

Art of the Table

9 January 2014

NGV International | 28 February – 31 December 2014 | Free entry



Exquisitely decorated porcelain plates surrounded by cutlery and highlighted with sparkling glassware – a well-laid dining table can be a work of art. A new exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, *Art of the Table*, explores dining practices through the examination of the extravagant aesthetic of the dining table.

Opening on 28 February 2014 to coincide with the start of the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, the exhibition will draw on the richness of the NGV's decorative arts collection, assembling works from the 15th to 20th centuries

to highlight the practices, predilections and culinary passions from this defining period in gastronomic display.

Amanda Dunsmore, Curator, International Decorative Arts & Antiquities, NGV, said: "*Art of the Table* will present a variety of exquisite ceramics, glass, cutlery and silverware that adorned dining tables of the affluent from the 16th to 18th centuries."

"During the 17th and 18th centuries many new table forms came into being with the emergence of royal dining etiquette, developed at the court of Louis XIV. Many of these forms are still used on our tables today," Ms Dunsmore said.

Inspired by this period, *Art of the Table* will present 12 themed cases of works filled with precious table wares spanning five hundred years. Matthew Martin, Assistant Curator, International Decorative Arts & Antiquities, said that each of the cases will exhibit dining wares developed for particular foods and beverages, such as imported tea, coffee and chocolate, medicinal and fortifying foods, and foods for the dairy and desserts.

"We have developed themes to highlight a variety of dining practices. This will include the serious business of drinking with all the theatrical accoutrements; 18th century equipage relating to the newly imported luxuries of tea, coffee and chocolate; the invention of the porcelain dinner service showcasing a splendid Meissen service from a private collection and Renaissance dining featuring 16th century Venetian Maiolica plates and German stoneware.

"*Art of the Table* will also compare traditional items from the 18th century with their contemporary counterparts in a case themed 'then and now'," Mr Martin said.

-continues-

NGV NEWS

ngv
National
Gallery of
Victoria

Art of the Table will showcase a recent acquisition; a mid-18th century French travelling chocolate service, which will be on display for the first time.

Art of the Table will be on display from 28 February to 31 December 2014 at NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road. Open Wed–Sun, 10am–5pm. Free entry.

-ends-

Media contact:

Jessica Hedger, Media and Public Affairs Officer
03 8620 2411 | 0438 582 727 | jessica.hedger@ngv.vic.gov.au

Image caption:

Chelsea Porcelain Factory, London (manufacturer)

England c.1744–1769

Melon tureen c.1755

porcelain (soft-paste)

Collection of Kenneth Reed, Sydney