

MEDIA RELEASE
3 May 2018

NGA LAUNCHES NATIONAL TOUR OF SIDNEY NOLAN'S NED KELLY SERIES

For the first time in 15 years, the National Gallery of Australia's collection of Sidney Nolan's 'Ned Kelly' paintings is touring Australia in its entirety. The tour spans four states and one territory, giving Australians across the country the chance to experience some of the most famous and poignant masterpieces of 20th century Australian art.

While the Kelly paintings have been exhibited internationally at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, they have rarely visited the far corners of Australia. In 2018, the NGA's Ned Kelly collection travels to the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and then to the Murray Art Museum, Geelong Art Gallery, Riddoch Art Gallery, and Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

'It is essential that all Australians have equal opportunity to access these remarkable works,' said Dr Gerard Vaughan, NGA Director. 'By experiencing this iconic group of paintings with their radical style, and anti-establishment mythology firsthand, new generations gain insight into the work of one of our most well-known artists.'

From 1946-47, Nolan developed an original and starkly simplified image of Ned Kelly, which quickly became a national symbol—part of the shared iconography of Australia. The NGA acquired its first Ned Kelly work from the series in 1972, *Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek* 1946. In 1977, Sunday Reed donated to the NGA 25 of the 27 paintings from Nolan's first exhibited Kelly series. Together, these 26 paintings provide a masterclass on Australian art history and the development of a new figuration and landscape painting in Australian art, with enamel-like surfaces on board.

This travelling exhibition is supported by the Australian Government through Visions of Australia and the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Mary-Lou Nugent
Manager of Travelling Exhibitions
National Gallery of Australia
E: marylou.nugent@nga.gov.au
T: 02 6240 6650 M: 0418961063