

NGV NEWS

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY NGV!

In 2011, the National Gallery of Victoria is celebrating its 150th birthday!



In 2011, the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) is celebrating its 150th birthday. This is a major milestone in the history of Australia's first public art gallery, an exciting moment to celebrate the NGV's outstanding collection and the achievement of artists, and to look forward as much as back.

Founded in 1861, the National Gallery of Victoria has a rich history filled with fascinating tales, resulting in the treasures to be found on the walls of both buildings – NGV International on St Kilda Road and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square.

Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director, NGV said: "The 150th anniversary is an opportunity to invite everyone to come and enjoy the great treasures of our NGV Collection. Many of our major spaces have been reorganised and rehung to celebrate the anniversary, and this process will continue through 2011. Some truly astonishing gifts have been made in celebration of our 150th birthday. 2011 will also be filled with magnificent exhibitions and a wide range of special programs and new installations for everyone to enjoy."

The philanthropic history of the NGV will also be celebrated in this special year, highlighting in particular the outstanding achievements of the Felton Bequest, established in 1904 after Melbourne businessman Alfred Felton died, leaving a substantial fortune for the benefit of the NGV.

Image details: Visitors looking at **Andy Warhol's *Self-portrait no. 9* 1986** which was completed a year before Warhol's death. Through this work, Warhol references the 'world' of Andy Warhol and his now infamous activities of the 1960s – the environment he created at his New York studio 'The Factory', his work in experimental film and music, and his acknowledged role as Pop Art innovator. This important work forms a part of the NGV Collection.



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The Felton Bequest transformed the NGV, enabling it to purchase superb masterpieces including Rembrandt's *Two Old Men Disputing* c.1628, Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra* 1743-44, Claude Monet's *Vétheuil* 1879, Frederick McCubbin's *The Pioneer* 1904 and Tom Roberts' iconic Australian work *Shearing the rams* 1888-90. Over 15,000 works have been acquired through the Felton Bequest, and the current value of the gifts from the Felton Bequest exceeds \$2 billion, of the overall collection value of \$3.5 billion.

In May 2004, respected Melbourne art dealer, artist and collector, Dr Joseph Brown, donated over 150 paintings, sculptures and works on paper, representing at the time the most generous gift of artworks ever made to a public gallery in Australia.

The majority of the NGV's marvellous collection of over 70,000 works, representing the world's most important art movements across many centuries and cultures, has been gifted by members of the community for everyone to enjoy.

The National Gallery of Victoria has grown from a small exhibition space at the Victorian State Library in 1861 to two architecturally renowned galleries in Melbourne's famous arts precinct.

The Gallery on St Kilda Road was designed by Sir Roy Grounds in 1968. It was redeveloped and designed by Mario Bellini between 1999 and 2003 as in response to new needs and the growing collection, reopening as NGV International, housing the Gallery's collection of international art. In 2002, the NGV opened The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square to hold what is arguably Australia's most exceptional collections of Australian art. Together these two magnificent buildings form the NGV.

In 2004, the new Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series began with *The Impressionists: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay*. Since then the NGV has brought to Melbourne superb work of the 17th century Dutch Golden Age, explored the relationship of Picasso and his muse Dora Maar, excited audiences with contemporary works from the Guggenheim Museum, taken a step back in time to the Art Deco period, dazzled Melbourne with the genius of Salvador Dali and introduced radical 19th and 20th century works from the famed Städel Museum in Frankfurt. This annual event is now one of Melbourne's biggest tourism drawcards and a cultural landmark in Victoria's events calendar.

This year, the NGV will bring to Melbourne *Vienna: Art & Design*, showcasing the spectacular paintings of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, a fascinating collection of decorative arts including fabulous jewellery and other objects by Josef Hoffmann, the magnificent designs of the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop) as well as radical works by Adolf Loos, Richard Gerstl, Koloman Moser and Oskar Kokoschka, among many others.

In 2009, the NGV was ranked the 20th most visited gallery in the world by London's Art Newspaper, with 1.6 million visitors – a great achievement. Almost three quarters of visitors to the NGV are local, with a great number being children and their families, giving the NGV one of the highest community participation rates of any of the world's great museums.

The NGV's 150th birthday is the perfect opportunity to come in and experience Victoria's truly astonishing art collection, which belongs to each and every member of our community.

TO CELEBRATE THIS MAJOR MILESTONE, NGV 150 pARTy WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY 28 AND SUNDAY 29 MAY 2011.

Entry to the NGV Collection is free for all to enjoy!

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The NGV Story

Founded in 1861, the National Gallery of Victoria is Australia's oldest public art gallery, celebrating its 150th birthday in 2011.

The National Gallery of Victoria opened on 24 May 1861, Queen Victoria's birthday, and was housed within the new State Library on Swanston Street, Melbourne.

When Melbourne businessman Alfred Felton died in 1904 he left a significant bequest, which had a major impact on the formation of the NGV Collection. This placed the NGV at the forefront of buying organisations around the world, resulting in the Gallery being able to purchase key masterpieces. These included Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra* 1743-44, Monet's *Vétheuil* 1879 and McCubbin's *The Pioneer* 1904. Since 2004, over 15,000 works have been purchased through the Felton Bequest.



As the collection grew, it became clear that a new building would be required to house the ever growing number of artworks.



In 1960, Roy Grounds was appointed as the architect to design the new building to be built on St Kilda Road. Within 12 months, Ground's drawings for a new museum took shape and the new building was completed six years later.

The new gallery on St Kilda Road opened on 20 August 1968 to great acclaim and was a resounding success with the public.

In succeeding decades, the Gallery acquired modern masterpieces such as Picasso's *Weeping woman* 1937, Rothko's *no. 37 (Red)* 1956 and Emily Kngwarray's *Big Yam Dreaming* 1995. The NGV also developed major holdings in indigenous, contemporary and Asian art as well as old and modern European masters.

In 1996 it was decided that the Gallery needed to be redeveloped to accommodate its growing collection. Mario Bellini, the eminent architect and designer from Milan, along with Melbourne-based Métier3 were announced as the winning architects of the St Kilda Road redevelopment following an international competition. The NGV on St Kilda Road would be extended and redeveloped. At the same time plans were laid to establish a second wing to house the NGV's collection of Australian art as part of the new Federation Square.

The Ian Potter Foundation generously supported the NGV's development program at Federation Square with a gift of \$15 million.

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The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, designed by Lab Architecture in association with Bates Smart Melbourne, opened at Federation Square in November 2002, becoming the new home for Australian art in Melbourne.

In 2003, NGV International on St Kilda Road reopened, housing the Gallery's collection of international art and heralding both the return of much-loved masterpieces and the introduction of exciting new acquisitions. Many of the admired landmarks of the original building were preserved, including the iconic stain glass ceiling in the Great Hall and the entrance arch and Waterwall.



In 2004 the NGV began a series titled Melbourne Winter Masterpieces, which has now become one of Victoria's biggest events.



The series began with *The Impressionists: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay*, which was seen by almost 375,000 visitors. This was followed by *Dutch Masters from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* in 2005, *Picasso: Love & War 1935–1945* in 2006, *Guggenheim Collection: 1940s to Now* in 2007, *Art Deco 1910–1935* in 2008, *Salvador Dalí: Liquid Desire* in 2009 and *European Masters: Städel Museum, 19th–20th Century* in 2010. In 2011, the NGV's 150th year, the Gallery will showcase *Vienna: Art & Design* featuring the work of Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Josef Hoffmann and Adolf Loos among many others.

During 2009 the NGV reached new audiences, holding its very first 24 hour opening during *Salvador Dalí: Liquid Desire*. In the same year the NGV began the Last Day of Summer event, combining Melbourne's love of music and art in the surrounds of the Grollo Equiset Garden at NGV International. The Art Newspaper (UK) also ranked the NGV as the 20th most visited gallery in the world through their annual survey of gallery attendances.



In 2010, the Gallery opened NGV Kids Corner at Federation Square, a space where children and their families can enjoy creative installations and activities designed just for them. Over 220,000 people attend the NGV's educational and public programs annually.

During NGV's 150th year in 2011, new spaces will be introduced including NGV Studio at Federation Square, celebrating Melbourne's dynamic cultural network and engaging community groups, as well as Contemporary Projects, a space dedicated to contemporary art on the ground floor of NGV International.

Image captions: 1. Charles Nettleton English 1825-1902, worked in Australia 1854-1902 *Exhibition at the Melbourne Public Library and Museum* 1869 State Library of Victoria, Melbourne Commissioned by Trustees of the Library, 1869 2. Opening of the National Gallery of Victoria on St Kilda Road, 1968 3. Visitors lining up for *Salvador Dalí: Liquid Desire* 24 hour opening 4. Visitors enjoying Last Day of Summer in the Grollo Equiset Garden at NGV International 5. Children enjoying the NGV Kids Corner.



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PHILANTHROPY AT THE NGV

Over its 150-year history, the NGV has been privileged to have many benefactors and supporters assisting the Gallery in acquiring art works. Almost all the works in the NGV Collection have been donated by the public.

ALFRED FELTON (1831–1904)



Alfred Felton is the greatest benefactor in Australia’s visual arts history. Many of the NGV’s great works came to the NGV Collection through the generous legacy of the Felton Bequest.

Alfred Felton, a prominent and successful Melbourne businessman, was born in England in 1831 and migrated to Australia in 1853. He died in January 1904 leaving instructions in his will for the remainder of his estate to become a charitable foundation, to be known as the Felton Bequest.

He instructed that the Felton Bequest be placed in the care of a committee and a trustee, with annual distribution to be shared equally between selected Victorian charitable organisations (particularly those that benefit women and children) along with the acquisition of artworks for the National Gallery of Victoria.

Alfred Felton never married and died a bachelor. Once the payment of legacies and probate duties was met, the residue of the estate of £378,033 (a staggering sum in today’s terms) was put in a trust.

From 1904 to 2010, more than 15,000 works have been purchased by the Felton Bequest for the NGV, with a current value of approximately \$2 billion. The NGV Collection is currently estimated to be worth over \$3.5 billion.

Many of the finest works in the NGV Collection came to the Gallery because of Alfred Felton’s extraordinary bequest. From 1904 the NGV was able to purchase key masterpieces including Tiepolo’s *Banquet of Cleopatra* 1743-44, Claude Monet’s *Vétheuil* 1879, Frederick McCubbin’s *The Pioneer* 1904 and Tom Roberts’ iconic Australian work *Shearing the rams* 1888-90. As Felton said himself, the bequest was to “raise and improve public taste”.

In its 150th year, the National Gallery of Victoria pays tribute to Alfred Felton, one of the greatest arts benefactors of the 20th century. His generosity was immense and his legacy continues, through a new generation of committed philanthropists.

Image caption: John Longstaff, Australia 1862–1941 *Alfred Felton* c. 1932, oil on canvas 136.6 x 93.0 cm Felton Bequest, 1932

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PHILANTHROPY AT THE NGV

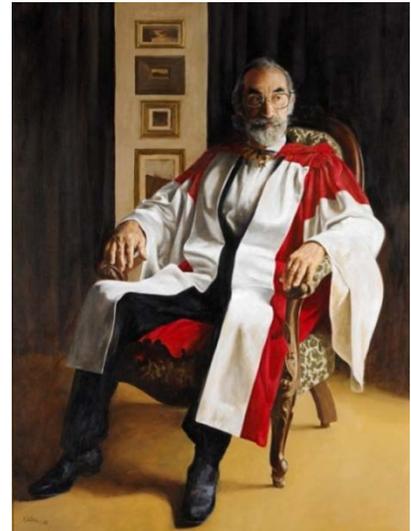
JOSEPH BROWN (1918–2009)

In 2004, Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, respected Melbourne art dealer, artist and collector, donated the major part of his collection of Australian art to the National Gallery of Victoria.

His donation of some 150 significant paintings, sculptures and works on paper represented at the time the most generous gift of artworks ever made to a public gallery in Australia. This donation forms The Joseph Brown Collection, which is on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square.

The Joseph Brown Collection includes works by John Glover, Eugene von Guérard, Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton, John Russell, Sidney Nolan, Margaret Preston, Russell Drysdale, Arthur Boyd, John Brack and Fred Williams, among many others.

Joseph Brown died in August 2009.



MASTERPIECES FOR MELBOURNE



In 2008, the NGV launched its Masterpieces for Melbourne campaign, inviting the community to support the Gallery by securing \$150 million by the NGV's 150th anniversary.

For the first half of the 20th century, the Felton Bequest enabled the NGV to acquire great masterpieces and laid the foundations for what is now recognised as one of the world's finest collections of art.

Since the 1950s, however, this buying capacity has been in decline, and the NGV has been unable to buy works of equal quality. Huge rises in the cost of major works of art, the reduction in the relative value of the Australian dollar, and the conservative investment policy prescribed by the will of Alfred Felton, have significantly reduced the buying power of this bequest.

Since 2008, the Masterpieces for Melbourne campaign has advanced as a result of the actions of generous benefactors including Loti and Victor Smorgon, Allen and Maria Myers and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. These donors continue the NGV's great tradition of philanthropy.

Nearly all of the collections of the NGV represent private philanthropy. Our current status is the result of the generosity of past generations, and it is now time for this generation to respond, enabling our Gallery again to become one of the great acquiring institutions in the world.

Image captions: 1. **Wes Walters** born Australia 1928 *Dr Joseph Brown* 1983 oil on canvas National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne The Joseph Brown Collection. Presented through the NGV Foundation by Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004 © Wes Walters 2. Dame Elisabeth Murdoch during the filming of the Masterpieces for Melbourne campaign.



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INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE NGV

- Entry to the NGV is free for all to enjoy.
- The NGV has an exhibition space of almost 19,000 square metres across both buildings.
- The smallest work in the NGV Collection is 'Wdjat' eye, a piece of pottery from Egypt measuring just 0.7 x 0.1 x 0.3 cm.
- The oldest work in the NGV Collection is a *Brick* made from unfired clay from Iraq, 5000 BC.
- The largest painting in the NGV Collection is John Herbert's *Moses bringing down the Tables of the Law* (c. 1872–1878), purchased in 1878, which measures 344.4 x 633.5 cm.
- The earliest purchased work in the NGV Collection is an engraving by Eugen E. Schäffer, *The Pieta in the Arena Chapel* c. 1851-1852 which was purchased in 1860.
- The NGV Collection includes over 70,000 works of art across many media and art forms including decorative arts, prints and drawings, photography, sculpture, fashion and textiles, and new media.
- The first painting purchased by the NGV was *On the ice, Stockholm* 1853 by Per Cedergren. This work was purchased in 1861, the year the Gallery opened.
- The Leonard French stained glass ceiling at NGV International is 51.206 metres long, 14.325 metres wide and 1.22 metres deep. Due to the weight of the glass, the ceiling could not be built flat, and was therefore made of triangular sections projecting downward. The ceiling is made of 224 triangular pieces of glass in 50 colours and took five years to construct.
- The Waterwall at NGV International was intended to emphasise the simple shape of the building by the water's movement. The glass is 20 metres wide and 6 metres high and is the support for a continually running, recycled water curtain.
- The NGV's birthday, 24 May, was Queen Victoria's birthday and the Gallery's first exhibition was held to coincide with this date.
- Since reopening in 2002, more than 14 million visitors have enjoyed the displays in the NGV's two buildings. Overall, it is possible that more than 150 million visitors have visited the NGV in the past 150 years.
- In 2009, the NGV was recognised as the 20th most visited art gallery in the world, with 1.6 million visitors, and the most visited art gallery in Australia.
- The first collection of works purchased for the opening in 1861 included plaster casts of the Elgin Marbles, gems and coins.
- The NGV Collection is currently estimated to be worth over \$3.5 billion. Of this, approximately \$2 billion worth of art has been acquired through the Felton Bequest.
- On average, 1.5 million people visit the NGV each year.
- The NGV has ten curatorial departments including Asian Art, Australian Art, Australian Fashion & Textiles, Contemporary Art, Decorative Arts, Indigenous Art, International Art, International Fashion & Textiles, Photography and Prints & Drawings.

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A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

- 1861** The National Gallery of Victoria opens on 24 May, Queen Victoria's birthday, within the new Library on Swanston Street (now the State Library).
- 1862** NGV acquires its first Decorative Arts works, an Illustrative Series of ceramics from Alderman Copeland.
- 1864** The NGV acquires its first Australian painting, Nicholas Chevalier's *The Buffalo Ranges, Victoria*
- 1895** NGV acquires its first Textile work, a collection of Indian textiles.
- 1904** The Felton Bequest is established along with an independent Felton Bequest Committee. Once the payment of legacies and probate duties were met, the residue of the estate was £378,033 – a massive sum at the time.
- 1905** Pissarro's *Boulevard Montmartre 1897* is acquired, making the NGV one of the first public galleries in the world to purchase a French Impressionist work.
- 1906** Frederick McCubbin's *The Pioneer 1904* is acquired.
- 1932** Tom Roberts *Shearing the rams 1889-90* is acquired.
- 1933** Tiepolo's *The Banquet of Cleopatra* is acquired. This work, the most valuable in Australia, has become the signature work of the NGV.
- 1936** NGV purchases its first Rembrandt, *Two old men disputing 1628*.
- 1960** Plans for the new St Kilda Road Gallery are proposed and Roy Grounds is appointed as architect.
- 1968** The new National Gallery of Victoria building opens on St Kilda Road, Melbourne.
- 1986** Picasso's *Weeping woman 1937* is acquired.
- 1995** Emily Kngwarray's *Big yam dreaming 1995* is acquired.
- 1999** NGV on St Kilda Road closes for refurbishment.
- 2002** The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia opens at Federation Square as the first gallery in the world dedicated to Australian art.
- 2002** Rio Tinto donates the entire Fred Williams *Pilbara* series, the most valuable gift of works of art ever made to a public museum by a private corporation.
- 2003** NGV International on St Kilda Road reopens, refurbished with a much larger display space.
- 2004** The Joseph Brown Collection of almost 150 paintings, sculptures and works on paper is gifted to the NGV.

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- 2004** The first Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition, *The Impressionists: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay* opens at the NGV, attracting some 375,000 visitors – at the time setting the Australian record for exhibition visitation.
- 2004** The NGV introduces late night openings, inviting city dwellers to experience **art after dark**.
- 2008** The Masterpieces for Melbourne campaign is launched to raise \$150 million by the NGV's 150th anniversary, for the acquisition of artworks.
- 2009** NGV Kids Corner, the Gallery's first space dedicated to children opens at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.
- 2009** The NGV holds a 24-hour **art after dark** event during *Salvador Dalí: Liquid Desire*. This is the first 24-hour event in an Australian gallery.
- 2010** The Art Newspaper (UK) reports that during 2009, the NGV is the 20th most visited gallery in the world.
- 2010** The NGV welcomes its 12 millionth visitor since reopening in 2003.
- 2011** The NGV celebrates its 150th birthday!
- 2011** Many new developments are introduced for the 150th year, including major acquisitions; redeveloped gallery spaces; Australia Post launches a series of stamps featuring works from the NGV Collection; two new contemporary spaces and an online competition seeking a public vote for the overall top ten favourite artworks from the NGV Collection.

NGV DIRECTORS

1870–1882	Eugene von Guerard (Head of School of Art, and de facto the first Director)	1973–1974	Gordon Thomson
1882–1891	George Frederick Folingsby	1975–1980	Eric Rowlison
1891–1935	Lindsay Bernhard Hall	1981–1987	Patrick McCaughey
1936–1941	James Stuart McDonald	1988–1988	Rodney Wilson
1942–1955	Daryl Lindsay	1989–1995	James Mollison
1956–1973	Eric Westbrook	1995–1998	Timothy Potts
		1999–current	Gerard Vaughan

NGV International

180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne
10am–5pm, closed Tuesdays

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

Federation Square, Melbourne
10am–5pm, closed Mondays

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My Top Ten Online Competition



The National Gallery of Victoria invites you to vote online for your favourite works of art from the NGV Collection.

From Rembrandt to Brack, the NGV Collection includes over 70,000 works, and from Friday 4 February, you can vote for your favourite!

To make it a little easier we have selected 150 works to choose from. These works span the fifteen decades of the NGV's history and My Top Ten participants are encouraged to post comments about the works for which they are voting.

Each of the top ten works on display will be accompanied by a special NGV 150 wall label. These labels will include a selection of comments and personal responses made by voters.

The ten most popular works will form part of a special NGV 150 self-guided trail which will be launched on the NGV 150 pARTy weekend on 28–29 May 2011.

Visitors to the Gallery will be able to enjoy the self-guided trail at NGV International, St Kilda Road and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square.

Voters also go in the draw to win a weekly prize. Prizes will be awarded randomly and in the final week of voting a major prize will be awarded.

Visit mytopten.ngv.vic.gov.au from 4 February 2011 for your chance to win one of several great prizes and help determine the NGV's best loved works of art. Voting closes Sunday 17 April 2011.

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Media enquiries

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