

MEDIA RELEASE
15 MARCH 2019

GIANT MELTING WAX CANDLE SCULPTURE UNVEILED AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

The National Gallery of Australia today revealed its latest major acquisition, *Francesco 2017*, by leading artist Urs Fischer. The four-metre high wax sculpture is his most significant work acquired for a public collection in Australia. The National Gallery has an important role to play in bringing the most innovative and progressive art to Australian audiences.

‘This sculpture shows us that art in the 21st century shape shifts, it is not static, it is alive and always changing, reflecting the world in which we live,’ said National Gallery Director, Nick Mitzevich. ‘It is the opposite of Michelangelo’s *David* because it is wax, not marble, and will disintegrate as it burns to the ground.’

The work of art was conceived as a wax candle portrait in a pose capturing an intense connection to a mobile phone – a familiar and uncomfortable reminder of the common obsession with phones and technology. Inside the head are candle wicks which are lit and, over time, result in the sculpture’s disfigurement and collapse. The work will be lit each week over six months, and when fully melted will be recast to its original form.

Fischer began exhibiting throughout Europe in the mid-1990s, and his works have been seen in exhibitions and biennales from Venice to Los Angeles. In the early 2000s he began creating a series of wax portraits. *Francesco* is just one sculpture from a series of wax portraits Fischer created since discovering the material as a medium. His works have been collected by leading public and private collections around the world.

‘His candle portraits have been seen by millions of people, and now Australians can experience this captivating work of art which lures you to watch it morph with every visit to Canberra,’ said Mr Mitzevich.

The work has been funded through the National Gallery’s acquisition budget and philanthropic donations.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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