Richard LARTER

a retrospective

Canberra only 20 June – 14 September 2008

The National Gallery of Australia is an Australian Government Agency
Jan Billycan (Djan Nanundie)
Yulparija people, All the Jila
2006
Acrylic binder with Langridge dry pigment and marble dust on plywood.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 2007 © Jan Billycan (Djan Nanundie)
Director's foreword

A walk through Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape

Foundation and Development

Masterpieces for the Nation Fund appeal 2008

Painted in words: the James Gleeson oral history collection

Richard Larter: a retrospective

Royal court photography in Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s

Pacific arts: highlights from the National Gallery of Australia collection

Treating the costume for a squid

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New acquisitions

Culture Warriors on tour

Travelling exhibitions

Faces in view

Cover: Tamil Nadu, India. Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja). 11th–12th century bronze. 128.5 x 106.0 x 40.0 cm. Purchased with the assistance of the National Gallery of Australia Foundation 2008
The staging of the groundbreaking exhibition *Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape* is a great event in our recent history. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd honoured the Gallery by opening the exhibition to the public on 14 March 2008. It has been a huge success and has exceeded our expectations. The National Gallery of Australia is its only venue, and only days remain before the exhibition closes on 9 June to see these stunning works, which trace the rise of nineteenth-century landscape painting. *Turner to Monet*, among other things, presents for the first time Australian nineteenth-century landscape painters in the context of their great European and American contemporaries. You will not see works by all these artists together again as the exhibition is drawn from forty collections from around the world. The exhibition, curated by Christine Dixon, Senior Curator, International Painting and Sculpture, Lucina Ward, Curator, International Painting and Sculpture, and me, is generously supported by Channel Nine and Art Indemnity.

The Gallery has recently acquired a rare, large and exquisite Shiva Nataraja sculpture from the Indian Chola dynasty (ninth–thirteenth centuries) and it is a pivotal image for our special Indian gallery. Shiva, the great god of destruction, is depicted performing the Dance of Bliss, which destroys in order to recreate the universe. In this quintessential Hindu image, Shiva is surrounded by a halo of flames as he crushes the dwarf of ignorance underfoot. A masterpiece of Chola bronze casting, the sculpture was created in south India around the eleventh and twelfth centuries – the high point of bronze casting in India. The skills of Chola artists are evident, as is the elegance and sensuality of the sculpture of this period. At one hundred and thirty centimetres in height, the new *Shiva Nataraja* is one of the largest Shiva Nataraja sculptures from the period in existence. The image of the dancing Shiva represents the most powerful and popular image in Indian art. We appreciate the generous support of the Foundation and also the proceeds from the 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner, which made this important acquisition possible.

The Gallery has also acquired a ten-panel work by Australian artist Rosalie Gascoigne. *Earth* 1999 is Gascoigne’s final assemblage series and is now a highlight of the Australian galleries. It is made from sheets of formboard, used in building and construction work. Her earlier works were often mixed-media, incorporating other materials and found objects, but *Earth* is an assemblage of form-boards alone. This evocative work has a strangely still, meditative quality despite its large scale. Rosalie Gascoigne had a long-standing relationship with the Gallery and has gifted a number of works in the past. This latest gift by her husband Ben Gascoigne, AO, and the Gascoigne family is in the spirit of her generosity, and is a strikingly important contribution to our contemporary Australian collection. Ben Gascoigne formally presented the two million dollar gift at the Gallery in March.

Another interesting new acquisition is the Tasmanian double-ended sofa, a major colonial example of the Regency-period style of the early nineteenth century. Probably dating from the late 1820s, it is one of our earliest Tasmanian works. This fine neoclassical sofa crafted from Australian cedar is now on display with other examples of colonial furniture from Tasmania and New South Wales and with new works from our expanding colonial silver collection.

From 20 June to 14 September the National Gallery of Australia celebrates the work of Richard Larter, one of Australia’s most provocative artists and remarkable colourists. Larter spent most of his career on the outskirts of Sydney and in Yass and now lives in Canberra. At the age of 79, Larter continues to paint prolifically, having achieved a significant local and national profile over many decades. This retrospective exhibition will cover his artistic practice from the late 1950s to the present, and will include a room dedicated to his most tireless subject, his late wife Pat Larter. His unflinching and unapologetic study of the human body and sexuality, and his fascination with popular culture and politics, will make this a sharply engaging exhibition. Curated by Deborah Hart, Senior Curator, Australian Painting and Sculpture after 1920, this retrospective brings together works from public and private collections to represent five decades of Larter’s career.

*Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s* is the first ever comparative survey exhibition of the history of photography of our Asia–Pacific region. The exhibition reveals the beauty and cultural diversity throughout South and Southeast Asia, Australia and the Pacific, and chronicles the developments in photography during the first century of its existence in the region.

The significant portion of native-born photographers in the exhibition is a highlight – including Lala Deen Dayal, Kusakabe Kimbei, Francis Chit, Kassian Cephas and Ichiki Shir. Their contribution to the history of the medium in the region is often overlooked in favour of significant foreign photographers such as Samuel Bourne and Scot John Thomson. The works of both local and foreign photographers working in our region are brought together in *Picture paradise* to allow a greater understanding of the rise of photography in Asia and the Pacific. The majority of the more than four hundred and fifty photographs included
are from the Gallery’s extensive collection, most of which has been acquired recently. The exhibition is presented in conjunction with Vivid, Australia’s inaugural National Photography Festival, which celebrates photography’s vital role in Australian life and history. Curated by Gael Newton, Senior Curator, Photography, the exhibition is on display in the Exhibition Galleries from 11 July.

I am also pleased to announce that the Gallery’s successful inaugural National Indigenous Art Triennial, Culture Warriors, will begin its tour to state venues in Adelaide on 20 June. The exhibition then opens in Perth in September and the Australian tour will end in Brisbane in 2009. A tour of the exhibition to the United States has also been set for late 2009. Generously sponsored by BHP Billiton, the exhibition highlights innovative Indigenous works of art – some using traditional materials in highly original ways, some revitalising cultural practices, and others tantalising us with contemporary technologies and cross-cultural references. We are very proud of the partnerships with state institutions and government bodies, and BHP Billiton.

Since 2003, the Gallery’s Foundation has been very successful in raising funds from private individuals through the Masterpieces for the Nation Fund appeal. The appeal provides an opportunity for anyone and everyone to help the Gallery acquire major works of art for the national collection. Since the appeal was launched in 2003, the generosity of donors has allowed the Gallery to purchase significant works such as Jeffery Smart’s Lovers by house 1956, WC Pigenet’s Near Liverpool, New South Wales c. 1908 and William Robinson’s Creation landscape – fountains of the Earth 2002. This year, we are asking for support for a major contemporary Aboriginal painting and an Indian painting. The works are Doreen Reid Nakamarra’s Untitled 2007, which was displayed lying flat just above the ground in Culture Warriors in 2007, and a stunning and lively nineteenth-century Indian pichhavai. Please see pages 8–11 for more information on the appeal and the works.

I hope you had the chance to enjoy the many exciting events at the Gallery during autumn, particularly the extensive program of events associated with Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape. Winter brings many more opportunities to attend special events and to engage with artists, curators and educators.
Donations

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Australia Council for the Arts through the Showcasing the Best international strategy and through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Visual Arts Board and Community Partnerships and Market Development (International) Board
The Gordon Darling Foundation
Visions of Australia through its Contemporary Touring Initiative, an Australian Government program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance for the development and touring of Australian cultural material across Australia, and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian Government, and state and territory governments

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Vincent van Gogh
Tree trunks in the grass 1890 (detail) oil on canvas 72.5 x 91.5 cm Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo

TURNER TO MONET
THE TRIUMPH OF LANDSCAPE

CANBERRA ONLY 14 MARCH – 9 JUNE 2008  NGAGOV.AU

national gallery of australia
JMW Turner’s large and impressive painting *Crossing the brook* exhibited 1815 announces the historical precedents for nineteenth-century landscape painting. We are led gently into a silvery, light-filled scene framed by trees; in the dappled foreground, two female figures and a dog provide us with a narrative focus. Despite these carefully crafted devices, this is not a mythical scene but an image of modern Britain triumphant, although almost bankrupted by the Napoleonic Wars. Elsewhere in the exhibition’s first room, themes of the pastoral and the picturesque are examined in watercolour and oil paintings. Portraits of great estates, scenes of rural labour and classical compositions demonstrate the lasting impact of the great seventeenth-century landscape artist Claude Lorain.

From the 1790s, artists in Britain, Germany and France began to paint outside, *en plein air*. John Constable, Wilhelm Kobell and Camille Corot show a bold naturalism that sets them apart from academic artists, and their studies provide insights into artistic practices of the time. Painters have always prepared rapid visual notations of first impressions – details of a scene and drawings to aid working up compositions in the studio – however, they were traditionally regarded as private works and were rarely for public display. Constable’s cloud studies and emphasis on atmospheric conditions in many of his finished paintings reveal his conviction that the sky was the ‘chief organ of sentiment’. It is generally accepted that Constable was influenced by British meteorologist Luke Howard’s classification system, which was published in 1803. Less well-known is that the Dresden artists centred around Caspar David Friedrich were also exposed to Howard’s pioneering work via Goethe’s poem ‘To the honoured memory of Howard’ 1820. Small oils by Constable hang beside exquisite paintings by Friedrich, Johan Christian Dahl and Carl Gustav Carus, providing visual evidence of the influence of these new scientific ideas on art.

Romantic painters convey the spectacle of nature through images of vast alpine scenes, stormy seas and sunsets, as well as single figures and isolated trees. Turner’s magnificent late paintings are well represented in the exhibition. Two early masterpieces by Friedrich emphasise the differences between German and British notions of the Sublime. In *View of the Elbe Valley* c. 1807 and *Dolmen in the snow* 1807, the artist employs dualities – evergreen spruces and deciduous oaks, summer and winter, life and death, Christian eternal life and a pagan past. Despite or perhaps because of their extraordinary quietude, these paintings evoke strong emotions. Friedrich’s exact technique does not imply a literalist approach to landscape: his oils were composed using drawings made in a range of places on his sketching tours. Nature was viewed by many artists as a means to understand God’s project but the emergent discipline of geology also led to a questioning of the nature of Creation.

The export of landscape traditions to new terrains is examined in the next room. Paintings of the immigrant artists Eugene von Guérard and Nicholas Chevalier – who travelled on scientific expeditions to the Australian Alps, the Arapiles and to New Zealand – are juxtaposed with those of Frederic Church, Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt, striking images of newly explored areas of South America and the western regions of the United States. *Hot springs of the Yellowstone* 1872 represents a merger of art, science and commerce. Moran’s paintings of the first national park,
and the prints produced after them, feed an enthusiasm for tourism.

Back in the Old World, radicals such as Gustave Courbet reinvented the very nature of painting. He made grand ‘history paintings’ from the events of daily life and chose highly localised subjects for his landscapes, rendering them in a painterly manner regarded by his contemporaries as coarse. In *Source of the Lison* 1864 Courbet brings us close to the rocky cliffs and mysterious cave, cutting off any conventional vistas or view of the sky; the paint is applied thickly, with a palette knife, to accentuate the materiality of the subject. Courbet adopts a limited, almost claustrophobic vocabulary of motifs, and two of his other best known subjects, a wave and seascape at Trouville, also feature in *Turner to Monet*.

Increasingly, as the nineteenth century progressed, signs of industrial life became visible. Haystacks, small villages and scenes of rural life provided everyday subjects, although these were treated in a new way. Artists such as Tom Roberts and Camille Pissarro observed city streets from high viewpoints, an innovation perhaps prompted by photography.

The Impressionists’ first exhibition took place at the studio of the photographer Nadar in 1874. In the exhibition *Turner to Monet*, Monet’s canvases include subjects often addressed by the artist – haystacks, the Seine in winter, rocks at Belle-Île, and Waterloo Bridge. Monet experimented with renditions of different times of day and conditions of weather, painting the changing colours of light. As the nineteenth century came to an end, radical ideas about the abstract nature of art and reality infused the work of Georges Seurat, Paul Gauguin and Jan Toorop, all of whom investigate arbitrary colour and patterning to remake the world. The glorious *Tree trunks in the grass* 1890 also shows the impact of these new ways of looking. By replacing the conventional panorama of land, horizon and sky with a closely cropped view, Vincent van Gogh uses part of a motif to stand in for the whole.

At the opening for *Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape*, visiting curators explored many of these ideas. Dr Jenns Howoldt, head of the Gallery of the 19th Century, Hamburger Kunsthalle, illuminated links between art and science in German Romantic painting, discussing the ways Friedrich and his circle immersed themselves in landscape and produced works that are wilfully anti-picturesque. Some of these themes were developed by the National Gallery of Victoria’s Dr Ted Gott, who examined Thomas Moran’s collaboration with expedition photographer William Henry Jackson. Dr Charlotte Eyerman, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Saint Louis Art Museum, provided an energetic and discursive exploration of the changing ‘what and how’ of landscape painting. Other overseas colleagues who accompanied works to Canberra commented on the ambitious nature of the project, the high quality of the loans secured and the new insights offered by the juxtapositions of these various landscape traditions. Many visitors have taken advantage of the late-night openings on Saturdays and the full range of talks and events organised to complement the exhibition.

Lucina Ward
Curator, International Painting and Sculpture
The National Gallery of Australia’s twenty-fifth birthday celebrations continued in full swing throughout autumn with the opening of two significant exhibitions, *Australian Surrealism: the Agapitos/Wilson collection* and *Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape*.

**Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape**

Nine Network Australia

We welcome and extend our gratitude to Nine Network Australia for their most generous support as the principal sponsor of *Turner to Monet: the triumph of landscape*; in particular, its Chief Executive Officer David Gyngell. Sponsorship of this kind and at this level is essential to the successful delivery of an exhibition like *Turner to Monet*, ensuring a promotional campaign that will reach all Australians and visitors to Australia and bring them to Canberra.

Like, David Gyngell, the Nine Network’s Andrew Mulready, Director of Sales, and Jean Jenkins, Director of Marketing, and their teams have been invaluable in their professionalism and enthusiastic support for the project.

Art Indemnity Australia

The assistance of Art Indemnity Australia, the Australian Government’s art indemnity scheme through which loans to the exhibition have been indemnified, has been invaluable. Without this support this extraordinarily valuable exhibition could not have taken place. We are pleased *Turner to Monet* will commemorate the one hundredth exhibition Art Indemnity Australia has supported.

Adshel

We also welcome Adshel to the National Gallery of Australia as a new sponsor and thank them for their generous support of *Turner to Monet*. Adshel have provided a high quality and prominent street promotion campaign that will ensure high visibility of the exhibition in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

**Australian Surrealism: the Agapitos/Wilson collection**

Agapitos/Wilson Bequest

A dinner was held following the opening of *Australian Surrealism* to honour the generosity of Ray Wilson, OAM, and the late James Agapitos, OAM, who had gifted to the Gallery. Their friends and family and Her Excellency Marie Bashir and Sir Nicholas Shehadie were among those who attended. Ray Wilson delivered a poignant speech, announcing the $2 million Agapitos/Wilson bequest and encouraging supporters of the Gallery to follow suit. Such extraordinary generous acts of benefaction not only directly benefit the institution but also endorse the role and significance of the national collection.

Foundation Interstate Dinner – Perth

The Patron of the Foundation, Governor-General Michael Jeffery, AC, CVO, MC, has been participating in Foundation events in each state and territory. The purpose of these events is to reaffirm the national status of the Foundation by engaging with supporters from around Australia. In April, Foundation member and national icon Kerry Stokes generously hosted a dinner in Perth, which was attended by His Excellency the Governor General and Mrs Marlena Jeffery. The dinner was very successful as an initial function to engage with current and prospective Perth donors.

**25th Anniversary Gala Dinner**

The 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Gallery was held on Friday 11 April 2008. Guests donated towards an anniversary gift, which was unveiled on the evening: a stunning Chola-dynasty bronze, *Shiva as Lord of the Dance* (*Nataraja*) (on the cover of this issue). However, to complement this generosity, we are still seeking a significant benefactor who will receive naming rights in perpetuity. For more information on this remarkable sculpture see pages 42–3.

**National Australia Bank**

We were very proud to launch the children’s booklet Discover the National Australia Bank Sculpture Gallery at the Sculpture Garden Sunday event on 9 March 2008. Greg Evans, Senior Partner, NAB Business, officially launched the publication and joined over one and a half thousand people – children, parents and grandparents – in the Sculpture Garden and the National Australia Bank Sculpture Gallery (with booklet in hand). All were making cardboard castles, twisted PVC-pipe sculptures, ‘heads’ that floated in the Sculpture Garden pond, clay sculptures inspired by Henry Moore’s sculpture and a painted mural. Easels and artists were all through the garden. We are very pleased
and privileged to be able to work with our valued naming rights sponsor, the National Australia Bank, to publish this booklet, which draws people in to discover the magic of sculpture and the national collection.

**Corporate Members Program**

We are very proud and delighted to welcome Champagne Pol Roger as the premium wine sponsor of *Turner to Monet*. The spirit of the company is a hallmark for excellence, and echoes the spirit of the exhibition: a respect for nature, a devotion to quality and a certain *joie de vivre*. The opening of the exhibition was made even more memorable with the presence of this wonderful champagne and also that of the fine wine sponsor Yalumba and accommodation provider Saville Park Suites.

We are grateful to and thank the following for their continued corporate support: The Brassey of Canberra, Casella Wines Pty Limited and The Forrest Hotel and Apartments.

Thank you to all of our benefactors and sponsors who have supported the National Gallery of Australia during our twenty-fifth anniversary. If you would like more information about the Foundation, please contact the Foundation Executive Director Annalisa Millar on (02) 6240 6691.

For enquiries regarding sponsorship and development, please contact the Head of Development and Membership Belinda Cotton on (02) 6240 6556.

**Twenty-fifth Anniversary Gift Program**

The Gallery is delighted with the acts of benefaction from Council and Foundation members, corporate sponsors and many donors. Many significant donations have been received, assisting the Gallery to acquire important works of art to strengthen the national collection. The target of $25 million by the end of 2008 is very achievable at this stage. For further information, please contact the Foundation Office on (02) 6240 6454.

**Masterpieces for the Nation Fund appeal 2008**

Please see the following pages for more information about the Masterpieces for the Nation Fund appeal 2008. To make a donation, please fill in the enclosed form or contact the Foundation Office on (02) 6240 6454.
One of the most successful regular fund-raising programs of the National Gallery of Australia’s Foundation is the annual Masterpieces for the Nation Fund appeal. This program was initiated in 2003 and has assisted the Gallery to acquire five significant works of art for the national collection.

William Robinson’s *Creation landscape – fountains of the earth* 2002 was the first work to be offered for this appeal. This magnificent landscape depicting the rainforest of far north Queensland confirmed that there were many donors who would like to contribute to acquisitions for the national collection. A more traditional Australian work, WC Piguenit’s *Near Liverpool, New South Wales* c. 1908, was selected in 2005, and in 2006 the very popular art nouveau painting Sydney Long’s *Flamingoes* c. 1905–06 was selected. Last year, people could donate towards an Indian work, *Festival of the cattle [Gopashtami]*, as well as Jeffrey Smart’s early painting *Lovers by house* 1956.

This year we are delighted to announce that donors will have the choice of two works: Doreen Reid Nakamara’s *Untitled 2007* and an eighteenth-century Indian *pichhavai* (shrine hanging), *Autumn moon festival [Sharad Purnima]*.

Nakamara’s *Untitled* is the first Indigenous work chosen for the appeal. It was featured in last year’s highly successful inaugural National Indigenous Art Triennial.

Last year, donors who attended Robyn Maxwell’s fascinating lecture on the Gopashtami were asked to vote on whether they would like another Indian work for the 2008 Masterpieces for the Nation Fund appeal. They were so intrigued by the lecture that they unanimously voted that a *pichhavai* be included in this year’s appeal.

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**Sydney Long**

*Flamingoes* c. 1905–06  
Oil on canvas  
30.6 x 61.0 cm

**Jeffrey Smart**

*Lovers by house* 1956  
Oil on board  
30.5 x 38.0 cm

**WC Piguenit**

*Near Liverpool, New South Wales* c. 1908  
Oil on canvas  
74.2 x 125.0 cm
Doreen Reid Nakamarra  
Untitled  2007
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
183.0 x 244.0 cm

Doreen Reid Nakamarra is a young Pintupi/Ngaatjatjarra artist who has an extraordinary vision of her country. Her use of contrasting colour, tone and line take you on a virtual journey across her traditional country. Her expert use of zigzags of varying lengths give the sense of movement and show the tali (sand hills) around Marrapinti, a significant rock hole site to Nakamarra. She stunningly executes the hills and valleys of the sand hills and alludes to the shifting nature of this environment.

This particular work depicts the travels of several Nangala and Napangati ancestral women who, while camping at Marrapinti, had a women's ceremony and pierced the nasal septum of some younger participating women with nose bones (marrapinti) before travelling north-east to Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay). Nakamarra’s extraordinary attention to detail is hypnotic and can, in some cases, cause motion sickness after extended viewing.

Nakamarra was one of thirty Indigenous artists whose work was featured in Culture Warriors, the inaugural National Indigenous Art Triennial at the National Gallery of Australia in October 2007. Her works were highlighted as some of the visitors’ favourites in the exhibition, especially this work, which was displayed on a plinth on the ground and gave a true sense of movement over her country.

Nakamarra is a polite and quiet woman who will no doubt be a very exciting artist to watch in years to come. The Gallery currently has two works by Nakamarra, and this work will be a significant addition to the collection.

Tina Baum
Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art
Autumn moon festival [Sharad Purnima]

Vibrant, finely painted Indian *pichhavai* (shrine hangings), particularly those depicting divine blue-skinned Krishna, have become a central focus of the Gallery's Asian art collection. This *pichhavai* served as a shrine backdrop for the Sharad Purnima (autumn moon festival), which celebrates Krishna's legendary dance with the *gopis* (milkmaids). It is an important ceremony in the devotional calendar of the Vallabha Hindu sect. An avatar of Vishnu, Krishna was born to oppose evil. He grew up in a cow-herding village in India and was adored for his mischievous personality and miraculous deeds.

At the centre of the painting, Krishna appears as Shri Nathji, flanked by adoring *gopis*. The imagery refers to the lifting of Mount Govardhana and Krishna's *rasa lila* (dance of love). As a child, Krishna played a trick on the god of heaven and rain, Indra, who retaliated with a great storm. Krishna then lifted Mount Govardhana to shelter the cows and herders of his village. In a symbolic distillation of this myth, Shri Nathji is the image of Krishna with left arm raised. Later, as a young man, Krishna enticed the *gopis* to dance beneath the autumn moon and magically multiplied himself so that each enthralled woman believed herself to be with him alone. In this painting, the *gopis*, with hennaed hands, appear to be suspended in motion. Indra, Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu float in chariots against the starry sky, and the silver moon hovers above Krishna in characteristic flamboyant costume.

Central to Vallabha belief is *darshana* (seeing the divine). At the sect's main temple in Nathdwara, a sacred statue of Shri Nathji is adorned for eight formal viewings a day. Vallabha followers consider Krishna a living deity and they feed, clothe, bathe and entertain images of the god. *Darshanas* are elaborate theatrical displays with costumed sculptures, colourful *pichhavai*, sumptuous textiles, flowers and religious paraphernalia. An insight into Vallabha ritual, the border of this *pichhavai* comprises scenes of seasonal Krishna festivals.

Lucie Folan
Curator, Asian Art

To contribute to the acquisition of one or both of these remarkable works of art, which will become part of national collection and preserved for future generations to enjoy, please fill in the enclosed donation form or contact the Foundation on (02) 6240 6454.
The Research Library at the National Gallery of Australia collects catalogues raisonné, auction catalogues, rare serials and books and other printed and pictorial media relating to the visual arts. In addition to bibliographic collections, the library keeps manuscripts and documentary material such as diaries, photographs and ephemera. It also holds a collection of ninety-eight recorded interviews and transcripts with Australian artists created in the late 1970s, before the National Gallery of Australia was built.

The interviews were conducted by the well-known Surrealist artist James Gleeson (b. 1915), who served as chairman of the Acquisitions Committee at the Gallery from 1974 to 1975. At the time of the interviews, he was member of the Australian National Gallery Council and the visiting curator of Australian art. The Gallery’s director, James Mollison, commissioned the interviews to collect more information for the Gallery’s Research Library collection. They were not formal interviews intended for a wider public audience but rather conversations between artists. The resulting recordings are powerful on multiple levels. As well as the artists’ personal recollections about how a work was made, the recordings also link to the Gallery’s corporate and official memories – the history of its acquisitions, the choice of artists whose works were acquired and the histories of the works themselves.

Oral history has an interesting place in a museum context. It revolves around the power and reliability of memory and the spoken word in an environment that more often values the written word, the document, the image and the object. Spoken words have a number of qualities that make them different from other ways of communicating. They are able to capture the emotions behind what it means to be a person who is living and making art at a particular time in history. And the storytelling in the interview captures both the pleasures of memory and the act of creativity.

Oral history plays a vital role in keeping us aware of the centrality of the individual artist’s experience. Even after the most sensitive arrangement, it is difficult for manuscripts and photographs to reveal something as nuanced as the cultural and working environment of an artist. There is also interplay between material evidence and personal reflection when Gleeson shows the artists photographs of their works to prompt recollection and reflection.

Painter Judy Cassab (b. 1920) was interviewed by Gleeson in January 1978. Born in Vienna, she was raised by her grandparents in Hungary, where she began studying painting. Migrating to Australia after the Second World War, she was influenced by the Australian landscape and continued to develop her skills into an easily recognisable personal style.
Fairly early in the interview, Gleeson asks her about capturing a likeness in portraiture:

I think that I could express it by saying that catching the likeness or drawing the bone structure or using paint is almost like scales on a piano now. Because I’m much more interested in digging deeply into the character and, as I get older, I know more about the psychology of my sitter. But I’m still more intuitive and instinctive, I think, than conscious of what I’m doing.

Listening to Gleeson and Cassab on the audio recording, we start to get a very strong feel for the personalities, the rhythm of Cassab’s storytelling and her absolute delight in the act of painting.

In another interview, James Gleeson asks the painter Brett Whiteley (1939–1992) about the ‘symphonic’ qualities of the work Summer at Sigean 1962–63. Whiteley responds:

Yes, yes … after a while I just started to feel the picture as almost being like music … in the studio where I worked, which was an old deserted barn, there were about forty fruit bats that lived there and they had a particular sound. There was the droning of bees that were perpetually around; wasps and the whole creaking sound of summer, you know, in a sense that started to become the music of the picture.

At the end of the 1970s, Albert Tucker (1914–1999) and his wife donated to the Gallery a group of his paintings and drawings. In his interview with Tucker, Gleeson asks him to describe what being an artist is like and Tucker replies:

… in a sense, I was like a zombie. I hardly knew what I was doing … I often had the feeling that: what am I doing here. I mean this isn’t life as I’ve expected it to be. It’s something else altogether. But I’m here and I’m breathing and acting and I’ve got to be producing an image of some sort.
Costume designer Elaine Haxton (1909–1999) was interviewed by Gleeson in 1979. She had worked on sets and costumes for theatre, ballet and opera, including *Journey to the moon* in 1960 for the Borovansky Ballet and *Parades* in 1962. Musing on why she stopped designing for the theatre, Haxton confides in Gleeson:

> It was never a very well paid job doing the theatre. One did it for love and the smell of the grease paint, all that sort of thing. It was … you were always keyed very high and you know the actors and the dancers. It was a terribly interesting life and it was thrilling. But Australian designers have never been given their … any real credit …

In contrast to the delicacy and lightness of touch in her ballet designs, Haxton’s frank interview with Gleeson reveals some of the tensions and uncertainties of theatre life, the punishing deadlines and strong personalities.

The James Gleeson oral history collection has been inscribed into UNESCO’s Australian Memory of the World register 2008 as being of significant Australian cultural heritage. The UNESCO Memory of the World program announced the inscription at its conference Communities and Memories: A Global Perspective in Canberra, 19–22 February 2008. The Gleeson interviews join other culturally significant material on the register, including the *Endeavour* journal of James Cook, the Mabo Case manuscripts, the *Sorry* books and the 1906 film *The story of the Kelly Gang*.

These items are all national treasures. It is suitable recognition of the significance and value of an artist’s words that the interviews have been entered on the register. The recordings allow the voices of these Australian artists to be heard by future generations. Their words add another dimension to the understanding and appreciation of the body of work they created during their life.

Jennifer Coombes
Special Collections Archivist, Research Library

Interviews by James Gleeson, Canberra, 1977–79, held by the National Gallery of Australia Research Library, Canberra.

Elaine Haxton
Costume design for a male bird from *Journey to the moon* 1960
gouache, crayon and pencil on paper
52.7 x 41.5 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1977

Grahame King
*Tribal image* 1965
planographic printed image:
43.0 x 30.5 cm,
sheet: 56.0 x 43.0 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

(opposite)
Albert Tucker
*Portrait of Adrian Lawlor* 1939
oil on paperboard mounted on composition board
48.2 x 35.0 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1982
From an early stage in his artistic life Richard Larter (b. 1929) wanted his work to make an impact. He agreed with the philosophy that art should not sit placidly on the walls of museums but should engage people in a range of ways: be it to provoke, excite, disturb or enchant. He recognised that art is a one to one dialogue with the viewer and that it can incorporate a wide range of ideas and subject matter. For many years his art has been both figurative and abstract (often in the same works). Yet he realised, like many artists, philosophers and psychoanalytical thinkers in the 1960s and 1970s, that the human body in its many permutations provides a sure way of catching people’s attention and involving them in a work of art.

As Richard Larter's retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia reveals, his work has been inspired by popular culture, music, politics and society, the natural environment and personal relationships – particularly his relationship with his wife, Patricia Larter (1936–1996). They met in 1951 and married in 1953, moving from England to Australia in 1962. Mother to their five children and his best friend until her untimely death in 1996, Pat was his model and collaborator. She also became an artist in her own right. It would almost certainly be true to say that Pat is one of the most painted, drawn, photographed and filmed artist–partners in the entire history of art. When one critic complained about too many images of Pat in a show at Watters Gallery, Larter promptly went and filled single canvases with multiple images of the love of his life. Although there are many sexually explicit images of his wife, revealing their shared interest
in freedom of expression and frustration with moralistic censorious attitudes to the body, Larter was also more than capable of depicting Pat’s introspective moods, as many portraits from the 1960s through to the 1990s convey. In *Cliché no. 2 (Blue Patricia)* 1965, he depicts a thoughtful woman, and there is a similar tenderness of expression in later lyrical portraits such as *Portrait of Pat* 1984. One of the fascinating aspects of Larter’s portrayals of Pat is the way that the works chart the passage of time from youth to maturity, from model to active performer, collaborator and artist. As gallery owner Geoffrey Legge has noted:

I think you can feel in the early paintings Pat is modelling in the conventional way. She would get into a pose and he would paint her. Whereas subsequently through the camera she was able to express herself and the whole thing lifts up a gambit. So she taught Richard something and they discovered something together which he is brilliantly able to apply to his work.¹

A sense of Pat as the active performer is apparent in Larter’s striking paintings *Page three coffee: TATTOOS* 1967 and *Yellow eye research* 1971. In the former, painted solely in black and white, Pat appears dancing from one pose to the next. This approach of including the same performer in different poses in the one painting came to the fore in his earlier *Stripperama* paintings in the mid 1960s, which showed the model going from fully clothed to undressed (except for the shoes). While the dazzling *Stripperama no. 3* 1964 was painted in strips echoing the idea of film strips or frames, in *Page three coffee: TATTOOS* Pat is liberated in space in a more direct, personal engagement with the viewer.

Over the years, Richard and Pat developed a quite particular artistic partnership. It is not widely appreciated that Pat Larter was Australia’s main contributor to mail art, an art form that had its roots in the anti-establishment approach of dada and the Fluxus group and came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s. The idea of mail art was that artists from around the world could send their works through the postal system. Pat’s work was included in all the significant international mail art catalogues from the 1970s to 1991.² Her contributions were mainly performative self-portraits.

Although Richard often took the photographs, Pat chose the poses, the theatrical personae, and the outfits (which she usually made herself). In the 1970s, when feminism was opening up many possibilities for women artists, Pat came into her own. In her work she relished sending up stereotypes, recognising that by taking control of representations of the body, issues of identity and sexuality could be critiqued and enjoyed and celebrated. Other artists who worked with Pat recall her humour and her fearlessness; her belief to ‘say it at it is’, not to cover things up. This attitude came through not only in her mail art but also in her film *Men* 1975 and her work with male and female models (shown at the Adelaide Biennial in 1996).

An important distinction between Pat’s and Richard’s ways of working is that while the performative photographs constituted her art they were often the source of the poses that he chose for his paintings. The films they collaborated on had a homemade quality that was very much part of the atmosphere of the 1970s. The fluid interplay between performance, film and aspects of home and family life also appears in some of Larter’s paintings, such as *Yellow eye research* where Pat is depicted as a woman confident in her own body alongside meticulously drawn fairytale images inspired by storybooks they read to their children.

Larter has always seen drawing as an important basis for his paintings. In the 1950s, when he was still living in England, he took art classes at night at Toynbee Hall in London, where he drew from plaster casts. Perhaps surprisingly in the light of his later nudes, he was reluctant to progress to the life classes, believing that it was of the utmost importance to be able to attain a likeness.

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¹ Richard Larter
² Richard Larter
³ Richard Larter
⁴ Richard Larter
⁵ Richard Larter
⁶ Richard Larter
Beyond these classes, his adult art training was limited. This aspect of being largely self-taught is significant to his highly experimental approach with an array of techniques. This included his discovery of the hypodermic syringe as a painting tool. In a ‘road to Damascus’ moment, he saw the syringes through the window of a medical supplies shop in Camden Town while waiting for the bus home and realised they would provide an excellent way of drawing with paint. His abilities in this regard shine in many works of the late 1950s and 1960s, including the intricate, colourful linearity in *Stripperama no. 3*. By the late 1960s he had stopped using the technique.

Early on in his artistic career Larter was fascinated by pointillism and refers to his seminal paintings as ‘pointillist abstracts’. His fascination with the fine dotting techniques of artists like Seurat and Signac, as well as their interest in the science and emotive resonances of colour, took on new life in his works such as the ravishing painting *Exercise* 1967. Here, dots of varied sizes flow in curvilinear patterns across the surface. They are layered over vertical bands of colour so pure and vibrant that the combined effect is to dazzle the eye and lift the spirits. Larter’s love of decorative patterning and luminous colour was also informed early in his artistic life by a visit he made to Algiers in 1951 where he was greatly inspired by Islamic art (something he shares with Henri Matisse whose work he admires).

Movement in Larter’s work is often associated with music. From the 1950s to the present, music has been an important aspect of his life and he often listens to music while he paints. The subjects in some of his major figurative paintings include portraits of musicians associated with pop and rock, like Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger. Compared with the strident nature of some of his figurative works, there is a lightness and lyricism, and a subtle use of colour in *Swingalee no. 4* 1986. The experimental nature of his painting techniques is again apparent in the small notations — like grace notes — applied by edgers used by house painters for the finer work. At the same time, there is a feeling of effortlessness in the way the rhythmic forms fan out and rotate and literally appear to swing.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, Larter undertook a number of works that were inspired by natural phenomena and the environment. By the time he painted his epic work *Side thrust* 1989, he had moved with Pat from Luddenham, in the outer western suburbs of Sydney, to Yass, New South Wales, about an hour’s drive from Canberra. This meant that he and Pat became regular visitors to the National Gallery of Australia, enjoying the collection and exhibitions that included works by some of his favourite artists — Claude Monet, Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse among them. For years, Larter had been fascinated by luminosity in colour, both in terms of natural phenomena and in a painterly sense. A feeling for light and colour also informed Larter’s life in Yass, where the changes in the seasons were palpable. As a child, Larter was very excited when he witnessed the aurora borealis, which became the subject of
paintings decades later in 1986. In these works the bands of refracted light appear soft and semi-transparent. In Side thrust, on the other hand, the rainbow forms appear more substantial, as though they have become the embodiment of light and energy rhythmically pulsating through the landscape.

Side thrust comprises nine panels and extends over ten metres. It was recognised as one of the most significant works in Larter's output when it was acquired for the national collection. As John McPhee wrote:

The work is principally a combination of two essential elements, Larter's mastery of a highly original technique and his love of light and landscape of the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales.

Side thrust should be read as a metaphysical landscape, a distillation of sound, light and emotional tension. The mosaic-like ground and attenuated ribbons of rainbow colour, both made with a paint soaked roller, produce a resonance that embraces the viewer … The 'view' is not simply something to look at, but to be part of.¹

The following decade Larter had to face tragic circumstances when his beloved wife and friend for some forty-three years died in 1996. In the same year, he painted his grief in Into the silence – a dark painting tentatively searching for the light. In contrast to the somnambulist beauty of that work, however, the joy, love and energy that Pat brought to their lives is celebrated in Farewell my lovely 1996.

By the turn of the new century, Richard Larter had moved to Canberra, where he now lives and continues to paint with unabated commitment and passion. In recent years he has captured the local environment, including the Canberra bushfires of 2005. Now in his late seventies, his memory is ever-present and he has continued to paint portraits of Pat for his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He also continues to create figurative and non-figurative works inspired by the human form, politics, music, nature, art and culture of the past and present. Along with Larter's abilities as a colourist, this rich amalgam of interests has informed an extraordinary body of work over the years; a body of work that is recognised and celebrated in his retrospective at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

Deborah Hart
Senior Curator, Australian Painting and Sculpture after 1920

A book published in conjunction with the exhibition is available from the Gallery Shop. For further information, telephone (02) 6240 6420 or send an email to ecom@nga.gov.au.

notes
2 These catalogues are in the Pat Larter Papers, Art Gallery of New South Wales Research Library, Sydney.
3 John McPhee, submission on artist's file, NGA.
Royal court photography in Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s
11 July – 9 November 2008  exhibition galleries

Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s will showcase, for the first time, the National Gallery of Australia’s Asian and Pacific photography collection – supplemented by loans from public and private collections in Australia, United Kingdom and United States of America. It will provide a window into the lives of the photographers and their images of the region, many of which have never been seen publicly before. The exhibition covers the first century of Asia–Pacific photography and the area stretching from India and Sri Lanka through Southeast Asia, Australia and the Pacific to the west coast of North America. The over four hundred works include photographs by both foreign photographers working in the region and locals. Visitors will see a range of photographic techniques, including daguerreotypes, photogenic drawings, calotypes; and an array of subjects as the technologies advanced.

One of the many fascinating discoveries while researching the exhibition Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s was that the royal courts in Asia and the Pacific were places where photography was first introduced into a country. As a consequence, the courts were often where the first native-born photographers had their start.

In the mid 1840s in Bangkok in Siam (now Thailand), members of the royal court received training on the daguerreotype camera imported by the French Catholic Bishop in 1845. One of these trainees took the business name of Francis Chit (1830–1891) when he started his own photography studio in Bangkok in 1863. He became the first professional Thai-born photographer of note. Photographs by Chit were among those given to British widow Anna Leonowens by the King of Siam, King...
Mongkut (Rama IV, reigned 1851–1868). Leonowens used these photographs to illustrate her 1870 tale *The English governess at the Siamese court*, which later inspired many book, stage and film adaptions – the most famous of which is the 1956 musical film *The King and I*. The title page of Leonowens’s book draws special attention to the king’s gift, but the photographs were no mark of special favour. King Mongkut kept drawers full of photographic images to give to visiting foreigners. The selection and styles of photographs in stock were carefully constructed to give Mongkut and the Thai nation a very dignified and substantial public image in Europe and America.

From his ascension in 1851, King Mongkut brought an astute and creative flair to the staging of royal portraits to exchange for those he was receiving from foreign monarchs and leaders. He spoke English well and was very familiar with Western science, and he understood exactly how to convey through photography the authority and dignity of his court and people, and thus their equality with their European counterparts.

Mongkut initiated various court protocols and made social reforms to align Thai and Western practices in order to smooth negotiations and meetings with foreigners. These adjustments included abandoning shaved heads and adopting European stockings and shoes. According to the occasion, the king might appear in traditional Thai dress, French-style military dress uniform or in his own simple white robes as a Buddhist monk. In another concession to Western ideals, Mongkut appealed to European monogamous sensibilities by being photographed with a single consort and crown prince rather than with multiple wives and children.

Quite a large number of Thai royal portraits survive. As part of an exchange of gifts honouring the 1856 Treaty of Amity and Commerce, and Navigation Mongkut between Thailand and the United States, Mongkut sent a dignified yet simple portrait of himself with Queen Debsirindra, mother of the crown prince, to President Franklin Pierce. Similar portraits were sent to Pope Pius IX, Napoleon III and Queen Victoria. The following year, Queen Victoria sent King Mongkut a daguerreotype outfit as a gift. It is still held in the Thai archives.

Foreign photographers were also often allowed access to the king. While travelling in Thailand in 1865, Scottish photographer and writer John Thomson (1837–1921), who had been working from a studio in Singapore from 1862, sought permission to photograph the Royal Palace in Bangkok. He was immediately granted access. In his 1875 book *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China, and China, or Ten years’ travels, adventures, and residence abroad*, Thomson provides an eyewitness report of the king’s attitude to photography. He tells how King Mongkut, after first appearing in his monastic robes and expressing a wish to be photographed in prayer, changed his mind and reappeared in his French-style military uniform. The king ensured that his brother, who Thomson was told had a good grasp on photography, watched the photographer at work.

In 1868, Mongkut was succeeded by his equally
remarkable son King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), who ruled until 1910 and was even more energetic in exchanging and disseminating photographs of the royal family. King Chulalongkorn was especially concerned to present himself as a modern monarch and travelled to neighbouring countries and to Europe. Hundreds of photographs from his travels still exist.

Across the Pacific Ocean the royal family of Hawaii were also among the first photographed in 1845 by a visiting photographer from Peru. One of the finest treasures on loan to the Picture paradise exhibition is a striking whole-plate daguerreotype of the family of King Kamehameha III in Honolulu. The photograph from the Hawaii’s Bishop Museum was taken around 1853 by German-born daguerreotypist Hugo Stangenwald (1829–1899), who had arrived in Honolulu while travelling to Sydney from the goldfields of California. Business was so good in Hawaii that Stangenwald stayed on and earned enough as a photographer to return to Vienna in 1858 to finish his medical studies. He later returned to Hawaii to open a medical practice.

The Hawaiian royals continued to employ photographers to take their portraits; however, unlike in Thailand, no native Hawaiians appear to have been trained. The royal family, by encouraging diplomatic ties through the exchange of portraits, looked to the British to support their fight against the encroaching annexation by the United States. Although this bid for continued sovereignty failed when annexation took place in 1898, the surviving portraits are rich and varied. Queen Emma, consort to King Kamehameha IV from 1856 to his death in 1863, was praised by Queen Victoria for her dignity – a quality seen strongly in her portrait in Picture paradise.

Back in Asia, the resplendent portrait photographs of maharajas, clothed in silk and encrusted with jewels, indelibly fixed the mystery and allure of India in the West. Photographic equipment arrived in India in 1840 soon after its invention in Europe, and many of the country’s princes, such as Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (reigned 1862–96), took more than a passing interest in learning the new medium themselves. The most famous nineteenth-century Indian photographer is undoubtedly Lala Deen Dayal (1844–1910), who worked for both Indian and British patrons, including the Nizam of Hyderabad and Lord Curzon. He later opened his own studio in Bombay win 1896.

In Japan, the earliest surviving daguerreotype portrait is of Shimazu Nariakira, the daimyo of Satsuma. It was taken by self-taught court photographer Ichiki Shirō (1828–1903) in 1857 on apparatus first imported by the daimyo in 1848. The Imperial family were uninterested in the new medium and were not photographed until the 1870s by Uchida Kuichi (1844–1875). By the 1880s, however, they were presenting themselves to the camera in Western dress.

Queen Victoria never travelled to Asia or the Pacific but it became the practice to dispatch crown princes on royal tours in the British colonial realms of the Asia-Pacific region. The tour of Prince Alfred to the Australian colonies...
in 1867–68 stimulated a scramble by local photographers all along the route to secure photographs. As the royal entourage collected prints from local studios, these studios were also competing for the much desired Royal Warrant of Appointment, which allowed the supplier to advertise that they supply to the Royal Family – ‘By Royal Appointment’. The Prince's yacht also had a photographer on board, ensuring that the tour was well documented. Various commemorative publications from the Prince's tour were issued in Hong Kong, South Africa and Australia. Tsar Nicholas of Russia similarly sent the crown prince on a tour of Asia and many gift photographs were collected. These occasions also benefited local photographers, as they were able to observe and learn about the latest trends from photographers who were travelling with royal visitors.

The sons and grandsons of deposed French royals also travelled to Asia and the Pacific and some became explorers. The Duke of Penthièvre and the Count of Beauvoir travelled around the world in 1866, gathering photographs along the way. Beauvoir's book of their trip, Voyage autour du monde, was a best seller. Explorer Prince Henri d’Orleans (1867–1901) became famous as an explorer in Asia. From 1895 to 1896, he travelled with his cameras from Hanoi in Vietnam to Assam in India. He followed the Irrawady River in search of its source and published the popular book From Tonkin to India by the sources of the Irrawady.

The 1850s French invention of the carte de visite, a type of small photographic portrait, arrived in the Asia–Pacific region in the 1860s. Cartes de visite were preserved in specially designed albums, and the popularity of the format in the British colonies was stimulated by the sale of one album in particular: London photographer John Mayall’s album of the British Royal Family, which was sanctioned and commercially released in 1860. In turn, cartes de visite of just about every native king and queen in Asia and the Pacific also proved popular back in Europe.

The enthusiasm with which the royal families of Asia and the Pacific accepted photography almost certainly helped to secure the status and adoption of the medium worldwide. It is harder to tell, however, if the exchange of portraits between royals and dignitaries in the Asia–Pacific region and the West had any significant or lasting effects on diplomatic relations. The royal portraits make up a small but vibrant part of the photographs that will be on display in the exhibition Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s at the National Gallery of Australia from July to September.

The exhibition is presented in conjunction with Vivid, Australia’s inaugural National Photography Festival, which celebrates photography’s vital role in Australian life and history.

Gael Newton
Senior Curator, Photography, and curator of Picture paradise: Asia–Pacific photography 1840s–1940s

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A book published in conjunction with the exhibition is available from the Gallery Shop. For further information, telephone (02) 6240 6420 or send an email to ecom@nga.gov.au.

Unknown photographer
Sultan of Soerakarta and family 1930
Java, Indonesia
gelatin silver photograph
27.4 x 21.3 cm
Purchased 2007

Woodbury and Page
Suleiman Badru Alamsyah, Sultan of the Lingga and Riau Islands, and entourage on the occasion of the visit to Dutch Governor General P Mijer, Batavia (Jakarta) 1867
albumen silver photograph
27.0 x 20.0 cm
Collection of David Knaus, California
Beginning in October, highlights from the National Gallery of Australia’s Pacific arts collection will be on show in an exhibition that will feature many works that visitors may never have realised were owned by the National Gallery of Australia – outlandishly large, chaotically painted and constructed nunu susu dance costumes, kavat masks from the Baining people and numerous sculptures, which on first impression might sooner be attributed to Giacometti, Ernst or Picasso rather than the hand of a Papuan artist.

The exhibition exclusively draws upon the Gallery’s Pacific arts collection initiated by the Gallery’s first Director James Mollison who with great foresight gathered many works for their uniqueness or for the fact they represent visually the highest calibre within their respective art traditions. Historically, various cultures of the Pacific held the potent forces of spirits from the sea, land, air and the stars in high regard – each spirit possessing its own personality. Some were malevolent, presenting a very real danger, yet with the use of magic and observing rituals their aid could be enlisted.

The immense power of the ancestors and spirit beings to control events pervaded almost every aspect in the daily life of a Pacific Islander, including every stage of a person’s life, from the cradle to the grave and beyond. The Pacific highlights show in October will exhibit the physical forms spirits can take; for example, the Sepik River war trumpet, sounded when a community was successful in a melee, features the visage of the ancestral warrior whose supernatural powers helped create a winning result for the community.

The very word ‘Pacific’ brings together countless individual cultures from across the region – from Papua New Guinea in the west to remote Rapa Nui in the furthest reaches of the east. Better known as Easter Island, Rapa Nui will be represented in the exhibition by an enigmatic carved figure that has hermaphroditic qualities. It is also worth taking into account the anonymity of many of the works as the names of the artists were seldom recorded. Such is the width, breadth and depth of island cultures that the works shown depart from Western tastes and expectations in wonderful, sublime and occasionally surprising ways. The indigenous reasoning and aesthetics behind works – such as the carved spirit ‘family’ from the secret interior of an Abelam people’s spirit house and the Rambaramp effigies of Vanuatu – will provide visitors with insight into the rich cultures of the Pacific.

The island cultures of Melanesia – Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – have produced some of the strangest, most affecting and visually inventive traditional art forms anywhere in the Pacific region. The Melanesian works will be displayed over two galleries while the current Pacific gallery will house the Polynesian collection, featuring elegant and richly produced Maori sculptures and a highly prized Maori chieftains’ cloak hand-woven from golden flax.

This will be the first temporary exhibition of Pacific arts on this scale in Australia for twenty years, and the very first survey of the National Gallery of Australia’s collection. A classic example of the traditional Pacific art of the later twentieth century is the work of New Guinean sign-writer Kaipel Ka, whose brightly painted war shields incorporate both classic motifs of aggression and advertising designs for beer.

This world-class collection is known only for a handful of iconic works from the Pacific, such as the prehistoric Ambum stone and the graceful double-figure housepost from Lake Sentani. However, the Gallery holds many more works from the Pacific, which have never been on display for the Australian public. Through this exhibition, these works can now take their place in the sun.

Crispin Howarth
Assistant Curator, Pacific Arts
Treating the costume for a squid

Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes revolutionised the world of dance with its productions from 1909 to 1929. Diaghilev’s talents in bringing together the work of performers, musicians, choreographers and artists gave his audiences new ways to appreciate modern art and design. Costumes designed for the company remain as vivid evidence of its spectacle and innovation.

The National Gallery of Australia began collecting theatre costumes from the Ballets Russes in 1973, purchasing a major group of almost one hundred costumes. Extensive restoration of these costumes has been undertaken over the past twenty-five years to ensure that visitors to the Gallery can view these costumes – designed by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Giorgio de Chirico, Léon Bakst and Natalia Goncharova – as close as possible to their original splendour. The Gallery’s textile conservators are preparing many of these costumes for a major exhibition of the Gallery’s Ballets Russes costume collection to be held late in 2009.

The most recent conservation treatment was done on a costume designed for a squid character in the Ballets Russes’ production of Sadko (a traditional Russian fairytale set in an underwater fantasy land). It was designed by Russian artist Natalia Goncharova for the ballet’s 1916 production and, although significant, has never been displayed due to its extremely fragile condition. The deterioration of the fabrics, general wear and tear and past restoration treatments made the conservation work challenging. Requiring over eight months to complete, it has been among the more significant treatments undertaken.

From a highly decorated bodice of pale turquoise silk, metallic braids flow down a mid-length bright blue silk skirt with a pointed hemline. Metallic cords form squid-like tentacles, falling from the bodice and are attached at the wrist. The general soiling, extensive wear and the inscriptions of a number of dancers’ names in the bodice are evidence of the costume’s many performances. The costume bares witness to the variety of body shapes of the dancers who wore it, as it had undergone several alterations. The turquoise bodice silk had suffered, with large areas lost at the shoulders, and the blue silk skirt had become so brittle with age that it had shattered to...
resemble confetti. Prior to being acquired by the Gallery, the costume had been poorly repaired using stiff nylon netting with a tacky adhesive. This repair had caused dark staining throughout the silk and the adhesive had collected dust in the gaps between. In addition the costume was sticking to itself.

To effectively treat such a fragile costume, conservators were faced with the enormous task of deconstructing it, removing past restoration, and then treating and finally reassembling the pieces. A major concern was that once the past restoration had been removed conservators would have to manage hundreds of shattered silk fragments during the treatment process.

Prior to treatment the costume had to be thoroughly documented with every stitch, damage and stain recorded. All stains and restoration adhesives were tested to determine suitable agents to be used in removing them from the costume. These processes took almost three months to execute. During treatment to remove the inadequate nylon netting with chemical solvents, care had to be taken to isolate the costume as general activity in the laboratory could disturb the positioning of the silk fragments. The sections of the costume were separated and carefully wet cleaned and then realigned on a special board. The fragments were then stabilised by being adhered to fine silk gauze dyed to match the original colour of the deteriorated areas. Once this was completed the sections of the costume were sewn back together, ensuring the costume once again took on the design originally intended by Goncharova. The large areas of loss from the skirt were supported with a blue silk lining, which allowed the skirt to be viewed as a complete fabric. The lamé decorations, after being couched to new fabric supports, were reattached onto the bodice and over the stabilised silk skirt.

The conservation treatment of the costume has been one of the most challenging ever undertaken by the Gallery’s conservation department, and an unprecedented amount of time and research was required for its success. A specially designed mannequin will be manufactured to ensure no stress will be placed on this delicate garment while on show. Now stabilised, it can soon be viewed as Goncharova and Diaghilev had originally intended almost a century ago.

Debra Sphoer
former NGA textile conservator
It is appropriate that architect Col Madigan’s National Gallery of Australia, a building of high architectural ideals, is the venue for an annual series of lectures given by four of Australia’s top architectural practices. These lectures take place over four consecutive Wednesday nights in August at the James O Fairfax Theatre at the Gallery.

The series was originally established by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1987 to provide the opportunity for architects in Australian Capital Territory to hear Australia’s leading contemporary architects and architectural designers speak about their work and the state of the industry. As the series grew in popularity, word reached beyond the architectural profession, leading to the partnership between the Gallery and the RAIA in 1995. Now in its twenty-first year, the series continues to bring issues at the forefront of architectural design to architects and non-architects alike in Canberra.

Last year, Paul Pholeros spoke to a spellbound audience on his diverse work, ranging from a sustainable tourist facility in China to his twenty-year involvement (through Healthhabitat) in Indigenous communities throughout Australia. The audience was delighted by the considered designs presented by Stephen O’Connor of O’Connor + Houle Architecture in Melbourne, and Michael Heenan of Allen Jack + Cottier took them through a whirlwind of exciting and brash projects such as car racing stadiums and recreation centres. In the final week, Tone Wheeler sparked controversy, making an analogy between the idea of modernising Blue poles 1952 and the planned extensions to the Gallery itself. The projects presented and the areas of expertise were diverse; however, each presenter touched on sustainability as an integral part of their design.

If you have an interest in Australian architecture and where it is heading, Wednesday nights in August at the National Gallery of Australia bring the promise of four very different architects from around the country: Simon Knott, Black Kosloff Knott, Melbourne, 6 August; Nick Murcutt and Rachel Neeson, Neeson Murcutt Architects, Sydney, 13 August; Dale Jones-Evans, Sydney, 20 August; Colin James, Director, Ian Buchan Fell Housing Research Centre, Sydney University, 27 August.

Sophie Clement
ACT Chapter Manager, Royal Australian Institute of Architects
The ten panels that make up *Earth* were constructed in the autumn and early winter of 1999. They were among the last things Rosalie Gascoigne made. Two months after her death in October 1999 her husband, Ben Gascoigne, received a letter from Jan Brown, who recalled how earlier in the year ‘Rosalie spoke with enthusiasm about a brown “thing” she was working on in the studio’. The December issue of *Artlink* included an obituary in which Paul Greenaway remembers visiting Rosalie just after she had completed ‘a major new work’. She described it to him as being ‘from the Earth’, saying prophetically, ‘it looks like death, where do I go from here?’

*Earth* is made from builders’ form-board, the thick pre-painted plywood sheets used for constructing concrete floors, walls and columns. Humble material. Rosalie’s fascination with form-board began in 1986. She described how in a family letter in February 1987:

> My dining room floor is covered with builders’ form board in various shades of brown, dull purple, and tan. I made a killing at a new building site opposite Nat Library [National Library of Australia]. Stepped daintily down to the manager’s office in my Carla Zampati linen and my social shoes and asked if I might have any spare bits. So now I know ‘John’ who says I can cope with anyone bustling me by mentioning his name. I returned next day in my old pants and took a LOT. Plenty to go on with anyway! I wonder that no other artist is using it. I keep scrubbing concrete off it and laying it all over the floor until such time as it tells me what it wants to become.

Rosalie was attracted to the eccentric shapes of the board, particularly the curves. The Gallery has an excellent example in her *Suddenly the lake* 1995. She said of a curved shape in that work, ‘suddenly I found the big Ellsworth Kelly piece and it was a beautiful piece, it ballooned you know, and the hills do that for me’. In 1977, James Mollison had
invited Rosalie to the Gallery’s store to see the recently acquired Ellsworth Kelly. In a letter dated 11 October 1977, Rosalie expressed her elation at seeing the Kelly:

I was glad I could respond to it, having felt fairly cold in the presence of [the Gallery’s Kenneth] Noland. Big orange curve on white. Not symmetrical; rather the shape of a rain drop about to leave a fence wire. Pregnant in the broadest sense of the word. I was impressed by the feeling … in it.

Concave or convex, the curves became the dynamic element in works that called up the bays and coastlines of her childhood in New Zealand, the south coast of New South Wales and the hilly landscapes of the Monaro – and, in one case, her sister’s farm in New Zealand. Like Suddenly the lake, these earlier works were all mixed media, involving other types of wood, galvanised iron and Masonite. Earth, on the other hand, is a meditation on form-board alone, where Rosalie employs elements of wood and rectangle that are basic to the language of art.

A photograph taken in August 1996 shows squares of form-board set out on the courtyard floor outside her studio and a large panel leaning against a wall – the panel comprising form-board rectangles. The photograph was published in the catalogue for the Drill Hall Gallery’s exhibition From the studio of Rosalie Gascoigne in 2000, and the caption accompanying it noted:

The marine plywood had been lying around the courtyard for many years. She’d [Rosalie] talked about it, the differences in colours when it was wet from when it was dry. She’d used the curved pieces. In 1996 she’d tried arrangements of the straight-cut wood on the courtyard floor, put together a grid and had it leaning against the wall.

By autumn 1999 Rosalie had exhausted her stocks of yellow Schweppes boxes and retro-reflective road signs. She turned to the unfinished business represented by her pile of form-board, and by doing so she went back to something primary in her creative process, which she had described two years earlier in an interview with ABC Television’s Stephen Feneley:

I still start with the same premise, I’ve got the material and I like it, and then under your hand and fed by your emotions, it will grow and you know yourself when it’s arrived at something or whether it’s a proper nothing.

The Earth panels were constructed quickly with Ben’s help, whose job was to squeeze the glue onto the backs of the cut boards. Panels four, five and six were completed by 22
April 1999, the remainder by June 1999. Rosalie’s studio assistant, the sculptor Peter Vandermark, who prepared the panels for display (straightening the edges and installing hanging systems), observed how Earth came together:

She knew the material and making those Earth panels it was almost as if she did not need to look at a piece of form-board to know its colour quality and precisely what would happen between the boards as she put them side by side. By this time I believe she knew the whole gamut of possibilities of form-board and threw herself upon that knowledge. Also, I’d notice how she would orientate the rectangles of wood so that the grain went one way, then another: they’d refract the light differently.¹

The panels that make up Earth are very physical, in keeping with their subject matter. The colour and qualities of earth had been the subject of an earlier Gascoigne construction, Industrial area 1984, which also plays with the colour shifts and textures of the soil in the landscape. This earlier work, which has since been destroyed, was literally made from earth – notably the debris from many ant nests carefully graded according to colour and laid out in heaps on a grid of forty-two sheets of newspaper. It recalled a similar structure in Nikolaus Lang’s Earth colours and paintings 1978–79, which she saw at the Sydney Biennale in 1979 (where Rosalie also exhibited), and subsequently in the Australia National Gallery’s 1980 exhibition Landscape-art: two way reaction (curated by Grazia Gunn and shown at the Australian National University).

The difference between the 1984 and 1999 works reflects a shift from the particular to the general in Rosalie’s art. As she had expressed in her interview with Feneley:

Objects have their own history you see, they’ve got a meaning themselves. [In art] I want to say the universal … and I want to say the feel … [My art] is dictated by what I’ve got of course [in materials], and my experience …

Earth 1999 has density and weight and an obdurate form. However, besides those earthbound qualities, it has a generality of feeling that opens the door to many readings.

The National Gallery of Australia played an important part in Rosalie’s creative life and this inspired the Gascoigne family’s decision to give Earth to the Gallery.

Martin Gascoigne

note

¹ Mary Eagle (ed.), From the studio of Rosalie Gascoigne, exhibition catalogue, Australian National University, Canberra, 2000. For Ben and his role, see pp. 14–15, for Peter Vandermark, see p. 25.
The figure of Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja) is probably the best known sculptural image in Indian art. Encircled by flames representing the boundaries of the cosmos, the powerful Hindu god Shiva performs his dance of destruction and creation. This form of Shiva was developed in south India early in the Chola dynasty (ninth–thirteenth centuries). During the dynasty, bronze casting for temples and shrines was refined and expanded under the generous patronage of the Chola rulers. The finest bronzes of the dynasty are recognised as the pinnacle of Indian metal casting in terms of the technical skill and the sensual beauty and commanding presence of the sculptures. It is widely regarded as one of the greatest periods of sculpture in the history of Asian art.

The Chola kings ruled most of south India and Sri Lanka. They exercised power and artistic influence as far away as Java and had diplomatic ties with countries such as Burma, China and Malaysia. Bronze casting for temples and shrines was well patronised by Chola rulers, who commissioned impressive temple complexes richly decorated with images of the gods. They also promoted music, poetry, drama and dance.

The Shiva as Lord of the Dance, recently acquired by the National Gallery of Australia, is a superb example of the famous Hindu icon. As an intact image, the sleek elegance and delicate intricacy of the sculpture confirms the prominent position of Chola workmanship in Indian art. Confidently dated to the eleventh–twelfth century, it clearly illustrates the skill of Chola bronze casters and the elegance, sensuality and detailing typical of sculpture from this period.

Shiva’s dance takes place at the centre of the universe in the presence of the gods. His four hands enunciate aspects of this manifestation of the deity. He is shown holding the flame of destruction in his upper left hand while his upper right beats the sound of creation on a small drum. His lower right hand is raised in the gesture of protection (abhaya mudra), the lower left pointing down in solace. Shiva’s right foot quashes darkness and ignorance in the form of a dwarf while his left is raised, symbolising the potential for liberation from the cycle of creation. The articulation of the demonic dwarf is unusually clear as he turns upwards, his hand clutching a small serpent. The swaying hood of a snake can be seen wrapped around one of the god’s right arms, while another serpent appears in Shiva’s flowing locks on the left of the god. On the other side of his head, the upper torso of the goddess Ganga nestles in his matted tresses, which have been likened to the spray of the sacred river Ganga (Ganges) when the deity dances.

The sculpture has probably survived in excellent condition for many centuries secreted in a cache hastily created in the face of attacks on temples and priests. Initially buried or concealed in hiding places by Hindu priests and devotees in the face of Muslim invasions of south India from the fourteenth century, their whereabouts had been completely forgotten. As art historian John Guy points out, although occasionally sculptures are reinstated in their original temple setting, usually … these lost icons were duly replaced by newly cast images in the centuries that followed. Since these replacement icons had been consecrated and put into ritual service, the temples had little need for any recovered icons.1

Such recovered sculptures differ from those that have been in active worship for centuries: their crisp features contrast to those that have been caressed by worshippers to a smooth, polished patina.

Every art institution that prides itself on its Asian art displays aspires to possess a significant Shiva as Lord of the Dance. In the case of the National Gallery of Australia, this objective has been overwhelmingly achieved with the acquisition of the eleventh–twelfth century Shiva Nataraja.

We are indebted to the generosity of the National Gallery of Australia Foundation and those who attended the 25th Anniversary fundraising dinner for helping to purchase this arresting masterpiece of Indian art. The Foundation continues to seek funding to support its acquisition.

Robyn Maxwell
Senior Curator of Asian Art

notes
This elegant double-ended sofa was most probably made at the King’s Yard carpentry and cabinet-making workshop, which stood on Sullivan’s Cove in Hobart, Tasmania. It was probably commissioned and made for use by the Convict Department in a colonial establishment or the home of a colonial official. Its rare mark of a broad arrow and the letters CD, ink-stamped onto the original jute under-fabric on the seat back, locate it to Hobart and this maker. The Convict Department was part of the Imperial (as distinct from Colonial) establishment and was directly responsible to the Governor. The King’s Yard (or Lumber Yard) was active from about 1819 to 1835.

The style of the sofa is of the Regency period of the early nineteenth century, during which design motifs of classical antiquity were revived and interpreted by a number of influential English designers and cabinetmakers. Such designs were published in pattern books and served as guides for manufacturers in distant markets, including those in colonial Australia. This well-proportioned example, with its flowing lines, central gadrooned panel, finely carved leaf decoration on the scrolled back and applied paterae on the back and arms, demonstrates a refined understanding of the principles of Regency neoclassicism. Such motifs remained popular for domestic and official furniture throughout the mid nineteenth century; although, the lightness of design associated with this style gradually became more exaggerated, convoluted and coarser in later interpretations.

This sofa has survived with its original horsehair stuffing on the seat back and sections of the original jute lining fabric. The original woven horsehair upholstery has been lost through deterioration but enough fragments survived to serve as a guide for replacing it with modern woven horsehair fabric in a colour and pattern to suit the sofa’s Regency style. The patina on its wood frame has been preserved following removal of built-up shellac and dirt, and brass castors from the period replace those lost.

With the acquisition of this sofa the National Gallery of Australia is able to document the design of the early nineteenth century in more depth and, through this fine example, show the important influence of neoclassicism on early Australian furniture design. Visitors will see a relationship to the fine examples of neoclassical design seen in other early Tasmanian and New South Wales colonial furniture and Australian silver also on display in the Australian colonial art galleries.

Robert Bell
Senior Curator, Decorative Arts and Design

King’s Yard Hobart  Double-ended sofa

The Convict Department, commissioner

Double-ended sofa  c. 1820
Tasmanian oak, Australian cedar, brass castors, jute lining, horsehair stuffing, horsehair mixture upholstery fabric (replaced)
98.0 x 213.0 x 58.0 cm
Purchased 2007
This is the smallest known painting by Tom Roberts (1856–1931). He painted it directly onto the panel (without any ground), as he did with his other plein air paintings of the 1880s and 1890s. The location of the work is uncertain, but it is likely to be around Sydney Harbour, possibly from the north shore area, looking towards the city. Roberts worked in Sydney for much of the 1890s, living on the shore of Sydney Harbour at Curlew Camp, Little Sirius Cove, from 1891 until his marriage in April 1896, moving to Balmain in 1897. The thick impasto of the paint corresponds with Roberts's work of this period. The buildings are summarily treated in pink, white and brown. This palette and the open composition, with the narrow stretch of buildings across the centre, support a dating of late 1890s.

The lack of specificity of subject in this small panel may be because Roberts wanted to emphasise a mood of nature, such as the conditions at a certain time of day, as much as the delights of a specific place. In this work, as in many of his others, he was interested in expressing nature's beauty. Nonetheless, he included details of human settlement: clusters of buildings near the shore and possibly the towers of factories in the background.

The painting has been inscribed and dated by Roberts’s son, Caleb, on a paper support attached to the back of the oil panel: ‘By Tom Roberts/ C.J.R 1953’. The inscription confirms its authenticity and provenance.

Roberts was Australia’s foremost artist of the late nineteenth century, promoting outdoor landscape painting and depicting important rural subjects. Between 1889 and 1898 he spent much of his time visiting outback stations in New South Wales, painting rural works of a national character such as Shearing the rams 1890 (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). He also established a reputation for portraits, including those of public figures such as Sir Henry Parkes in 1892, and a series of twenty-three informal panel portraits of Australian types. He died from cancer on 14 September 1931 at Kallista, Victoria, aged 65.

Anne Gray
Head of Australian Art
Marion Manifold  Rosy dreams and Spring

Marion Manifold’s (b. 1954) recently gifted large linocuts *Rosy dreams: from the veranda of Purrumbete* and *Spring: Purrumbete from across the lake* will have a particular resonance for those familiar with the National Gallery of Australia’s collection of Australian colonial art. They are based on Eugene von Guérard’s 1858 oil paintings *From the veranda of Purrumbete* and *Purrumbete from across the lake*. Originally in the Manifold family collection, von Guérard’s ‘homestead portraits’ were commissioned in 1857 by squatters John and Peter Manifold, Marion Manifold’s husband’s great grandfather and great uncle. They are celebrations of the squatters’ success and are visual records of the historic bluestone homestead of Purrumbete, which they built on the one hundred thousand acres of land near Camperdown in the Western District of Victoria.

Manifold has produced a series of landscapes interspersing imagery sourced from the relics and mementos of Victorian life, and the Manifold family in particular. The rose pattern at the top left of *Rosy dreams* is from a broken washbasin, which Manifold ‘found when scuba diving on Purrumbete’s rubbish tip and the tea cup and pot are also from Purrumbete’. ¹ When the Purrumbete property was sold in 1983, Manifold and her husband bought the original Aeolian Orchestrelle, a roll-operated reed organ, which was decorated with the rose patterns found in *Spring*.

Manifold has gathered these historic elements to produce layered works that develop her ongoing investigations into female identity and body imagery, her role as the ‘fifth Marion’ in the Manifold family and her personal motif of the rose (there is a rose named Miss Marion Manifold). She graduated from Deakin University in 1996 with Honours in Visual Arts, and completed her PhD at Deakin University in 2001, with her thesis ‘The sexual bias of the sublime and the beautiful: surrealist female body imagery’. Manifold won the Shell Fremantle Printmaking Award in 2001 and will undertake a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris during 2008.

Anne McDonald Curator, Australian Prints and Drawings

note
¹ Marion Manifold, correspondence with the author, 19 July 2007, NGA File 08/0056, folio 1.
Culture Warriors on tour

The exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia included over one hundred and seventy works created by thirty Indigenous artists with a diverse range of styles and levels of experience and from regions all around Australia, remote and urban. All the works exhibited were created in the past three years. A selection of works from each artist has been chosen to tour.

*Culture Warriors* displays works that cover a wide range of media from the more familiar ochres on stringy bark and canvas and wood carvings to installations with kangaroos covered in broken china, weavings, possum skin cloaks, film and synthetic polymer paints on canvas.

Jean Baptiste Apuatimi, Phillip Gudthaykudthay, John Mawurndjul, Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek, AO, and Arthur Koo’ekka Pambegan Jr are all senior custodians and artists. They have contributed significantly to their communities through decades of cultural teachings to the younger generations. Their outstanding continuous practice, their art-making skills and cultural knowledge, is recognised and respected both nationally and internationally, and will be passed on to future generations of culture warriors.

In *Culture Warriors*, the works of politically astute Brisbane-based artists Judy Watson, Richard Bell, Gordon Hookey and Vernon Ah Kee all focus on a certain event that divided a state and caused an outcry by Queensland’s Indigenous communities for justice. The case of Mulrundji Doombgee, a young Indigenous man who died in police custody on Palm Island after being arrested for drunk and disorderly behaviour in November 2004.

Watson created a series of works based on this event. This body of work was first exhibited at Brisbane’s Bellas Milani Gallery in early 2007 under the title *a complicated fall*, quoting the comment made by the Queensland Director of Public Prosecutions to explain Doombgee’s death. Watson also deals with the subject in *palm cluster* 2007, a painting on unstretched canvas that is touring with *Culture Warriors*.

Hookey’s work is confrontational but, at the same time, funny. He paints his view of the hypocrisy of white Australia and highlights, in his imagery, what he considers is the political nonsense that runs this country.

Interestingly, Bell samples the styles of other influential artists from around the world – such as Colin McCahon,
Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein – in a kind of reverse appropriation. The work of Lichtenstein is evident in *Big brush stroke* 2005 but, at the same time it is clearly representative of his Indigenous cultural background. The colours and the hand-painted, irregular dots are turned into Australian Aboriginal pop art.

The creators of the magnificent works of art in *Culture Warriors* are from regions throughout Australia and live different lifestyles, coming from urban areas to the remote communities in the bush, although similarities are recognised. The exhibition brings them together to present to the world traditional knowledge, cultural connections and differences, controversial views and opinions, and an undying spirit to fight for their rights (the same rights as all people in Australia).

This vibrant and diverse travelling exhibition offers a remarkable experience for those who did not have the opportunity to witness it in full in Canberra last year. As *Culture Warriors* travels interstate a new opportunity will arise for it to recharge and present its wonderful array of lights, colour and variety for all of the public to see; and what better way for the world’s oldest living culture to celebrate its past history and traditions but through an exhibition of contemporary Indigenous art?

Moses Gibson
Project Officer, Travelling Exhibitions

*Culture Warriors* travels first to the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 20 June to 31 August 2008.
travelling exhibitions winter 2008

Black robe white mist: art of the Japanese Buddhist nun Rengetsu

Supported by the Japan Foundation and the Australia-Japan Foundation

Black robe white mist: art of the Japanese Buddhist nun Rengetsu explores the life and work of the nineteenth-century artist and poet Otakaki Rengetsu. Rengetsu was renowned for her inspired poetry, pottery and calligraphy. This exhibition reveals the beauty of the understated and unconventional, and is significant as the first major exhibition of Rengetsu’s work to be held outside Japan. The exhibition features ceramics, scroll paintings and poem sheets created by Rengetsu and her close collaborators.

RMIT Gallery, RMIT University, Melbourne, Vic., 6–28 June 2008

Grace Crowley: being modern

One of the leading figures in the development of modernism in Australia, Grace Crowley’s life and art intersected with some of the major movements of twentieth-century art. This is the first exhibition of Grace Crowley’s work since 1975 and includes important works from public and private collections. Spanning the 1920s through to the 1960s, the exhibition traces her remarkable artistic journey from painter of atmospheric Australian landscapes to her extraordinary late abstracts.

nga.gov.au/Crowley

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA, 14 June – 21 September 2008

Ocean to Outback: Australian landscape painting 1850–1950

The National Gallery of Australia's 25th Anniversary Travelling Exhibition

Supported by Visions of Australia, an Australian Government Program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance for the development and touring of Australian cultural material across Australia. The exhibition is also proudly sponsored by R.M. Williams The Bush Outfitter and the National Gallery of Australia Council Exhibitions Fund.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the National Gallery of Australia, Director Ron Radford, AM, curated this national touring exhibition of treasured works from the national collection. Every Australian state and territory is represented through the works of iconic artists such as Clarice Beckett, Arthur Boyd, Grace Cossington Smith, Russell Drysdale, Hans Heysen, Max Meldrum, Sidney Nolan, Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Eugene von Guerard.

nga.gov.au/OceantoOutback

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth, WA, 13 April – 1 June 2008

Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns, Qld, 21 June – 7 July 2008

Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT, 9 August – 19 October 2008

The Elaine and Jim Wolfensohn Gift Travelling Exhibitions

Three suitcases of works of art: Red case: myths and rituals includes works that reflect the spiritual beliefs of different cultures; Yellow case: form, space and design reflects a range of art making processes; and Blue case: technology. These suitcases thematically present a selection of art and design objects that may be borrowed free-of-charge for the enjoyment of children and adults in regional, remote and metropolitan centres.

For further details and bookings telephone (02) 6240 6432 or email travex@nga.gov.au. nga.gov.au/Wolfensohn

War: the prints of Otto Dix

Otto Dix’s Der Krieg cycle, a collection of 51 etchings, is regarded as one of the great masterpieces of the twentieth century. Modelled on Goya’s equally famous and equally devastating Los Desastres de la guerra (The disasters of war), the portfolio captures Dix’s horror of and fascination with, the experience of war.

nga.gov.au/Dix

Art Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Vic., 12 April – 10 August 2008

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, 22 August – 26 October 2008

Imaging Papua New Guinea: prints from the national collection

Imaging Papua New Guinea is an exhibition of prints from the national collection that celebrates Papua New Guinea’s independence and surveys its rich history of printmaking. Artists whose works are in the exhibition include Timothy Akis, Mathias Kauage, David Laissi, John Man and Martin Morububuna.

nga.gov.au/Imaging

Tamworth Regional Gallery, Tamworth, NSW, 17 May – 29 June 2008

The Elaine and Jim Wolfensohn Gift Travelling Exhibitions

Three suitcases of works of art: Red case: myths and rituals includes works that reflect the spiritual beliefs of different cultures; Yellow case: form, space and design reflects a range of art making processes; and Blue case: technology. These suitcases thematically present a selection of art and design objects that may be borrowed free-of-charge for the enjoyment of children and adults in regional, remote and metropolitan centres.

For further details and bookings telephone (02) 6240 6432 or email travex@nga.gov.au. nga.gov.au/Wolfensohn

Red case: myths and rituals

South West Arts, Hay, NSW, 5 May – 26 June 2008

Coomoora Primary School, Springvale South, Vic., 14 July – 18 August 2008

Blue case: technology

Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Toowoomba, Qld, 16 June – 13 July 2008

South West Arts, Hay, NSW, 4 August – 22 September 2008

Exhibition venues and dates may be subject to change. Please contact the Gallery or venue before your visit. For more information on travelling exhibitions, telephone (02) 6240 6525 or send an email to travex@nga.gov.au.

The National Gallery of Australia Travelling Exhibitions Program is generously supported by Australian airExpress.
1. Margaret Davidson and Sir William Tyree, OBE, at the 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner

2. Kelli Cole, Anthony Hopkins and Jacque Chlanda at the opening of Turner to Monet

3. Brothablack plays to the crowd at the special youth event Underground Sounds

4. David Bennison, Anne McDonald, Beryl McElligott, Warren Karle and Simon Elliott at the presentation of the Rotary Collection of Australian Art Fund gift in memory of Philip McElligott, AM, MBE, and in celebration of the National Gallery of Australia’s 25th Anniversary

5. The Hon. Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia, officially opening the exhibition Turner to Monet

6. Venerable Thich Quang Ba, Abbot of the Vietnamese Van Hanh Monastery, introduces Buddhist meditation in the Mahayana tradition

7. Eva Curran and Christina Descoueyte at the 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner

8. Hannah Fink, writer, Deborah Clark, Curator, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Janet Burchill, artist, in the National Australia Bank Sculpture Gallery on International Women’s Day

9. Zeke Soloman, Foundation Chairman Rupert Myer, AM, Cathy Harris, AO, Brian White, Rosie White and David Harris at the 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner

10. Penelope Seidler, Cathy Rossi Harris, AO, and Gallery Director Ron Radford, AM, at the 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner

11. Miko Gaskill and Mr Ian Teasdale at the opening of Turner to Monet

12. Gallery members enjoy the fine dining at the special members’ opening for Turner to Monet

13. Ben Gascoigne with Rosalie Gascogne’s Earth no. 4 1999, recently gifted to the Gallery by the Gascoigne family
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(top) Madeleine Donovan, At the river, 2004, Australian National University School of Art.


(right) Frank Hurley, Five Australians, members of a field artillery brigade, passing along a duck-board track over mud and water in the devastated Chateau Wood, Ypres, 29 October 1917. AWM E01220. Glass positive transparency. Australian War Memorial.

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A NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, SA, 20 June – 31 August 2008

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA, 20 September – 23 November 2008

Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Qld, 21 February – 10 May 2009

Sinhalese man

c. 1920  (detail)  gelatin silver photograph  Collection: David Knaus, California

Jan Billycan (Djan Nanundie)

Yulparija people

All the Jila

2006  acrylic binder with langridge dry pigment and marble dust on plyboard  National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  Purchased 2007  © Jan Billycan (Djan Nanundie)
Richard LARTER
a retrospective

Canberra only 20 June – 14 September 2008

• national gallery of australia

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