

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 8 September 2020



NATIONAL GALLERY ANNOUNCES 20 NEW ACQUISITIONS VALUED AT \$8 MILLION

The National Gallery of Australia has acquired 20 new works of art valued at \$8 million thanks to the ongoing generosity and support of donors to its private giving program.

The gifts – including works by esteemed Aboriginal painter Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, trailblazing Australian feminist Vivienne Binns, Italian artist Rudolf Stingel and a sculpture by South-Korean artist Haegue Yang – will make a major contribution to the depth and scope of the national collection.

Some works will be presented as part of the National Gallery’s Know My Name initiative, aimed at increasing the representation of women in the institution’s artistic program.

National Gallery of Australia Director Nick Mitzevich said he was indebted to Australian philanthropists and artists whose gifts helped the National Gallery of Australia continue to acquire outstanding works of art.

“We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our valued patrons of the arts in Australia,” he said.

“Our philanthropic supporters are doing a great service to the people of Australia by building the national collection and making these exceptional works of art available to our audience. Now more than ever, art provides inspiration, an opportunity for reflection and a window to another world, helping us make meaning of current circumstances.”

Mr Mitzevich said philanthropic support was critical to the future sustainability of the National Gallery.

“To fulfil our national mandate, remain a globally relevant institution, and speak to the diversity of our audience, we need to be making acquisitions across the National Gallery’s collection. These donations are vital to helping us achieve that responsibility.”

The works of art acquired as gifts by the National Gallery are by Australian artists Vivienne Binns, Di\$COUNT UNIVER\$E, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Willy Gibson Tjungurrayi and Margaret Worth; Russian collective AES+F; UK artists the Chapman Brothers; Italian-born artist Rudolf Stingel and South Korean artist Haegue Yang.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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AES+F

The Feast of Trimalchio, 2010

Gift of Dick Quan and John McGrath

The Feast of Trimalchio: Arrival of the Golden Boat, 2010

Gift of Dick Quan and John McGrath in memory of Mr Bing Kuen Quan

Russian collective AES+F are known for their luscious slow-motion videos, constructed from thousands of digital stills. Exhibited at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009, *The Feast of Trimalchio* is one of AES+F's best-known multi-channel moving image works and is the second work in the group's *Liminal Space Trilogy*.

This work is a contemporary re-imagining of the *Satyricon*, a Roman epic believed to have been written by the poet Gaius Petronius Arbiter. In the *Satyricon*, Trimalchio is a satirical figure, the nouveau-riche host of a lavish and ostentatious feast. This grotesque performance of wealth is reconceived by AES+F as an idyllic choreographed sequence of 'leisure and pleasure' by a set of privileged, yet seemingly bored, 'masters' and youthful, exoticised 'servants'.

Unexpectedly, and only momentarily, this hierarchy switches as waiters, maids, masseurs, and gardeners become objects of desire and power, taking part in seemingly robotic seductions. AES+F employ stereotype and subvert political correctness to create a contemporary allegory where material indulgence is shown to be vacuous and self-obsessed. This hedonistic existence, however, cannot last and is destroyed time and again by a series of world-ending catastrophes.

Curator: Jaklyn Babington, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art

AES+F (Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich, Evgeny Svyatsky, Vladimir Fridkes)
The Feast of Trimalchio, 2010
 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of Dick Quan and John McGrath 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

AES+F (Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich, Evgeny Svyatsky, Vladimir Fridkes)
The Feast of Trimalchio: Arrival of the Golden Boat, 2010
 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of Dick Quan and John McGrath in memory of Mr Bing Kuen Quan 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.



Vivienne Binns and collaborators

Tower of Babel, 1989

Gift of the artist

Vivienne Binns is a pioneer of feminist, collaborative and community-based practice in Australia. *Tower of Babel*, a mixed media installation, represents the culmination of her work in this field. Made over two decades with some 70 trained and untrained artists, Binns supplied each of her collaborators with a small box, within which they made a work of art, often in the form of a diorama or assemblage.

Assuming various forms since its first exhibition at Watters Gallery in 1989, *Tower of Babel* alludes to the origin myth in the biblical Book of Genesis that suggests why people across the world speak different languages. One of Binns' aims in producing the work was to explore and 'understand art as a human activity rather than something that only Artists do.'

Now in its final form, *Tower of Babel* forms a personal history of Binns' practice as its contributors include those who have influenced her art and thinking. Binns lives and practices in Canberra, and her work is included in the National Gallery's forthcoming exhibition, *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now*.

Co-curators: Deborah Hart, Head of Australian Art and Elspeth Pitt, Curator Australian Painting & Sculpture (20, 21 centuries)

Vivienne Binns and collaborators
Tower of Babel, 1989-2008
 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of the artist 2020.



Chapman Brothers

In our dreams we see another world, 2013

Gift of Steven Alexander Nasteski

McHelter skelter, 2015-16

Gift of Steven Alexander Nasteski

Jake and Dinos Chapman, working collectively as the Chapman Brothers, rose to prominence in the 1990s as part of the Young British Artists. They have since created work that explores death and destruction, horror and the grotesque. With few stylistic comparisons, the Chapman Brothers are known for their nihilistic aesthetic and exploration of moral dead ends.

The dioramas *In our dreams we see another world* and *McHelter skelter* depict barbaric acts set within a hellish landscape. In great detail, the work presents a multitude of highly inventive ways to die. The Chapman Brothers work plays out two incarnations of evil: hundreds of Nazi soldiers, the wartime spectres of 20th century history, and several Ronald McDonalds, the recognisable marketing characters of the globe's biggest fast-food chain.

Curator: Jaklyn Babington, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art

Jake and Dinos Chapman

In our dreams we see another world, 2013

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of Steven Alexander Nasteski 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

Jake and Dinos Chapman

McHelter skelter, 2015-16

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of Steven Alexander Nasteski 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.



DIŞCOUNT UNIVERŞE

Ten looks from the Spring 2019 collection *WOMEN*

Gift of the artists

DIŞCOUNT UNIVERŞE is the fashion label of Australian designers Cami James and Nadia Napreychikov, who launched their label online via their fashion blog in 2010 and soon attracted a loyal international following. The label is known for its adventurous spirit. The garments are characterised by brightly coloured, sequined designs that draw upon a range of influences including punk, glam rock, camp and popular culture. James and Napreychikov seek to subvert the luxury fashion industry, often injecting their garments with humour and an ironic edge.

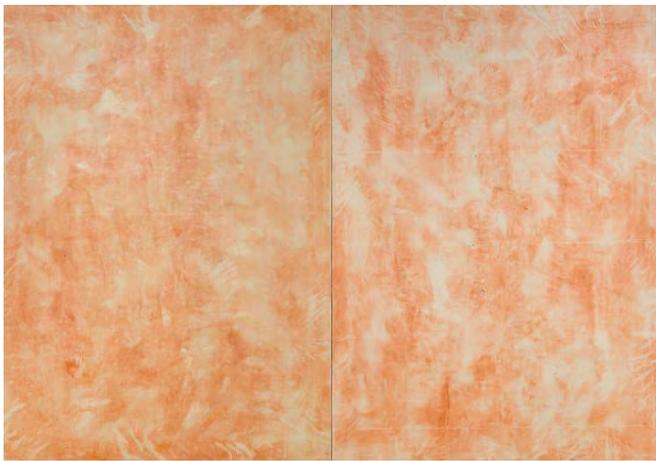
Shown at New York Fashion Week in late 2018, DIŞCOUNT UNIVERŞE's Spring 2019 collection *WOMEN* is a shift from earlier, more playful designs. Grounded in gender politics, the collection speaks with a feminist voice that offers an uncompromising view of 21st century womanhood. The pair used their runway show to interrogate traditional views of binary gender by selecting a diverse range of cisgender and transgender women models to wear the *WOMEN* collection.

Produced in New York against the backdrop of the #Metoo movement, the collection addresses objectification of the female form. Some garments are emblazoned with phrases such as 'not for sale' and adorned with sequins spelling out 'hysterical', 'crazy', 'emotional', 'sassy', 'irrational' and 'whore', terms traditionally used to belittle and dismiss women but now proudly reclaimed.

Curator: Rebecca Edwards, Sid and Fiona Myer Curator of Ceramics and Design

DIŞCOUNT UNIVERŞE (Cami James and Nadia Napreychikov)
WOMEN (Selection of 10 looks from the Spring 2019 collection), 2018

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of the artists 2020



Rudolf Stingel
Untitled, 1990

Gift of James Erskine and Steven Alexander
Nasteski

One of the most widely exhibited and collected figures in contemporary painting, Rudolf Stingel completed *Untitled* after his move to New York in the late 1980s. The work was painted following his production of *Instructions* 1989, essentially a do-it-yourself manual of conceptual art. By specifying the mechanics of his art, Stingel imagines that many people, in all parts of the world, might produce his work. Continuing that journey, *Untitled* addresses some of the key issues of what painting is, or can be, at the end of the millennium.

The lustrous surface of *Untitled* 1990, along with its veil-like qualities, recalls the texture of a moon or planet, and the subtlety of its colours are like those produced by light cast on mist. The absence of any subject gives *Untitled* an otherworldly quality; in front of it, the viewer is surrounded, free-floating without bodily cause.

Curator: Lucina Ward, Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture

Rudolf Stingel
Untitled, 1990
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of James Erskine and Steven Alexander Nasteski 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.



Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
Larumba, 1993

Gift of Jeff Hall and Sharon Grey

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri is one of the most prominent and recognisable artists of the Papunya painting group. Innovative and imaginative, Tjapaltjarri produced some of the most complex narrative painting of the movement. Stylistically typical of the work created later in the artist's career, *Larumba* 1993 is a masterful multilayered topographical painting of potentially two different sacred sites. Known for depicting several Dreaming narratives in the one painting, Tjapaltjarri, due to his senior cultural standing as both Elder and Anmatyerr ceremonial leader, collapses and integrates these two distinct geographical locations into the one painting, merging topographical and cultural maps of Country.

The meandering parallel lines of colour allude to the subterranean movement of water, a powerful resource that underpins life in the desert. Larumba (Napperby Lakes) consists of extensive claypans that are relics of larger lakes that come to life with seasonal rains. In dry periods, these watercourses travel below the surface of the ground emerging at discrete and highly protected sacred locations throughout the desert regions of Central Australia. These sacred waterholes are represented by the ochre-red concentric circles distributed almost grid like across the painting. In depicting this important men's site, Tjapaltjarri has captured the almost symmetrical energy and power of the ever-present subterranean watercourse with the natural earth colours of the desert.

Curator: Franchesca Cubillo,
(Larrakia/Wardaman/Yanuwa/Bardi Peoples),
Senior Curator Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
Anmatyerr people
Larumba, 1993
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Jeff Hall and Sharon Grey 2020.



Willy Tjungurrayi

Untitled, 2000

Gift of Julian Beaumont and Annie Beaumont

A Pintupi artist, Willy Tjungurrayi was influenced by his older brother, also a painter, who was one of the senior cultural men who began to paint at Papunya in the early 1970s. In 1976, Tjungurrayi began to paint for the newly established Papunya Tula Artists, and his early paintings reference the highly secretive Tingari Dreaming Song cycles. One of three remarkable artistic brothers from the Papunya region, his family set the benchmark for others to follow and played a significant role in the establishment of the Western Desert Art Movement.

While very little is known publicly about the Tingari song cycle, many Tingari ancestral men and women travelled across the land creating significant geographical features and disseminating Pintupi law.

Initially, Tjungurrayi's painting style referenced the traditional iconography of the Western Desert region, with concentric circles spread across the surface of the canvas in a grid-like fashion, connected by straight or slightly curved lines with the inner regions forming geometric patterns. As he grew older, he developed his own style, and the concentric circles were replaced by hundreds of dots that form endless parallel wavy lines that slowly move from left to right across the canvas.

The soft ochre palette and patterning of *Untitled* creates a shimmering effect that evokes the feeling of a soft breeze blowing across the desert sand dunes or the beginnings of a major dust storm.

**Curator: Franchesca Cubillo,
(Larrakia/Wardaman/Yanuwa/Bardi Peoples),
Senior Curator Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art**

Willy Gibson Tjungurrayi (Ngitjita)
Pintubi, Winanpa people
Untitled, 2000

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of Julian Beaumont and Annie Beaumont 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.



Margaret Worth

Sukhavarti number 5, 1967

Gift of an anonymous donor

Sukhavarti number 5 is a key early painting by South Australian artist Margaret Worth. It was one of several paintings made during her final year at the South Australian School of Art and is among the most compositionally complex from this time.

Made in the dominant international style of the 1960s, hard edge abstraction, *Sukhavarti number 5* comprises bands of colour that descend rhythmically from the upper point of the painting. Art historians have generally believed Worth's work was primarily influenced by Sydney Ball, whom she later married. However, Worth, featured in the National Gallery's forthcoming exhibition *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now*, recently stated that Dora Chapman was also among her key influences, which allows for a more nuanced understanding of the development of abstraction in this mid-20th century context.

Like many women artists of her era, Worth's career stalled after her marriage, despite her work with renowned artists including Lucy Lippard and Sol LeWitt. Interest in her work, however, has recently revived with major paintings and sculptures acquired by public and private Australian collections.

**Co-curators: Elspeth Pitt, Curator Australian Painting & Sculpture (20th & 21st Centuries) and
Deborah Hart, Head of Australian Art**

Margaret Worth

Sukhavarti number 5, 1967

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of an anonymous donor 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.



Haegue Yang
Triple Chalkies, 2015

Gift of Dick Quan and John McGrath

South Korean-born Haegue Yang's art explores ideas around colonisation, alienation, domesticity and industry, the ordinary and the embellished.

Yang uses household and industrial objects – electric cables, artificial plants, synthetic straws, metal plated bells, turbine vents, light bulbs – and liberates them from their functional context, imbuing them with other meaning.

Triple Chalkies is a labour-intensive installation suspended from the ceiling. The work's pastel coloured sculptural forms are made from different techniques: dyeing, weaving, knotting and embellishment. This aesthetic is typical of Yang's practice and serves to extend her meditation on 'Salim', the Korean word for housekeeping. Using the intensity of weaving and wrapping to make her point, Yang's work expresses the role that 'handiwork' has and continues to play in our culture.

Co-Curators: Jaklyn Babington, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, and Carol Cains, Senior Curator of Asian Art

Haegue Yang

Triple Chalkies, 2015

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of Dick Quan and John McGrath 2020. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.
