Australia is the most significant survey of Australian art ever mounted in the UK. Focusing on the influence of the landscape, Australia spans more than 200 years from 1800 to the present day and features 146 artists with over 200 works, including paintings, drawings, photography, watercolours and multimedia. This ambitious exhibition brings together works from the most important public collections in Australia, the majority of which have never been seen in the UK before.

HRH The Prince of Wales, who is the Patron of the exhibition, said: “I can hardly believe that it is now almost fifty years since I first visited Australia. It was during that first stay that, like many before me, I was deeply struck by the distinctive colours and light of Mackellar’s ‘sunburnt country’… It is an extraordinary achievement that the Royal Academy of Arts and the National Gallery of Australia have been able to bring together so many important works for the first time outside Australia.”

The story of Australian art is inextricably linked to its landscape: an ancient land of dramatic beauty, a source of production, enjoyment, relaxation and inspiration, yet seemingly loaded with mystery and danger. For Australian artists, this deep connection with the landscape has provided a rich seam of inspiration for centuries. In 1948, the Australian artist, and Royal Academician, Sidney Nolan (1917-92) said of his iconic Ned Kelly series that it was ‘a story arising out of the bush and ending in the bush’. He believed strongly that an understanding of landscape was central to his work, giving meaning to place, and commented that he found ‘the desire to paint the landscape involves a wish to hear more of the stories that take place in the landscape’.

The exhibition maps the period of rapid and intense change; from the impact of the first settlers and colonisation on the indigenous people to the pioneering nation-building of the nineteenth century, through to the enterprising urbanisation of the last century. Reflecting the vastness of the land and the diversity of its people, early, as well as contemporary Aboriginal art sits alongside the work of the first colonial settlers, immigrant artists of the twentieth century and the work of some of today’s most established Australian artists.

The exhibition includes works by Aboriginal artists such as Albert Namatjira (1902-59), Rover Thomas (c.1926-98), Emily Kame Kngwarreye (1910-96) and a number of artists from the Papunya Tula group of the Western Desert. Nineteenth century European immigrants such as John Glover (1767-1849) and Eugene von Guérard (1811-1901) also feature, as well as the Australian Impressionists whose paintings relied heavily on the mythology of the Australian bush: Arthur Streeton (1867-1943), Tom Roberts (1856-1931), a student of the Royal Academy Schools, Charles Conder (1868-1909) and Frederick
McCubbin (1855-1917). Early Modernists such as Margaret Preston (1875-1963), Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984) and Roy de Maistre (1894-1968) hang alongside the leading twentieth-century painters: Arthur Boyd (1920-99), Albert Tucker (1914-99), Rosalie Gascoigne (1917-99), Fred Williams (1927-82), Brett Whiteley (1939-92) and Sidney Nolan RA. The exhibition ends in the twenty-first century with internationally recognised artists such as Bill Henson (b.1955), Gordon Bennett (b.1955), Tracey Moffatt (b.1960), Fiona Hall (b.1953) Shaun Gladwell (b.1972), Christian Thompson (b.1978) and Simryn Gill (b.1959) who represented Australia at the Venice Biennale this year.

Highlights include Frederick McCubbin’s *The Pioneer*, 1904 (National Gallery of Victoria); four paintings from Sidney Nolan’s *Ned Kelly* series, 1946 (National Gallery of Australia); Rover Thomas’ *Cyclone Tracy*, 1991 (National Gallery of Australia); Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s *Big Yam Dreaming*, 1995 (National Gallery of Victoria) and Shaun Gladwell’s video *Approach to Mundi Mundi*, 2007 (Art Gallery of New South Wales, John Kaldor Family Collection). Judy Watson has been commissioned to create *Fire and Water*, a new sculpture for the Royal Academy’s Annenberg Courtyard.

**Australia** aims to evoke a sense of the distinctiveness of the Australian landscape whilst considering the art historical developments and contributions of Australian art across the last two centuries. It shows how in the nineteenth century an exploration of national identity allowed artists a freedom to define themselves, away from the rules of the European tradition. That focus on the landscape and its complex, deep-rooted connections to national identity, has continued in the work of Australian artists to the present day.

Christopher Le Brun, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, said: “The Royal Academy is delighted to be working in partnership with the National Gallery of Australia and we would like to thank them, together with the other public collections, for loaning their works. Without their support, and that of the Australian High Commission in London, this exhibition would not be possible. HRH The Prince of Wales’ patronage of the exhibition acknowledges the ambitious scale of the project and the close links that the UK and Australia continue to share today.”

Dr Ron Radford AM, Director of the National Gallery of Australia said: “This partnership between the Royal Academy of Arts and the National Gallery of Australia is a great opportunity to present Australia’s strong visual arts tradition, particularly that of land and landscape, both indigenous and non-indigenous, to audiences in Europe.”

**Organisation**

Exhibition organised with the National Gallery of Australia. The exhibition has been curated by Kathleen Soriano, Director of Exhibitions, Royal Academy of Arts, Dr Ron Radford AM, Director of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and Dr Anna Gray, Head of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
National Gallery of Australia
The National Gallery of Australia in Canberra is home to the Australian national art collection, comprising the world's largest collection and display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and extensive holdings of international art from America, including Jackson Pollock's famous *Blue Poles* 1952, along with a major collection of art from the Indian sub-continent, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. It has outstanding collection displays, touring exhibitions as well as major international exhibitions, and many public programs and events that increase access to and enjoyment of the visual arts among Australian and international audiences. [www.nga.gov.au](http://www.nga.gov.au)

Qantas
Qantas Airways, the Spirit of Australia is proud to support the Royal Academy of Arts ‘Australia’ exhibition. The world's oldest continuously operating airline, Qantas is a premium airline and is widely respected for its outstanding reputation for excellence in safety, customer service and technical innovation. Recently awarded ‘Best Airline in Australia-Pacific’ by Skytrax, Qantas operates double-daily services to Dubai and Australia with its award-winning four class A380 aircraft. Customers flying with Qantas benefit from a seamless network and world class travel experiences including First, Business, Premium Economy and Economy classes designed by award-winning designer Marc Newson, on-board menu by renowned Australian chef, Neil Perry and the ‘Best Overall Wine List’ of any airline in the world as awarded by the 2012 ‘Cellars in the Sky’ Awards. A new uniform by Australian fashion designer Martin Grant will be rolled out across the airline from early 2014. For flights to Australia make your next destination qantas.com

The Campaign for Wool
The Woolmark Company and Campaign for Wool are proud to be supporters of the Royal Academy of Arts’ ‘Australia’ exhibition, the largest collection of Australian art ever seen outside of the continent. The Woolmark Company is the world’s leading wool textile organisation and is the global authority on Merino wool, collaborating with Australian farmers to help them grow and harvest wool to the very highest standards. This unique exhibition celebrates in part the role that the wool industry has played in forming both the landscape and culture of the nation. Australia is the world’s largest producer of merino wool and many images in the exhibition contain reference to the wool industry, making the collection on display a perfect foil to Campaign for Wool. Campaign for Wool is proud to have the Patronage of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

Media Partner
THE TIMES

Catalogue
*Australia* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring essays by Wally Caruana, Franchesca Cubillo, Anne Gray, Deborah Hart, Thomas Keneally, Ron Radford, Kathleen Soriano and Daniel Thomas.

Dates
Open to public: Saturday 21 September – Sunday 8 December 2013
10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night opening: Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)
Admission
£14 full price; concessions available; children under 12 free; Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets
Tickets for Australia are available daily at the RA or by visiting www.royalacademy.org.uk. Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk

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About the Royal Academy of Arts
The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

For public information please print 020 7300 8000 and www.royalacademy.org.uk
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