating some books as rare.

Under Redmond Barry, the Library's early acquisition program explicitly avoided purchasing books solely for antiquarian or aesthetic reasons; newest editions were preferred, in order to provide the most up-to-date resources for the reading public. As the 1871 report by the trustees stated, 'those of a purely ephemeral description and of transient value, mere literary curiosities or rarities, expensive manuscripts, those simply recommended by their sumptuous binding or illustration, have hitherto been set aside for those

which commend themselves for their substantial merit and sterling value'. However, during Barry's tenure, some books that could have been considered rare at the time were donated to the Library, such as a medieval medical manuscript (late 14th to 15th century), a first printed edition of the collected works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1532) and Edme-François Jomard's *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–28). Other special books were purchased: John James Audubon's *Birds of America* (1827–38), 19th-century natural

history works by John and Elizabeth Gould, and second editions of Isaac Newton's *Principia mathematica* (1687) and John Flamsteed's *Atlas coelestis* (1729), the second editions having been chosen as the most authoritative texts. Most books were kept on open-access shelves, but some rare, fragile and restricted items were stored in the Chief Librarian's office and accessible only by application.

The Library Museums and National Gallery Act 1869 incorporated the Library with the Museum (which later became Museums Victoria) and the National Gallery (subsequently the National Gallery of Victoria). The Felton Bequest, established by the Will of Alfred Felton, began to acquire works for the Gallery and the Library, then still a single legal entity. The terms of the bequest instructed the trustees to purchase 'works and art objects ... [thought to be] of an artistic and educational value and to be calculated to raise or improve public taste'.¹ The Library began making purchases, which continued into the 1940s, of medieval manuscripts, using the Felton Bequest and other funds. Some purchases made by the bequest, such as the collection of Tasmanian industrialist Robert Carl Sticht in 1922, were split between the two institutions: his fine art prints were acquired by the Gallery, while the leaves from printed books were placed in the Library. The Sticht purchase paved the way for further book purchases via the Felton Bequest, including medieval manuscripts. In the early 1930s, the Library had the opportunity to purchase a First Folio and a Third Folio of Shakespeare's works (that is, the first and third collected editions of his plays, published in 1623 and 1664 respectively), but both were rejected by the then-executors of the Felton Bequest on the grounds that they were not works of art. The Second and Fourth Folios the Library already held met the conditions of its acquisition policy to prioritise the newest editions of every text.

The eventual independence of the three institutions, through *The Public Library National Gallery and Museums Act 1944*, began the process of the separation of the three collections: in 1968, the Gallery opened its new premises on St Kilda

Road, and in 2000, the Museum opened its new building in Carlton. The NGV Collection gained the five deluxe illuminated medieval manuscripts acquired for it through the Felton Bequest (*The Byzantine gospels* [c. 1125–1150], *The Livy* [c. 1400], *The Aspremont-Kievrang hours* [c. 1300], *The Wharnclyffe hours* [c. 1475–80] and *The Strozzi-Acciaiuoli hours* [1495]), while all the other medieval manuscripts (including a stunning manuscript made for Lorenzo de' Medici in 1478, in its original binding) stayed with the Library. The Art, Music and Performing Arts Library's reference collection was retained by the Library. Material like the bound volumes of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's famous *Vedute di Roma* prints also stayed at the Library as they were in book form.

Today, the Library and the Gallery both continue to acquire rare books, and work closely together on a shared appreciation for rare books, which are works of both art and intellect.

DR ANNA WELCH IS PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN, HISTORY OF THE BOOK & ARTS AT STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA, WHERE SHE HAS WORKED SINCE 2011. SHE IS A SPECIALIST IN MEDIEVAL BOOK CULTURE AND GRAPHIC ARTS.

(pp. 78–9) **Canon von Bullingen** *Album of watermarks* (compiled in 19th century). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Bequest of Helen J. Gibson, widow of the late R.C. Sticht Jnr., 1994. Photo: Heath Warwick

(p. 81) Melbourne Art Book Fair 2022 at NGV International. Photo: Tobias Titz



The Melbourne Art Book Fair

The Melbourne Art Book Fair is an annual event presented as part of Melbourne Design Week. Now in its ninth year, the program in 2023 expands its reach, with a record number of new imprints presented at the Stallholder Fair, and a larger events program across regional Victoria.

BY CORA DIVINY

The popular Stallholder Fair will return to the NGV Great Hall on the first weekend of the Melbourne Art Book Fair, from Friday 19 to Sunday 21 May. More than eighty-five participants, including the NGV design store, independent publishers, art book makers, established publishing houses and art galleries will present books, magazines, zines, art prints and more. Visitors to the Stallholder Fair can participate in 'Print Kitchen', an activation by artist Artek Halpern-Laurence. Exploring the connection between printmaking and food-making, participants will enter the studio-cum-trattoria to create their own etching, watch it 'cook' through the giant spinning wheel of the onsite etching press and, with the ding of a bell, collect their very own print to take home and enjoy.

Following the first week, the Melbourne Art Book Fair will present a range of satellite events reaching communities throughout Melbourne and into regional Victoria, as part of Melbourne Design Week. In partnership with arts, design, and publishing organisations, such as Collingwood Yards, Collingwood; Centre for Contemporary Photography, Fitzroy; Castlemaine Art Museum, Castlemaine; Platform Arts, Geelong; and Everybody Knows Books, Ballarat, the satellite program offers talks, launches, workshops, exhibitions and performances. Highlights include 'Resistance in Indigenous design', a lecture and conversation featuring First Nations artists and designers Tiriki Onus, Lisa Waup, Jenna Lee and Desna Whaanga-Schollum (Aotearoa), presented in partnership with the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development, the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts. Other key programs include a book launch and exhibition created by children and families of Hazara background in Dandenong presented by Kids' Own Publishing, and a regional art book fair with panels and workshops at Castlemaine Art Museum.

CORA DIVINY IS NGV MELBOURNE ART BOOK FAIR COORDINATOR.

WE THANK PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA AND DESIGN PARTNER RMIT UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE MELBOURNE ART BOOK FAIR.

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Mercure HOTELS

Ken Done, *Sydney Sunday* (detail) 1982, oil and acrylic on canvas. Collection of the artist.

@bendigoartgallery

HILDA RIX NICHOLAS



Hilda Rix Nicholas 1884 – 1961
(Elsie in the Garden, Étapes) c1914
 oil on canvas
 98 x 79 cm



Hilda Rix Nicholas 1884 - 1961
(Landscape with Aloe)
 oil on canvas on cardboard
 27.5 x 34 cm



Hilda Rix Nicholas 1884 - 1961
The Souk of Morocco
 oil on canvasboard
 26 x 33 cm

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LIFE AND TIMES



Painter, Plant Hunter

Ellis Rowan was one of Australia's most adventurous and talented natural history artists, specialising in flowers and birds, and occasionally insects. Over her lifetime, she painted more than 3000 works, some of which are in the NGV Collection. Its most recent acquisition, a wonderful four-piece painted screen titled *Australian wildflowers* joins the Collection through the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family.

BY SOPHIE GERHARD

There was a great thirst for discoveries in the sciences and arts during the Victorian era, seen throughout England and further afield in global Commonwealth countries. This wave of curiosity presented opportunities for explorers who were interested in botanicals to investigate the far corners of the earth in order to record undocumented species of flora and fauna.

Born Marian Ellis Ryan in Melbourne, 1848, Rowan was the first of seven children to Marian (née Cotton) and Charles Ryan. She eventually married British Army Officer Captain Frederic Rowan, becoming Ellis Rowan in 1873. Though she never received formal art training, Rowan was encouraged from a young age to paint wildflowers in her own style.

After her first overseas trip to England in 1869, Rowan was introduced to Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, arguably Australia's most prominent nineteenth-century scientist. Mueller, who would eventually become the artist's mentor, was commissioned by Rowan's father to landscape the family garden in Mount Macedon in 1872. Rowan was included in her father's garden design team, which allowed for a working relationship between Mueller and

Rowan to begin. Mueller was impressed by Rowan's artistic talent and invited her to become a key member of his research team, requiring her to compile plant specimens and illustrations for his new book.

Ryan's recruitment into Mueller's 'army of collectors' was a turning point in her life. Until then, her interest in painting flowers fitted within the Victorian narrative of being a respectable and appropriate pastime for a woman. Mueller's mentorship and encouragement gave Rowan credibility within Australia's artistic circles, allowing doors to open and providing the patronage women required in order to lead profitable careers. Soon after their connection became known, Rowan began exhibiting in international exhibitions, and was awarded ten gold medals, fifteen silver and four bronze between 1879 and 1893. Over these years, her success was weighted with a certain level of criticism from renowned male artists of the time, notably Norman Lindsay, Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts, who would write damning letters and articles dismissing flower painting 'vulgar' and inferior.

While some of Rowan's travelling was experienced during her marriage to businessman Frederic Rowan, it was after Frederic's



continent. Of this series, the South Australian government purchased 100 of her paintings and the Queensland government acquired 125 paintings. On her final painting trip at just under seventy years old, Rowan recounted, 'I had the satisfaction of knowing that, under all difficulties, I had achieved my object of making a really representative and accurate record of the birds and flowers'.

In broken health from battles with malaria and fatigue, Rowan held a final exhibition of 1000 paintings in Sydney in 1920, the largest exhibition to date in Australia. The following year, the federal Hughes government agreed to purchase the collection for the nation, but conflicting opinions within parliament delayed proceedings, resulting in no purchase being made before Rowan's death in Macedon in 1922, aged seventy-four. In 1923 the Bruce-Page government, offered £5000 for 947 paintings, now held at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. The recent acquisition of *Australian wildflowers* (c. 1890) into the Australian

Decorative Arts collection, a four panel, pine screen, each rendering a unique and intricate painting of a flower, will be exhibited in the permanent collection at the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. For this generous donation of a rare piece of Australiana history, we thank Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family.

death in 1892 that Rowan began travelling frequently. In fact, it became rare for her to be in Australia. Though her husband supported Rowan's interest in art, Frederic's passing allowed Rowan a freedom from domestic and familial duty, which seemingly prevented her from a full-time career as an artist and traveller. In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1898, Rowan reflected on the effect her marriage had on her career. 'My husband, who was very fond of botany, proposed that I take up painting. So I did, and every day I painted for two hours, but I hated it. My husband was a hard taskmaster, for he was very critical. The tears would roll down my cheeks as I worked. But he would say, 'Never mind, little woman, you will conquer it'. The opening passage to this same article reads as follows: 'There is a slender, fragile little woman making her home in New York for the time being whose work as an artist in the flower painting line seems to be well suited to the delicacy of her appearance', demonstrating the international hurdles women faced in being taken seriously as artists and professionals alike.

After Frederic's death, Rowan traversed most of the world's continents alone, donned with goggles, veils and mosquito nets, hiring local guides in remote areas, and recording, often for the first time, hundreds of species of flowers and animals. Unlike many in the same profession who would record from deceased animals, Rowan, even into old age, would hold birds under one arm while painting with the other. She said, 'The larger [birds] I tucked under my arm, and held in that way while I painted them. Some were very fierce and hard to hold ... I covered the heads of others with handkerchiefs or table-napkins to keep them a little quieter while I was painting the body. The smaller birds I kept in cages'.

On her return to Australia in 1905, she pursued her ultimate goal in finding and recording every species of wildflower on the

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ELLIS ROWAN AT [NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/4334](https://www.ngv.melbourne/artists/4334)

AUSTRALIAN WILDFLOWER JOINS THE NGV COLLECTION AS A GIFT OF KRYSZYNA CAMPBELL-PRETTY AM AND FAMILY THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S CULTURAL GIFTS PROGRAM, 2022.

SOPHIE GERHARD IS ASSISTANT CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN ART

(pp. 84–5 and p. 86) **Ellis Rowan**
Unknown (manufacturer) *Australian wildflowers* c. 1890 (detail). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022

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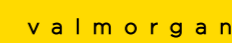
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WESTWOOD

THE FASHION REVOLUTIONARY

The late Dame Vivienne Westwood's (1941–2022) fashion practice was enriched by technical excellence, notions of identity, radicality and innovation. Associated with the 1970's punk subculture movement, Westwood was never one to conform and remained at the epicentre of British fashion for almost half a century. During the 1980s and 1990s, she referenced and recontextualised subcultures, historical construction and Classical art with collections that challenged the status quo.

BY CHARLOTTE BOTICA

Self-taught, Vivienne Westwood came to fashion in 1965 after meeting Malcolm McLaren, a controversial cultural appropriator, musician, artist, designer and impresario. Uninspired by the counterculture of the 1960s, the pair began designing and selling clothing that intimidated and shocked the public with seditious political and social messages.

In 1971 Westwood and McLaren opened Let It Rock, a store on King's Road in London, which was subsequently renamed Too Fast To Live, Too Young To Die in 1972, SEX in 1974 and then Seditious in 1977. During this period their clothing expressed anti-establishment values with an aesthetic that drew from 1950's rock'n'roll and Teddy boys, bondage, sexual fetishism and comprised 'do-it-yourself' details such as safety pins, chains, and knotted and torn finishes. Combining a hybrid of dated styles, recycled garments and materials, and garish cheap fabrics, they created the ultimate anti-fashion statement.

The quintessential punk outfit was a customised Westwood slogan T-shirt and bondage trousers in the NGV Collection. *Anarchy bondage shirt*, features lyrics from the Sex Pistols first single 'Anarchy in the U.K.', released 1976. At the time, McLaren was managing the band, and Westwood dressed them.

In 1980, Westwood renamed her shop again, to Worlds End, then in 1983 ended her partnership with McLaren. For the next two decades, Westwood redefined her practice on new terms, embracing and reimagining Saville Row tailoring techniques and British textiles. She also began conducting regular archival research of London's Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum and The Wallace Collection. Westwood's key collections during this period include *Nostalgia of Mud (Buffalo)*, 1982, and *Pirates*, 1981 – her first commercial collection. The *Pirates* collection inspired the New Romantic youth culture movement, which was characterised by electronic synth-pop music, transgressive identity promotion and romanticism of





eighteenth-century dandyism, with musicians such as Adam and the Ants, and Boy George adorning white ruffled muslin shirts.

It was in 1982 that Westwood first explored the bra as outerwear. She also created the tube skirt (a single piece of knit fabric fashioned into a skirt with one seam and no fastenings), a practical garment but never-before-seen commercial silhouette. Westwood's oversized tailoring and loose garments remain an ever-present aesthetic today.

In 1984, Westwood embarked on what would become a recurring exploration of historical undergarments such as corsetry and crinoline, traversing them into the twentieth century as a reclamation of female liberation. As observed by fashion writer Marie Simon, '...she [Westwood] resurrects the corset, the crinoline, and the bustle...feminine symbols of a life of

idleness...freshly dusted down, flaunting themselves on the catwalks'.

In the early 1990s, while conducting research at the V&A, Westwood investigated the opulent sixteenth-century Tudor practice of slicing clothing to reveal underlayers. For her 1991 *Cut and slash* collection, Westwood provocatively reinterpreted the practice however, as evident in *Sunwheel dress*, 1991. Westwood distressed the technique and instead of uncovering layers of fabric, she revealed flesh.

Westwood said, 'When you look to the past, you start to see the standards of excellence ... By trying to copy a technique, you build up your own technique ... I couldn't design a thing if I didn't look at art'. Enveloped in historical research, Westwood's designs have informed contemporary fashion typologies. She influenced designers, such as Alexander

McQueen, John Galiano, and Martin Margiela and today her work continues to inspire emerging talents including Matty Bovan and Michaela Stark. Vivienne Westwood will forever be recognised as a fashion revolutionary.

CHARLOTTE BOTICA IS CURATORIAL PROJECT OFFICER, FASHION AND TEXTILES.

SEE THESE WORKS ON DISPLAY ON LEVEL 3, NGV INTERNATIONAL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT VIVIENNE WESTWOOD, NGV.MELBOURNE/ARTIST/7264/

(p. 89) Dame Vivienne Westwood watches rehearsals ahead of her show during London Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 2016/17 at Royal College of Surgeons on February 21, 2016 in London, England. Photo: John Phillips/Getty Images

Vivienne Westwood *Sunwheel dress* 1991 from the *Cut and slash* collection, spring-summer 1991. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gift's Program, 2020

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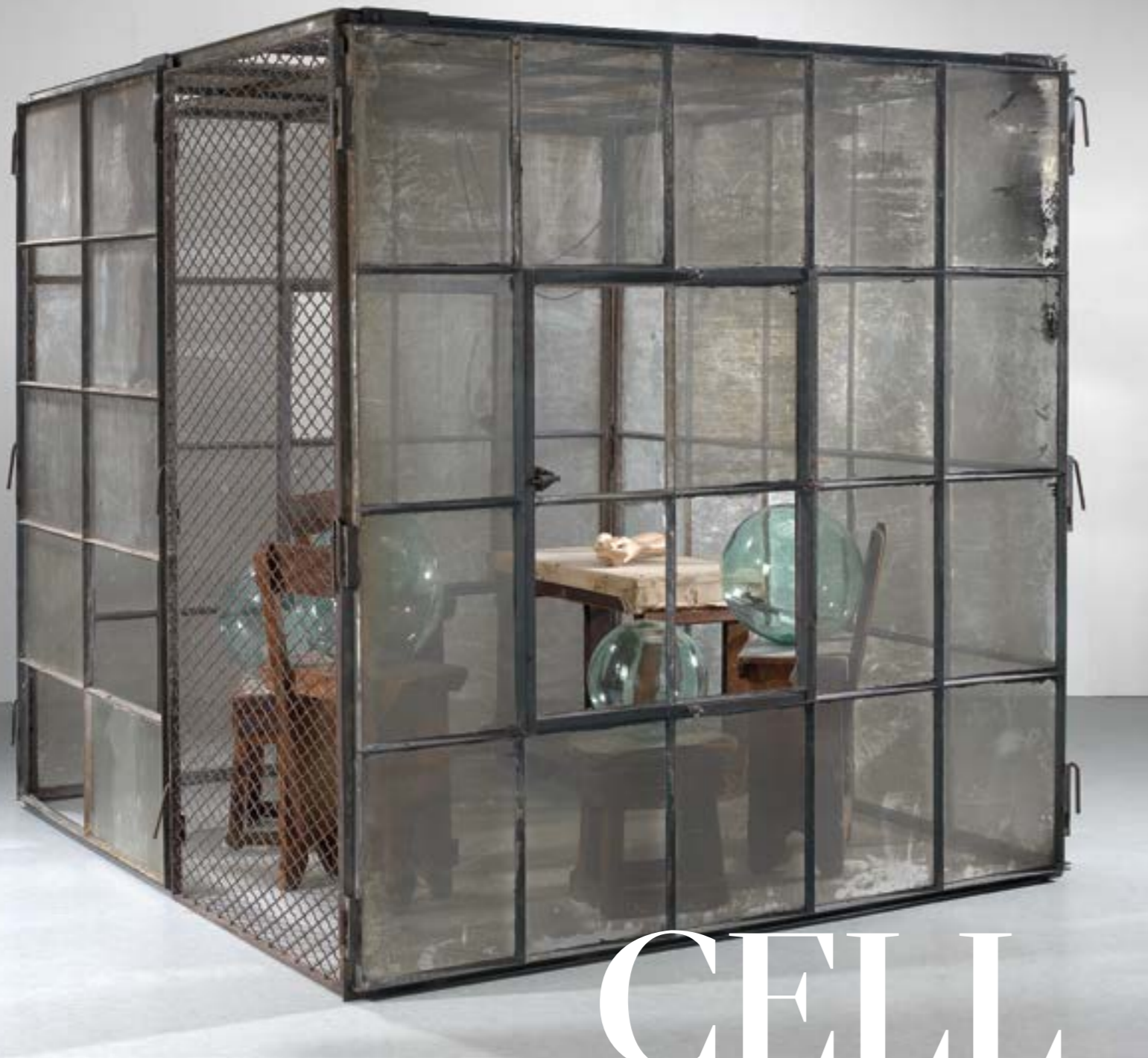


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NOW ON DISPLAY



CELL (GLASS SPHERES AND HANDS)

Identity, self-scrutiny, memory and the tensions inherent in human relationships are the core themes of Louise Bourgeois' art. Through her major installation work *Cell (Glass spheres and hands)* 1990–93, the artist reconfigures her family as glass spheres incapable of interpersonal communication. See the work on display now at NGV International.

BY SOPHIE OXENBRIDGE

Louise Bourgeois is widely regarded as one of the most imaginative and influential artists of the twentieth century. A visionary sculptor, painter, printmaker and draughtswoman, her formidable talent went unrecognised by the international art world for most of her adult life, only receiving due attention in the final decades of her career, following a retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1982 when Bourgeois was seventy years old.

Today, Bourgeois is acclaimed for her psychologically charged artworks, which address themes of trauma, relationships, sexuality, identity and the unconscious. Recognised for her confessional art, Bourgeois' biography provided the lifelong inspiration and subject matter for her deeply affective artworks. While rooted in her personal experiences, Bourgeois' works maintain a universal appeal for their powerful examination of the human condition.

Throughout her career, Bourgeois pursued a range of formal and conceptual innovations in her work. Several of these, such as her engagement with psychoanalysis and feminism, as well as the implementation of large-scale installation formats, are now considered cornerstones of contemporary art. Both of these developments are represented in Bourgeois' pioneering body of sculptures known as *Cells*. Produced over a twenty-year period between 1991 and 2010, Bourgeois' *Cells* are highly emotive artworks, which symbolise the psychological tension between the artist's interior and exterior worlds. Each *Cell* comprises a hard-edged architectural enclosure, crafted from repurposed industrial materials, that has been filled with intimate items of clothing, furniture, found objects, and sculptures from the artist's own archives. As with all of Bourgeois' works, the *Cells* held an important cathartic function for the artist, as a way of communicating and releasing her deeply-held memories and feelings. Offering Bourgeois a potent stage through which to play out and process her personal dramas, the sculptures gave shape and meaning to her frustrations and anxieties. At the same time, Bourgeois' *Cells* embody the artists' passionate belief in art as a form of reparation. She stated, 'You have to tell your story and you have to forget your story. You forget and forgive. It liberates you'.

Drawing on memories of the artist's childhood, Bourgeois' *Cell (glass spheres and hands)*, 1990–93, purchased with the assistance of the Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest, explores ideas of familial love, betrayal and alienation. Inside a cubic chamber composed of industrial window frames, Bourgeois has arranged a tableaux of enigmatic objects, depicting each of her family members – including her father and his mistress whose relationship was a source of anguish for Bourgeois – as isolated glass spheres, incapable of interpersonal communication. A pair of clasped marble hands function as the artist's self-portrait within the work. Like other fragments of anatomy that often appear in Bourgeois' works, the hands convey a sense of loss and abandonment. In this way, *Cell (glass spheres and hands)* plays on the multiple meanings of the word 'cell', as a biological or family unit, as well as a site of isolation and imprisonment, revealing the uncomfortable liminality that underpins this series of Bourgeois' works. Returning to display after more than a decade, *Cell (glass spheres and hands)* offers viewers an example of the artist's ability to channel personal trauma and psychological pain into some of the most important and powerful artworks of the twentieth century.


SOPHIE OXENBRIDGE IS NGV CURATOR, CONTEMPORARY ART.

Louise Bourgeois *Cell (Glass spheres and hands)*
1990–93. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased with the assistance of the Leslie Moira
Henderson Bequest, 1995 © Louise Bourgeois
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LOUISE BOURGEOIS' *CELL (GLASS SPHERES AND HANDS)* 1990–93 IS ON DISPLAY
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NGV/MELBOURNE/WORK/57353

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Image: Taree Mackenzie, 'Pepper's ghost, triangles, cyan and red', 2018, installation view, Neon Parc, 2018, image courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Christo Crocker.




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MAKING NEWS

REMBRANDT'S WATERMARKED PAPERS

Bonnie Hearn

Rampant lions, perching basilisks and a two-headed sunning eagle are just a few of the fanciful creatures found among watermarked papers used by prolific printmaker Rembrandt.

A watermark is a small wire device sewn to a papermaking mould as a way of marking or branding a sheet of paper. Watermarks are subtle attributions often only visible by manipulating light to expose the thin area of paper created by the device.

Among the paintings, sheets of drawings and etchings held by the NGV, paper conservators have captured fifty-five watermarks, revealing various motif designs and structural features of these papers, which aid in the investigative study of materials used by the artist. Watermark study, or filigranology, can reveal the origin of paper manufacture, such as where a sheet was made and in some instances by whom, which provides insight into the paper economy and trade of the time. It also gives us a sense of how artists such as Rembrandt used or favoured certain papers throughout his printmaking practice.

Paper conservators have used an array of imaging techniques to survey, analyse and present Rembrandt's watermarks within the NGV Collection. We are delighted to be sharing this work with the public, available now for the first time online at ngv.melbourne/conservation/research



spatial recession. It has been exciting to observe nuances in the lighting that were not obvious before the cleaning, for instance, the way Tissot has rendered the sky differently depending on whether it is seen through open windows, single or double panes of glass.

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023: 75+ PROJECTS BY 100 ARTISTS, DESIGNERS AND COLLECTIVES FROM 30+ COUNTRIES

NGV

From robotics to tapestry, weather patterns to war, mysticism to megacities – *NGV Triennial 2023* is a powerful and moving snapshot of the world today as captured through the work of 100 artists, designers and collectives at the forefront of global contemporary practice.

Bringing contemporary art, design and architecture into dialogue with one another and traversing all four levels of NGV International, the NGV Triennial features more than 75 extraordinary projects that invite us to reflect on the world as it is, while also asking how we would like it to be.

Featured artists include: Sheila Hicks (USA), Tracey Emin (UK), Petrit Halilaj (Kosovo), Betty Muffler (Australia), Yoko Ono (Japan), David Shrigley (UK), Schiaparelli (France), Agnieszka Pilat (Poland), Hoda Afshar (Iran), Thomas J Price (UK), Fernando Laposse (Mexico), Azuma Makoto (Japan), Flora Yukhnovich (UK), Yee I-Lann (Malaysia), Farrokh Mahdavi (Iran), Heather B Swann (Australia), Hugh Hayden (USA), Joyce Ho (Taiwan), Shakuntala Kulkarni (India), SMACK (Netherlands), Yinka Shonibare (UK), Tao Hui (China); Diedrick Brackens (USA) and many more.

With more than 25 world-premiere projects commissioned by the NGV especially for this presentation, the *NGV Triennial* reveals the extraordinary ways in which leading and emerging artists and designers have responded to the most relevant and critical global issues of our time. With many of the works on display entering the NGV Collection, the *NGV Triennial* establishes a lasting legacy for Victoria that can be accessed for many generations to come.

THE NGV TRIENNIAL WILL OPEN FREE TO THE PUBLIC AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER.

James Tissot *An interesting story* c. 1872. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1938

SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON JAMES TISSOT'S AN INTERESTING STORY

Raye Collins

Visit the Level 2 collection galleries at NGV International for a new perspective on James Tissot's *An interesting story*, 1872, which has been cleaned and restored for the first time in many decades. Acquired with funds from the Felton Bequest in 1938, this humorous and ironic depiction features a soldier relating a heroic tale, flanked by two disinterested young women, one of whom is suppressing a yawn. The painting was created the year after Tissot emigrated from France to England and is set against the buzzing maritime activity on the Thames.

Tissot was a contemporary of the French Impressionists and a friend of Edgar Degas, but his working methods were highly idiosyncratic, synthesising a variety of avant-garde and Old Master influences. Many of the recognised hallmarks of his method can be seen in *An interesting story*, including the use of a smooth painting support comprising solid mahogany, and the application of red-brown preparatory layer, known as *imprimatura*, which functions as a mid-tone and imparts a warm undertone to the colours.

The restoration involved removal of old discoloured surface coatings and restorations, and revarnishing, followed by retouching of losses and abrasions with reversible media. The new varnish has beautifully saturated the blacks and reds, enhancing the contrast and illusion of

WINTER AND SUMMER 2023 AT THE NGV

NGV

From *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* to *Top Arts 2023*, there are many exhibitions on at the NGV in the coming months. Here are some that are not to be missed.

AT NGV INTERNATIONAL

Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2023: *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi* 9 Jun – 8 Oct. The iridescent palette of leading twentieth-century French painter Pierre Bonnard will illuminate Melbourne this winter. See more than 100 works by Bonnard (1867–1947), depicting intimate domestic interiors, natural landscapes and urban scenes with subtlety, wit and a sensuous approach to colour and light. The works will be presented within a contemporary scenography by award-winning architect and designer India Mahdavi, who the *New Yorker* has described as a 'virtuoso of colour' and a 'possessor of perfect chromatic pitch'.

PIERRE BONNARD: DESIGNED BY INDIA MAHDAVI IS AN EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE NGV IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS. THE EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER VISIT VICTORIA, PREMIUM PARTNER HSBC AND MAJOR PARTNERS EY, TELSTRA, QANTAS AND NET-A-PORTER. TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE VIA NGV.MELBOURNE

Rembrandt: True to Life

2 Jun – 10 Sep

More than 100 etchings and a selection of paintings from the most important Rembrandt collection in the Southern Hemisphere feature in a major exhibition dedicated to the seventeenth-century Dutch master. *Rembrandt: True to Life* is supported by Presenting Partner the Australian Government International Exhibitions Insurance Program and Major Partner Macquarie Group.

Takahiro Iwasaki: Reflection Model (Itsukushima)

Until Oct

A monumental reimagining of the Shinto shrine of Itsukushima, most famous for its 'floating' Torii gate by one of the leading figures in Japan's new generation of emerging young artists.



Cerith Wyn Evans's C=O=D=A

19 May – Nov

A suspended suite of large, neon 'drawings' that explore the legacy of Noh Theatre, *C=O=D=A* returns after its popular debut in NGV Triennial 2020.

Up, Down and All Around:

Daniel Emma for Kids

2 Jun – Oct

A space centred around a sushi train, where children can use their imagination to transform familiar objects into new ones.

Photography: Real and Imagined

Oct – Jan 2024

More than 200 images by leading Australian and international photographers, the largest survey ever of the NGV's photography collection.

AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA

Top Arts 2023

Until 9 Jul

Artworks from VCE's most exciting artistic talent, exploring themes such as gender and cultural expression, relationships, beauty, ugliness and nature.

Watercolour Country: 100 Works from Hermannsburg

From Oct

A significant display from this pivotal school of Australian art including never before displayed works by Albert Namatjira.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE VIA NGV.MELBOURNE

Elmgreen & Dragset's *What's Left?* (studio view). Courtesy of the artists. Proposed acquisition with the support of Barry Janes & Paul Cross, 2023

DESIGN STORE

As well as presenting the NGV's ambitious in-house publishing program, NGV design store offers a wide range of art, design and cultural books from local and international publishers. Here are some of the latest releases.



KINTSUGI: THE POETIC MEND BY BONNIE KEMSKE, \$59.99

Author Bonnie Kemske explores *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with precious metals to restore ceramic pieces with the inclusion of diary entries, personal stories, and in-depth exploration of its origin and symbolism.



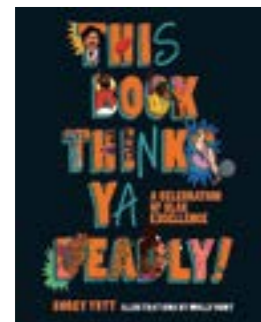
YAYOI KUSAMA: 1945 TO NOW, \$90.00

Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now is the most comprehensive survey of the artist to date. In addition to a selection of Kusama's writings, the book features correspondence with Georgia O'Keeffe and an interview with critic and curator Yoshie Yoshida.



MELBOURNE NOW, \$49.95

This publication is a comprehensive guide to the 2023 *Melbourne Now* exhibition, detailing every practice in the exhibition from A to Z.



THIS BOOK THINKS YA DEADLY! A CELEBRATION OF BLAK EXCELLENCE BY COREY TUTT, ILLUSTRATED BY MOLLY HUNT, \$34.99

This Book Thinks Ya Deadly! is an inspirational, illustrated compendium that celebrates the diversity and success of First Nations People including Dr Anita Heiss, Danzal Baker (Baker Boy), Adam Goodes and Blak Douglas.



BRAIN DEAD: CLOTHING FOR A CURIOUS LIFE, \$140.00

Brain Dead is a collective of artists and designers from around the world, founded in 2014. This book chronicles the formation and development of the brand as it has evolved.

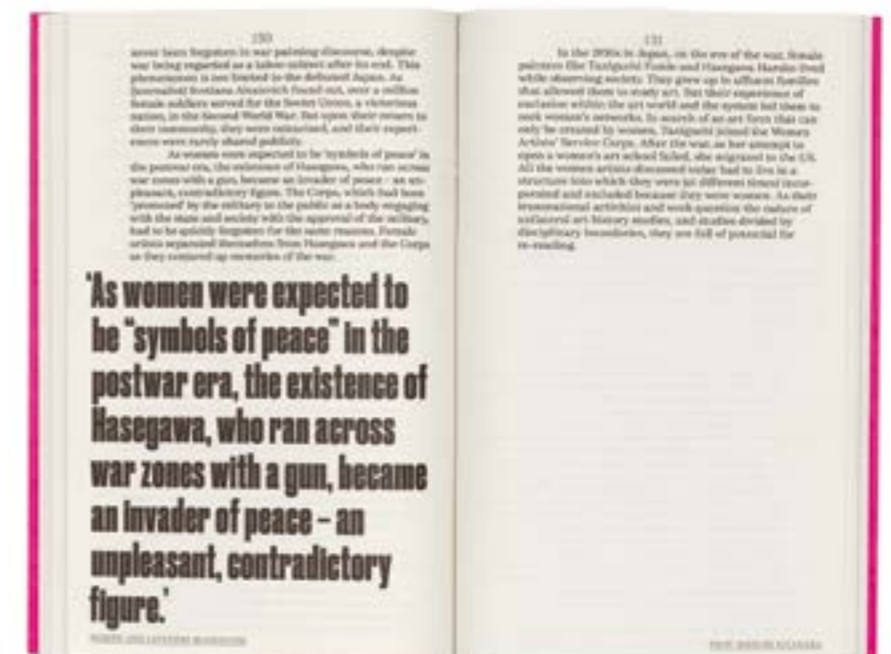
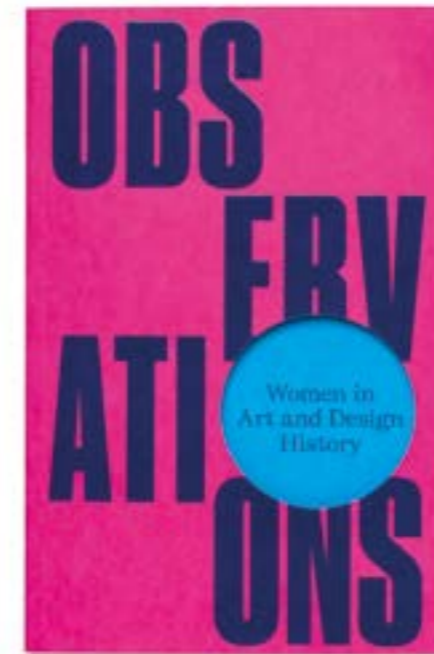


INDIA MAHDAVI BY INDIA MAHDAVI, \$130

The eponymous first monograph of India Mahdavi takes us on a retrospective journey through the most emblematic realisations of the world-renowned Paris-based interior designer, internationally praised for her unique sense of colour.

BOOKS

Observations: Women in Art and Design History



The impact of women artists and designers can be observed at the heart of the greatest art movements we have seen. In recent years, the NGV has made landmark acquisitions of historical women artists that now hang on permanent display in our Collection galleries. These include Berthe Morisot, a leader of the Impressionist movement; Lavinia Fontana, one of the first professional women artists to work in Europe; and Maria Van Oosterwyck, a celebrated Dutch still life painter. However, there is more work to do.

The NGV's latest publication *Observations: Women in Art and Design History* collates transcripts from the landmark 2022 NGV seminar series of the same name in a beautifully bound and typeset 240-page paperback.

The volume explores the work of some of the most significant women artists and designers represented in the NGV Collection, from Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614) and Mary Beale (1633–1699) to Dora Maar (1907–1997), Charlotte Perriand (1903–1999) and Helen Frankenthaler (1928–2011).

Follow along as leading historians, writers and curators from around the world explore the contexts, frameworks and networks that both supported and challenged the professional practices of women in art and design, while also examining their critical contributions.

PURCHASE A COPY OF *OBSERVATIONS: WOMEN IN ART AND DESIGN HISTORY* AT DESIGN STORE AT NGV INTERNATIONAL, ONLINE AT [STORE.NGV.VIC.GOV.AU/PRODUCTS/OBSERVATIONS-WOMEN-IN-ART-AND-DESIGN-HISTORY](https://store.ngv.vic.gov.au/products/observations-women-in-art-and-design-history) OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE BELOW.



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



Closing Soon

Catch *Top Arts 2023* before it closes on 9 July.

Now in its twenty-ninth year, *Top Arts*, an annual exhibition presented as part of the Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Season of Excellence, presents outstanding work from students – a glimpse into the minds and hearts of young creatives, who excelled in their VCE art studies in 2022.

This year's cohort enjoyed the return to consistent onsite learning, which enabled them greater access to art equipment and materials, the benefit of in-person feedback from peers and teachers, as well as the opportunity to engage with other people – family, friends, members of the community – in the development of their artworks.

For *Top Arts 2023*, forty-four works from thirty-eight students feature – chosen by the exhibition's selection panel who considered submissions from a field of

more than 1400 applications. The panel looked for works that were fully developed or resolved in their ideas, original and innovative, and those that displayed technical excellence, or a thoughtful consideration of aesthetics.

Be inspired by the artists' creative processes, imaginative ideas and skillful use of materials across a range of media in an exhibition which highlights the NGV's strong commitment to contemporary art and arts education.

SEE *TOP ARTS* ON GROUND LEVEL, THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA, UNTIL 9 JULY.

TOP ARTS IS SUPPORTED BY MAJOR PARTNERS OFFICEWORKS AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY, AND EDUCATION SUPPORTERS VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY, MELBOURNE ARCHDIOCESE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA.

Beth Pert *Mycotoxins 2022*. Melbourne Girls College, Richmond © Beth Pert

In The Next Issue

The July–August issue of *NGV Magazine* celebrates the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition *Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi*.

A kaleidoscopic exhibition presenting the iridescent paintings of Pierre Bonnard within immersive scenography by Paris-based designer India Mahdavi, the 2023 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition has been developed in partnership with Musée d'Orsay, Paris, and is largely drawn from the museum's impressive holdings of works by Bonnard alongside significant loans from other collections in France and beyond. Paintings, drawings, photographs, folding

screens and early cinema will bring modern France to life with startling beauty and vivid colour as visitors discover more than 100 works by the celebrated French artist, spanning from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century.

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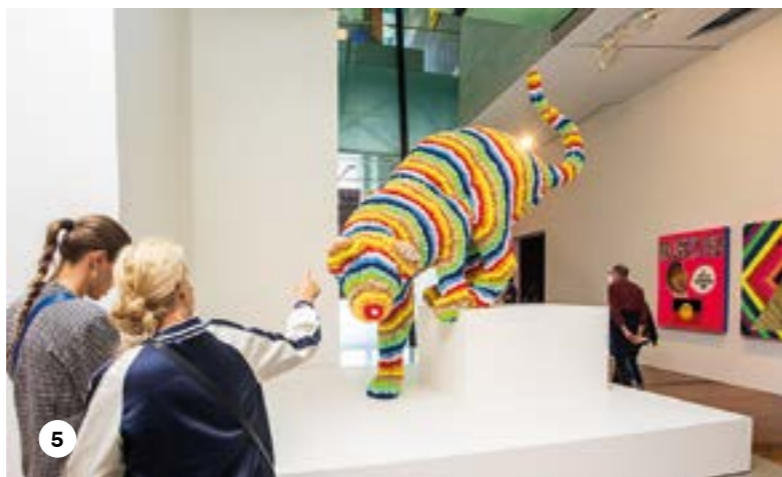
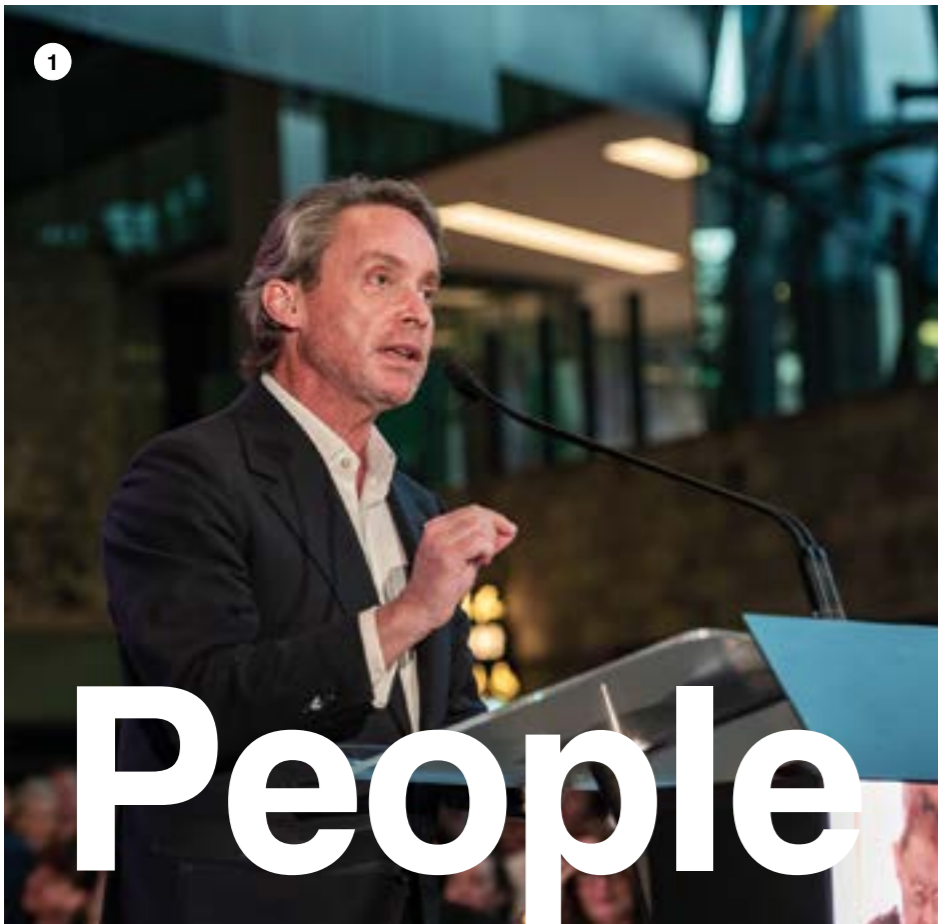
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MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK AND THE VICTORIAN DESIGN PROGRAM ARE INITIATIVES OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT. MELBOURNE DESIGN WEEK IS SUPPORTED THROUGH THE MELBOURNE CITY REVITALISATION FUND – A \$200 MILLION PARTNERSHIP OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE CITY OF MELBOURNE. THE NGV DEPARTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE HUGH D. T. WILLIAMSON FOUNDATION.



1. Tony Ellwood AM, NGV Director at the opening night of *Melbourne Now 2023* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Margund Sallowsky 2. Paul and Samantha Cross attend the *Melbourne Now 2023* opening at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Photo: Liana Hardy 3. *Melbourne Now 2023* exhibiting artist Scotty So photographed at the opening night of *Melbourne Now 2023*. Photo: Liana Hardy 4. Dr Timothy Moore, NGV Curator, Design and Architecture / Melbourne Design Week, with artists Kristin Bauer, Andre Bonnice and Anna Jankovic at the opening weekend of *Melbourne Now 2023*. Photo: Tobias Titz 5. Installation view of Troy Emery's *Mountain Climber 2022* at *Melbourne Now 2023*. Photo: Tobias Titz 6. Jess Newman, State Leader of Private Bank (VIC), Macquarie Group at the *Melbourne Now 2023* opening. Photo: Gracie Siteu 7. Tony Ellwood AM, NGV Director and Jo Horgan, Founder and co-CEO of MECCA at the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission 2023 announcement on International Women's Day at NGV International. Photo: Liz Sunshine 8. Cecily Adams, Founder and Benefactor, NGV Foundation, Andrew Clark, NGV Deputy Director, and Paul Cross, Life Member and President's Counsellor, NGV Foundation 9. Artist James Lemon photographed in his *Melbourne Now 2023* installation, *Swarming 2023*. Photo: Liana Hardy 10. NGV Business Council Members Susumu Matsumoto, Dannielle Kennedy, Ayako Hirao, Anthony Rosso from Mitsubishi Group, enjoying an NGV Business Council event at NGV International.

AROUND VICTORIA



CLARICE BECKETT—ATMOSPHERE

Until 9 July
Venue Geelong Gallery
 55 Little Malop Street, Geelong

geelonggallery.org.au

Geelong Gallery presents an exclusive in-focus, thematic survey of the work of Australian artist Clarice Beckett (1887–1935). This much anticipated exhibition will present key works from across Beckett's oeuvre ranging from 1919 to the early 1930s, providing a critical representation of this enduringly enigmatic modernist artist's atmospheric depictions of light, climate and bayside Melbourne. Beckett's beautiful paintings are revered for the ways in which they captured the essence of Beaumaris streetscapes and Melbourne cityscapes in varying light and weather conditions, as well as atmospheric vistas towards the waters of Port Phillip Bay.

CATHERINE OPIE: BINDING TIES

Until 9 July
Venue Heide Museum of Modern Art
 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen

heide.com.au

The first survey exhibition in Australia of internationally celebrated American photographer Catherine Opie combines key works from across her oeuvre with an emphasis on portraiture. The exhibition traverses Opie's early, most recognisable works exploring constructions of gender and sexuality, through alternative conceptions of the nuclear household – chosen family portraits that transcend traditional familial ties – to more recent musings on solidarity and collective action in the face of proliferating global crises. The exhibition comes three decades after her work was first seen in Australia, in the group exhibition *Persona Cognita* at Heide in 1994.

RENEE SO: PROVENANCE

27 April – 9 July
Venue Monash University, Caulfield Campus
 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East

monash.edu/muma

Guest curated by Charlotte Day, *Renee So: Provenance* is the first major exhibition of the London-based artist's work in Australia, where she grew up after migrating with her family from Hong Kong at a young age. The exhibition brings together more than a decade of art-making alongside new work, surfacing narratives within her evolving practice. Renee So's practice is distinguished by its embrace of traditional crafts, cross-cultural thinking, underlying sense of the comedic and persistent feminist worldview.

WANGARATTA CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE AWARD 2023 (A KYAMBA FOUNDATION PROJECT)

10 June – 20 August
Venue Wangaratta Art Gallery
 56 Ovens Street, Wangaratta

wangarattaartgallery.com.au

A biennial acquisitive award and exhibition, the Wangaratta Contemporary Textile Award celebrates the diversity and strength of Australian textile art. The Wangaratta region has a long and prominent history of textile manufacturing and craft-making. The Award builds upon this unique tradition and social history, elevating and promoting the development of contemporary textile practice in Australia. A partnership with the Kyamba Foundation will see an increase in the award's prize money from \$10,000 to \$40,000.

WITH THANKS TO THE PUBLIC GALLERIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA. VISIT PGAV.ORG.AU FOR MORE EXHIBITIONS.

Catherine Opie *Oliver in a Tutu* 2004
 © Catherine Opie, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, London, and Seoul

& gallery Australia

Anna Glynn
Antipodean Menagerie
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Celia Dymond
Offshore, Inland
 18 May – 12 June

Sushi Art Train
 Various artists
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Bruce Armstrong: *Tiny Eagle* – Bronze

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LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

(cover)

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Self-portrait in a cap, wide-eyed and open-mouthed 1630
etching, 2nd state
5.0 × 4.5 cm
Bartsch 320, Hind 32;
White & Boon 320, NHD ii/ii
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Transfer, 1816 (RP-P-OB-697)
Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Abraham Francen, apothecary c. 1657
etching, engraving and drypoint on Japanese paper, 4th state
15.8 × 20.9 cm (plate),
15.9 × 21.0 cm (sheet)
Bartsch 273; Hind 291 iv/ix;
White & Boon 273 iv/x; NHD 301 iv/xii
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Proposed acquisition, 2023

pp. 16–17

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Abraham Francen, apothecary c. 1657
etching, engraving and drypoint on Japanese paper, 4th state
15.8 × 20.9 cm (plate),
15.9 × 21.0 cm (sheet)
Bartsch 273; Hind 291 iv/ix;
White & Boon 273 iv/x; NHD 301 iv/xii
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Proposed acquisition, 2023

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Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Abraham Francen, apothecary c. 1657
etching, engraving and drypoint on Japanese paper, 4th state
15.8 × 20.9 cm (plate),
15.9 × 21.0 cm (sheet)
Bartsch 273; Hind 291 iv/ix;
White & Boon 273 iv/x; NHD 301 iv/xii
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Proposed acquisition, 2023

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Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Portrait of a white-haired man 1667
oil on canvas
108.9 × 92.7 cm
Bredius/Gerson 323; RRP VI 315
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1951 (2372-4)

p. 25

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Self-portrait 1659
oil on canvas
84.5 × 66.0 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Andrew W. Mellon Collection (1937.1.72)
Photo: National Gallery of Art,
Washington DC

p. 27

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Three heads of women, one lightly etched
c. 1637
etching, 3rd state
12.7 × 10.2 cm (sheet, trimmed
to platemark)
Bartsch 367; Hind 153 ii/ii;
White & Boon 367 iii/iii; NHD 162 iii/iii
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1961

p. 28

Abraham Bosse

Treatise on the ways of engraving on copper... 1701, first published 1645
illustrated book: letterpress text and etched illustrations
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1962

pp. 30–31

Salvador Dalí

conceived in 1937–38, executed by Green & Abbott 1938
Mae West lips sofa
wool, horsehair, wood and metal
77.0x 205.7 × 96 cm
2023 NGV Annual Appeal in memory of Robert J. Wylde, 2023

p. 47

Pierre Bonnard

The window (La Fenêtre) 1925
oil on canvas
108.6 × 88.6 cm
Tate, London
Presented by Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill through the Contemporary Art Society, 1930 (N04494)
Photo © Tate

p. 48–9

Pierre Bonnard

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

Pierre Bonnard

Coffee (Le Café) 1915
oil on canvas
73.0 × 106.5 cm
Tate, London
Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the NACF, 1941 (N05414)
Photo © Tate

Pierre Bonnard

White interior (Le Cannel) (Intérieur blanc [Le Cannel]) 1932
oil on canvas
109.5 × 155.8 cm
Musée de Grenoble
Acquired, 1933 (MG 2682)
Photo: Ville de Grenoble / Musée de Grenoble – J. L. Lacroix

p. 53

Kenny Pittock

My red wine 2022
acrylic on ceramic
Courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery, Melbourne
© Kenny Pittock and MARS Gallery, Melbourne

p. 54

Matthew Clarke

Lost in Melbourne Zoo 2022
colour linocut; ed. 1/15
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2022
© Matthew Clarke
Printed by Glenn Morgan

p. 55

Sanja Pahoki

How to lift me up 2022
giclée prints
Courtesy of Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne
© Sanja Pahoki and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

p. 56

Ashley Perry

Sentinels 2021
inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist
© Ashley Perry

p. 57

Lisa Reid

The old fashioned cash register with the old paper dollar notes and coins 2018
glazed earthenware
Courtesy of the artist and Arts Projects Australia
© Lisa Reid and Arts Project Australia

p. 60

Ying Ang

Untitled 2022
from *The Quickening* series 2019–
monotype
Courtesy of the artist
© Ying Ang

p. 63

Shaun Gladwell

Homo Suburbensis 2020 (still)
HD video, 16:9, colour, sound
© Shaun Gladwell. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery

Shaun Gladwell

Passing electrical storms 2023
© Shaun Gladwell. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery
Photo: Sean Fennessy

pp. 70–71

Takahiro Iwasaki

Reflection model (Itsukushima) 2013
from the *Reflection model* series 2001–
cypress, adhesive
(a-b) 139.0 × 783.0 × 864.0 cm (variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 2014
© Takahiro Iwasaki, courtesy of the artist and ARATANIURANO

p. 84–85 & p. 86

Ellis Rowan

Unknown (manufacturer)
Australian wildflowers c. 1890
four-panel folding screen: watercolour and gouache on grey paper, Pine (*Pinus sp.*), wood, glass, silk (velvet), paper, string, wallpaper, brass
188.0 × 64.2 × 13.0 cm (closed)
188.0 × W × D cm (open) (installed)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022

p. 92

Louise Bourgeois

Cell (Glass spheres and hands) 1990–93
glass, iron, wood, linoleum, canvas, marble
(a-m) 219.5 × 218.8 × 220.0 cm (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with the assistance of the Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest, 1995
© The Easton Foundation/VAGA at ARS. Artists Rights Society [ARS]/Copyright Agency, 2023

p. 102

Beth Pert

Mycotoxins 2022
charcoal powder on paper, colour digital projection, sound
(1) 450.0 cm × 114.0 cm (2) 2 min, 35 sec
Melbourne Girls College, Richmond
© Beth Pert

p. 106

Catherine Opie

Oliver in a tutu 2004
C-type print
24.0 × 20.0 cm
© Catherine Opie, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, London, and Seoul

LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

ENDNOTES

pp.16–19

All about Abraham Franzen

1. It was published as autograph by Wilhelm Bode, *The Complete Work of Rembrandt: History, Description and Heliographic Reproduction of all the Master's Pictures, with a Study of His Life and His Art*, C. Sedelmeyer, Paris, 1897, vol. VII, no. 500. Since then, it has been published as autograph in every catalogue of Rembrandt paintings.
2. The Felton Bequest paid £37,000. J. R. Poynter, *Mr Felton's Bequests*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2003, p. 486.
3. Albert Blankert, *Rembrandt: A Genius and His Impact*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and Art Exhibitions Australia, Waanders, Melbourne, Sydney, Zwolle, 1997, pp. 181–2.
4. Blankert, fn 1, p. 182.

pp. 26–9

The people behind the portraits

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2. F. Lugt, *Les marques de collections de dessins et d'estampes*, entries 1787, 1788, 1789 and 1790, 1921, pp. 321–2. Kristel Smenkek, *Mariette and the Science of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Routledge, 2014, p. 37.
3. James Watrous, *The craft of Old-Master drawings*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1957, p. 71.
4. Mark Stevenson, 'Print restoration in northern Europe: development, traditions and literature from the late Renaissance to the 1930s', in *Studies in the History of Art, 51 Monograph Series II*, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1995, p. 114.

pp. 40–4

India Mahdavi: the joy of design

1. Lauren Collins, 'India Mahdavi, virtuoso of color', *The New Yorker*, 12 Mar. 2018, <www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/03/19/india-mahdavi-virtuoso-of-color>, accessed 6 Mar. 2020.
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pp. 45–9

The Interior Space

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2. S. Freud, (1917) 'Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 16, trans. James Strachey, 1974, London: The Hogarth Press, London, p. 336–7.
3. Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 38.
4. Amory, Dita, ed. *Pierre Bonnard: The Late Still Lifes and Interiors*, Met Publications, 2009
5. Amory, Dita, ed. *Pierre Bonnard: The Late Still Lifes and Interiors*, Met Publications, 2009

pp. 78–81

Ballad of the bibliophile

1. Alfred Felton: will; grant of probate, 6 February 1904, Public Record Office of Victoria: Master in Equity, Supreme Court; VPRS 7591/P0002, Wills, 89/983, p. 6. See also J Poynter, *Mr Felton's Bequests*, Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2003, chap. 13, esp. p. 233.

pp. 84–6

Painter, plant hunter

1. Rare Flowers on Canvas, *The New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1898, <<https://www.nytimes.com/1898/01/16/archives/rare-flowers-on-canvas-mrs-ellis-rowan-has-a-wonderful-collection.html>>, date accessed 24 Jan. 2023.
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LINDSAY, Norman (1879-1969) Oil study for Amazons (ca. 1939). Douglas Stewart Fine Books
William and Mary Chest of Drawers, early 18th century. The Antique Guild

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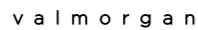
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Deborah Klein *Three women* 2021 (detail), synthetic polymer paint on canvas. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat. © the artist



Detail from WA1965.89 Marie Spartali Stillman, 'Cloister Lilies'. Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

artgalleryofballarat.com.au

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