

Mix Tape 1980s: Appropriation, Subculture, Critical Style

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia | 11 April – 1 September 2013 | FREE



Opening on 11 April, *Mix Tape 1980s: Appropriation, Subculture, Critical Style* will explore Australian art of the 1980s; a decade of dynamic social change and fiercely contested viewpoints on contemporary art and culture.

Featuring over 120 works, the exhibition will bring together creative approaches ranging from appropriation and sampling to the DIY aesthetics of post-punk; and from postmodern critiques of authorship and originality to postcolonial revisions of Australian history.

Tony Ellwood, NGV Director, said, “*Mix Tape 1980s* contextualises a decade that left a legacy beyond its memorable fashion and music.”

“Amid the glamour and greed of the 1980s, Australian artists were exploring issues that continue to engage artists of today – issues of Australian identity and place, and social, political, environmental and economic concerns.”

Mix Tape 1980s will feature various media—painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, fashion and furniture design, as well as selected ephemera including magazines, records, films and video which reference the preoccupations of a rapidly changing

Australian society and the intersections between art, music, theory and popular culture.

Max Delany, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, NGV, said that while the 1980s were characterised by significant events such as the AIDS crisis, the 1988 Australian Bicentenary and the fall of the Berlin Wall, they were equally memorable for raging debates between divergent camps and subcultural groups concerning art and culture.

“The 1980s was a period in which artists took up a diverse range of aesthetic positions not merely as stylistic options but as trenchantly argued ethical choices. Debates raged between those who saw a return to figurative painting and expressionism as an antidote to the cool cerebral conceptualism of the 1970s, and those who embraced postmodern and postcolonial theory as a challenge to existing formalist positions and nationalist narratives.”

“As the pre-eminence of landscape painting in Australian art came under increasing pressure by artists and designers informed by popular culture, urban contexts and subcultural style, artists began to develop local responses and cross-overs between art, music and design informed by increasingly international fields of reference,” said Mr Delany.

Mix Tape 1980s will present key works including: Howard Arkley’s *Muzak mural - chair tableau* (1980-1981) and *Tattooed head* (1988); Maria Kozic’s installation *The Birds* (1981); David McDiarmid’s *Safe sex ball* poster (1988); Tracey Moffatt’s *Something More* series (1989); Juan Davila’s *Rat man* (1980); and, the work of women artists from Lajamanu who were critical to the genesis of the Indigenous women’s art movement. Australian fashion of the 1980s will be highlighted through the works of Katie Pye Studio, Jenny Bannister, Leigh Bowery, Abyss Studio and others. Rather than an encyclopedic view of Australian art of the period, the exhibition is a focused look at specific aspects of the NGV Collection in an area that remains a strength of the institution’s collecting history.

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In addition, *Mix Tape 1980s* will showcase 1980s ephemera including records by *Tsk Tsk Tsk*, David Chesworth and his band *Essendon Airport*, featuring cover designs by Philip Brophy, Maria Kozic, Linda Marrinon, Bruce Slorach and Peter Tyndall, while selected participating artists will create 1980s music playlists for the exhibition space. *Mix Tape 1980s* will also display copies of significant Australian publications including *Tension*, *Lip Magazine* and the highly influential journal *Art & Text*, established by Paul Taylor in 1981 and esteemed for revolutionising Australian art criticism by considering local art in an international context. Paul Taylor subsequently went on to curate the 1982 landmark exhibition *Popism* at the NGV, which featured many of the Australian artists also presented in *Mix Tape 1980s*.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of public programs - visit www.ngv.vic.gov.au for further details. Crossbar Café (Level 3 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia) will offer a unique 1980s-themed menu for the duration of the exhibition, starring nostalgic classics such as quiche Lorraine and blue lagoon cocktails.

Mix Tape 1980s: Appropriation, Subculture, Critical Style will be on display from 11 April 2013 to 1 September 2013 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Federation Square. Open 10am–5pm, Tues–Sun. Entry is free.

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Image caption:

Maria KOZIC

Australian born 1957

Self-portrait 1987

from *The bicentennial folio: prints by twenty-five Australian artists* 1988

colour photo-screenprint, ed. 38/80

60.7 x 47.8 cm (image); 77.2 x 47.9 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased from Admission Funds, 1989

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