



NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA UNVEILS 2020 PROGRAM

The National Gallery of Australia today announced its 2020 exhibition program spanning more than 450 years of art. From Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* 1888, to a new hyperreal sculpture *Skywhalepapa* by contemporary Australian artist Patricia Piccinini, the National Gallery will present a dynamic program with a renewed commitment to women artists at its heart.

National Gallery of Australia Director Nick Mitzevich said 2020 promised to be a defining year in the National Gallery's history, beginning with an ambitious program of exhibitions and events aimed at elevating Australian women artists, and concluding with the largest group of works to travel outside of the United Kingdom from the National Gallery, London.

"Across our programming, from Know My Name to our refreshed display of the Australian art collection and beyond, the National Gallery wants to share an inclusive view of the world through the work of artists," Mr Mitzevich said.

"The art we present explores universal themes of intimacy, belonging, colonisation and culture. These works provide an enduring connection to our past, a way to make sense of the present and a roadmap to help us create a more inclusive future."

Through a vibrant and international program of events and exhibitions, national audiences will share the art of women spanning two centuries in exhibitions such as *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now* and *The Body Electric*, a large-scale installation by the Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Club Ate's digital project *In Muva We Trust* and Patricia Piccinini's anticipated new work *Skywhalepapa*, commissioned as part of the Balnaves Contemporary Series.

Skywhalepapa, 2020, is the new companion piece to *Skywhale*, 2013, which returns to Canberra after six years touring Australia and the world. Together they form a Skywhale family, which will be reunited over Canberra in 2020, before floating across the skies of Australia as a National Gallery travelling exhibition.

Audiences will also have a rare and exclusive chance to see works from the European masters – most have never previously travelled to Australia – in *Botticelli to Van Gogh: Masterpieces from the National Gallery, London*, which opens in November 2020 and presents more than 60 works by some of Europe’s most revered artists. Highlights include Rembrandt’s *Self-portrait at the age of 34* 1640, Vermeer’s *A young woman seated at a virginal* c 1670 and Van Gogh’s much-loved *Sunflowers* 1888.

In March, the first solo exhibition in Australia by XU ZHEN®, one of China’s most significant artists and activists will go on display, showcasing his sculptural installations, video and performance works that challenge cultural assumptions and question social taboos.

Mr Mitzevich said the National Gallery welcomed the ongoing support of Wesfarmers to share the stories of the one of the oldest living cultures with audiences across Australia and the world.

In September, *First Peoples’ Art of Australia: from the Wesfarmers Collection and the National Gallery of Australia* will go on display at the National Gallery of Singapore before beginning a tour of China the following year.

“These works from Indigenous Australian artists from the late 1800s to today show how they have maintained ancient traditions and developed new social and political identities while adapting to constant change,” Mr Mitzevich said.

The National Gallery remains committed to being a welcoming and accessible institution to all Australians through its national travelling program, its developing online presence and, in 2020, will introduce Art Weekends, opening the Gallery late on Fridays for the last weekend of every month and sharing a range of artist-centred programs across the weekend catering to people of different ages, abilities and interests.

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2020 Program available for download from:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4j5qvzggumwise6/NGA%202020%20Season%20Brochure.pdf?dl=0>

Images available for download from:

<https://nga.gov.au/aboutus/mediacentre/2020program/>

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Images left to right: Patricia Piccinini, *Skywhale* 2013, nylon, polyester, nomex, hyperlast, cable, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of anonymous donor 2019, Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program.

XU ZHEN®, *European Thousand-Armed Classical Sculpture* 2014, glass-fibre-reinforced concrete, marble grains, marble, metal, White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, image courtesy of White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney.

Julie Rrap, *Persona and Shadow: Christ* 1984, cibachrome print, approx. 194 x 105 cm, edition of 9, courtesy of the artist and, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, © Julie Rrap / Copyright Agency 2019.

Vincent van Gogh, *Sunflowers* 1888, oil on canvas, 73 x 92.1 cm, National Gallery London, Bought, Courtauld Fund, 1924.