

MEDIA RELEASE
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PROJECT 1: SARAH LUCAS OPENS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

'When humour happens, things get good. Less depressing. It's a kind of magic.
Suddenly things make sense.'
- Sarah Lucas

Opening this Saturday at the National Gallery of Australia, *Project 1: Sarah Lucas* brings together recent work by one of England's most influential and unapologetic artists.

Over the past 30 years, Sarah Lucas has built an illustrious career challenging the social constructs of gender through sculpture, photography and performance art.

An artist well ahead of her time, Curator Peter Johnson wants Australians to know her name.

'I think Australians are going to love Lucas – an artist who uses crude and humorous imagery to explore the representation of gender and confront the realities of bodily existence,' said Johnson.

Project 1: Sarah Lucas features two recent sculpture series, including new works from the *Bunny* series she has been making since 1997. The title refers to the 'bunnies' of *Playboy* magazine fame, as they challenge the depictions of women in art and pop culture as the objects of male desire.

The National Gallery has acquired *TITTIPUSSIDAD, 2018* – a work from Lucas' new series of bronze and concrete sculptures that transform her soft stuffed figures into something hard and resilient.

'These sculptures use humour to incorporate both male and female anatomy, breaking down the distinctions between genders,' said Johnson.

'While Lucas' earlier *Bunny* works depicted the female body as sexuality available and spent, the newer figures are more triumphant as they revel in their power and sexuality – on their own terms, and you can see this in *TITTIPUSSIDAD*.'

Lucas's sculptures are exhibited alongside rarely seen images of the artist's first self-portrait, *Eating a Banana*, which has been reproduced to more than seven metres high – covering the exhibition walls from floor to ceiling.

Lucas often uses food as a stand-in for body parts and in the act of consuming a banana while returning the viewer's gaze, she playfully asserts her power in a male-dominated world.

As Lucas says; "I'm not trying to solve the problem. I'm exploring the moral dilemma by incorporating it."

[Project 1: Sarah Lucas](#) will open 7 August 2021 and close April 2022. Free.

Project 1: Sarah Lucas is the first of the National Gallery's Project Series and is a part of the Know My Name initiative.

Curator : Peter Johnson, Curator, Projects.

Continue the celebration of women artists with part two of [Know My Name: Australian women artists 1900 to now](#) – also on display at the National Gallery until 26 January 2022. Free. Media release available [here](#).

Co-Curators: Dr Deborah Hart, Henry Dalrymple Head Curator, Australian Art and Elspeth Pitt, Curator, Australian Art

Footage from the media preview: available [here](#).

Sarah Lucas images: available [here](#) | **Know My Name images:** available [here](#).

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Caption: Sarah Lucas, *TITTIPUSSIDAD*, 2018, installation view, *Project 1: Sarah Lucas*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2021 © the artist