

QUEER

ARTWORK LABELS

© COPYRIGHT

This document remains the property of the National Gallery of Victoria and must be returned upon request.
Reproduction in part or in whole is prohibited without written authorisation.

In recent decades the word 'queer' has been reclaimed by many LGBTQ+ people. Despite its pejorative origins, the term is now often used in the spirit of pride, and it is with this in mind that the title for this exhibition has been chosen.

Queer embraces the many associations of queerness as it is understood, experienced and expressed in art, both now and throughout history. Queerness is explored within this exhibition as not only an expression of identity, but also a means for imagining a future, and of understanding sensibilities, aesthetic tendencies, artistic strategies and representations of community.

Queer brings together nearly 400 artworks across all collection areas of the NGV, which range from antiquity to the present day and represent artists from around the globe. Rather than attempting to provide a definitive history of queer art, this exhibition explores the NGV Collection through a queer lens, presenting and interpreting queer concepts and stories. Works are arranged thematically across broad and often intersecting ideas and subjects that permeate queer history.

Drawn entirely from the collection of this 160-year-old institution, *Queer* has its gaps and omissions. It does not seek to address the infinite experiences of queer lives, but rather questions how a collection reveals, celebrates or omits the queer stories that artworks hold, and how this

collection might be understood in a new light. Exploring a collection in this way tells us much about the way that queer artists have navigated the cultural landscapes of their eras, how they have been remembered or omitted by art history, and how queer stories can be told anew.

Note on language

Queer has been curated by a collaborative team and the selection of artworks, their arrangement and the texts accompanying them reflect this approach. The exhibition's development has also been informed by discussions with members of LGBTQ+ and queer communities and organisations.

Moving through *Queer*, you will encounter language that is varied and which responds to contemporary and historical contexts, diverse communities and changing social and political use, and which holds distinct meanings for different people. One word cannot encompass all sexualities, gender identities and experiences. Equally the meanings of words have changed over time. We have aimed to be as contextually accurate as possible, while also accounting for developments in language embraced by LGBTQ+ people over time.

The curatorial team thanks the many LGBTQ+ and queer organisations and community members who provided invaluable insight and feedback during the development of this exhibition.

Throughout this exhibition, you will find various uses of the Dover serif typeface, developed by queer type designer Robin Mientjes.

Imagination and fantasy have long existed as realms of queer possibility, within which queerness is figured through transformation, ambiguity, surfaces and symbols, rather than through real-world acts or identities. The pivotal moment of this mode of queerness was the fin de siècle (end of the nineteenth century), a period characterised by widespread fascination with metamorphosis, artifice and performance. The Aesthetic and Symbolist movements, with their liberating doctrine of 'Art for Art's sake', were a wellspring of queer fantasy. Many artists turned to mythology and fairytale as sites of freedom and fluidity, exempt from the moral strictures of contemporary society. Anticipating the work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, Symbolists, and later Surrealists, mined dream imagery for a visual language of the subconscious.

Fantastic queerness also infused the decorative arts: the sinuous lines of Art Nouveau simultaneously fetishised nature and problematised the meaning of 'natural,' while decorative excess emerged as its own mode of queerness. On the stage, Loïe Fuller and Sarah Bernhardt forged imaginatively ambiguous identities, inspiring many artistic tributes. This sensibility has continued to evolve and metamorphose across the globe into the present day, from the ornamental tableaux of Ethel Walker, through James Gleeson's surrealist visions, to the extravagant autobiographical creations of Yasumasa Morimura.

Across media, geographies and identities, art and design have offered insight into the forging of queer social and artistic communities throughout history. The term 'queer community' encompasses a diverse range of experiences rather than a single, monolithic group. For many queer people, community is often sought beyond the mainstream and heteronormative.

From Frances Hodgkins's queer world of literary and artistic figures in early twentieth-century England to the creative exchanges between Linda Jackson, Jenny Kee, David McDiarmid and other queer Australian fashion designers in the 1970s and 1980s, art and design have been integral in the formation of queer networks.

Discovering community is often about finding the people with whom you can share a sense of self. Artistic expression can be a means of conveying the self, and taking control of self-representation. Through adornment, material objects and self-portraiture, many contemporary artists including Zanele Muholi, William Yang and Dianne Jones reveal their experience, and demonstrate the performativity of representation.

In ancient Greek there were no words for the multitude of queer identities we recognise today, and the expression of a spectrum of sexuality and gender was accepted. Our knowledge of sexuality in both ancient Greece and Rome pertains mainly to men – given that both cultures were patriarchal, and surviving texts were predominantly authored by men, little (save for the poetry of Sappho) has been handed down concerning the personal experiences of women and gender-diverse people in these societies.

A wealth of representations of sexual relations between men permeates Greek art, literature and philosophical discussion, while many of the deities worshipped in ancient Greek culture had love affairs with both men and women. A frank openness about human sexuality seems to have characterised social life in the Roman Empire, which became the dominant governing force in the ancient world from the first century BCE to the mid fifth century CE. What is striking, in the surviving literature – poetry, ancient histories and biographies of famous figures – composed during the height of Imperial Rome, is the very casualness with which multiple facets of human sexuality are represented in this period. As both cultures were slave societies, sexual relations could also, unfortunately, be exploitative in ancient Greece and Rome.

The history of queer literature and performance is as old as these genres themselves, with tales of same-sex love and desire proliferating on page and stage from the classical period to the present day. Traditionally, the worlds of stage and screen – well known for their openness to difference – were gathering places for queer people of all identities and persuasions. The extent to which queerness could be freely expressed varied considerably across time and place, however, with periods of relative acceptance giving way to censorship.

Writers of the early twentieth century witnessed Oscar Wilde's imprisonment for gross indecency in 1895, and the banning of Radclyffe Hall's lesbian melodrama *The Well of Loneliness* in 1928. Their queer references, though abundant, were governed by codes of concealment. In England, the Bloomsbury Group was a community of literary and artistic figures in which queerness was embraced behind closed doors, but it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that the extent of that queerness was revealed to the public. As Virginia Woolf wrote in her novel *Orlando*: 'it cannot be denied that when women get together – but hist! They are always careful to see that the doors are shut, & that not a word of it gets into print ...'

Fascination with the private lives of reigning monarchs has fuelled speculation, rumour and debate for centuries. Surrounded by a plethora of courtiers, chroniclers and political schemers, the lives of royal rulers have historically attracted greater scrutiny than those of ordinary citizens. While royal privilege brought greater freedom from prevailing moralities and laws for monarchs who chose not to conform with social expectations, so too did their hierarchical prominence deny them privacy. The personal physician to Louis XIII of France, Jean Héroard, logged minute and intimate details of the king's daily life for almost three decades, including, for example, the monarch's every bowel movement.

Surviving records from various eras document the tastes and inclinations of hereditary rulers who were controversially same-sex attracted. In modern times, the decline of traditional monarchies has been matched by the rise of a new kind of royalty, known as gay icons or queer icons, with whom, regardless of their personal sexuality or gender identity, queer people have felt an affinity through their social and political struggles. Historical figures such as Marie-Antoinette and Oscar Wilde have attained this status, as have numerous actors and performers, including Judy Garland, Madonna and Kylie Minogue.

Representations of queer love, desire and sensuality throughout history range from coded to overt, and often focus on the body as the site of emotion and sexuality. These works reveal intimacy, create erotic atmospheres and depict pleasure. The art historical genre of the nude provided the opportunity for artists to explore eroticism in the guise of figurative studies and various narratives, particularly in periods when queer genders and sexualities were demonised. Artists would often use coded signifiers to indicate meaning to viewers 'in the know'. Intimacy and romantic love appear sometimes in the frame of the work, as in Mary Cockburn Mercer's *Two women*, and at other times are conveyed through the artist's tender view of their subject, as in Agnes Goodsir's *The letter*.

With the shift to postmodernism in the late twentieth century, representations of the body were recognised as shaped by various ideologies and politics. Artists including Tracey Moffatt and Brook Andrew invite us to understand the body as a form onto which the viewer imposes their desires and which equally has agency to resist presumptions. Eroticism is communicated through references to sexual practices and subcultures, and through fashion and sculpture that revel in the sensuality of bodies.

From the home to the artist's studio to the streets, physical spaces have often been sought out by queer people as sites of refuge, safety, desire, community and resistance. One such space is the bathhouse, which has long been a meeting place for queer people, often men, to engage in sexual activity. The endurance of this queer space has been inscribed into artworks across centuries, from Albrecht Dürer's coded depiction of men being entertained by musicians as they wash and socialise, to Hoda Afshar's intimate photograph of men embracing amid the steam.

A similarly persistent queer space is that of the nightclub, which is represented in such works as Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's *Moving backwards*, set in what the artists describe as 'an abstract club', and Viva Gibb's photograph of Melbourne's former hybrid queer venue, Trish's Coffee Lounge. The occupation and reclamation of public space by queer people is also explored by several artists, including Tourmaline, whose video work, *Atlantic is a sea of bones*, records the Hudson River, Meatpacking District and piers in New York as active sites for Black, queer and trans life in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

Artists engage queer strategies and methodologies to examine wideranging subjects, which may or may not address sexuality or gender. As well as describing a self-identification, queerness can also be understood as a method of challenging hierarchies and social norms to make space for diverse ways of thinking and living. In this way, queerness encompasses a range of political and philosophical modes, and provides a framework for reimagining society. Theorist Judith Butler has described this as a 'field of collective contestation'.

Queer theory emerged in the 1980s and is grounded in the cultural discourse of post-structuralism, which argues that we do not all share a single truth but instead experience the world through our own lens, context and conditioning. Aiming to dismantle preconceived norms including heteronormativity and gender binaries, queer becomes a tool used to disrupt other oppressive structures as wideranging as racism, patriarchy, capitalism, the organisation of labour, categories of 'high' and 'low' culture, and linear time.

Queer strategies used by artists to enact such dismantling include embracing fluidity and ambiguity; celebrating 'failure'; employing appropriation or parody; and queering, used as a verb to describe the process of re-appraising historical cultural material through a queer lens.

Much of the history of queerness is written through legislation and persecution, within which the majority of cases relate to men. Until 1997 gay men were still classified as criminals in one Australian state, Tasmania; and as late as 1982 at least twenty men were sentenced annually, in New South Wales, to imprisonment of between two and five years for consensual 'homosexual relations'. These anti-gay laws were remnants of King Henry VIII's Buggery Act of 1533, which for more than 300 years applied the death penalty to men who had sex with men, and criminalised sex between men for even longer.

Same-sex attracted men were also frequently hanged, beheaded or burned to death in numerous other European countries during this period. By contrast, sex between consenting women and members of other, historically marginal queer groups was rarely put on trial, although they were pathologised and discriminated against in other ways. Because sex between men was vigorously prosecuted, abundant evidence from trial records and newspaper reports about ordinary queer lives in centuries past survives today. Until comparatively recently, the revelation of a person's sexual orientation could frequently lead to work dismissal, damaged careers and social stigma, blighting the lives of legions of queer people worldwide.

Visitors are advised that this exhibition section contains stories and language relating to traumatic moments in queer history, including instances of discrimination, violence, self-harm and death.

Throughout queer history, activism has found expression in various forms. From community building to public action and the creation of artworks, queer people have long devised methods to work against systems of oppression and discrimination. A watershed moment in the history of queer and LGBTQ+ activism was the gay liberation movement. Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, the movement was founded on a central goal: encouraging queer and LGBTQ+ people to counter social, cultural and political discrimination by being publicly out and proud of their identity. This mantra is inscribed into such works as Gilbert Baker's now renowned design for the rainbow flag and Ponch Hawkes's intimate portraits of lesbian love defiantly expressed in a public setting. Works by David McDiarmid, Keith Haring and other artists and activists making art during and about the HIV/AIDS epidemic document queer endurance and resistance in the face of extreme discrimination and loss. Contemporary works, from Textaqueen's radical expression of self in *Gandhi returns (Self-portrait)* to Paul Yore's monumental textile response to the devastating environmental impact of Australia's 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires, highlight the broad and intersectional nature of queer activism today.

In her groundbreaking 1964 essay 'Notes on "Camp"' Susan Sontag declared, 'to talk about camp is to betray it'. Sontag's assertion alludes to the pleasurable notion of secrecy, the power of the unspoken and the coded and, in parallel to this, the risks of revealing too much, or of 'getting it wrong'. The same might be said of taste, a similarly slippery and subjective sensibility, and an ongoing preoccupation for queer artists and audiences alike. Nineteenth-century dandies perceived the perils of stagnating within the conventional parameters of polite good taste, as have more recent artists and designers, including David McDiarmid, Peter Tully and Leigh Bowery.

Whether expressed through painting, decoration, fashion or performance, camp seeks to interrogate hierarchies and undermine cues that reinforce social positioning around gender and sexuality, class and aesthetics. The stage has long been a site of playful inversions: poor masked as rich, young as old, grotesque as beautiful, man as woman. In emphasising the performative nature of identity, camp makes these binaries ridiculous, providing an avenue of infinite possibility grounded in irreverence and often in humour. As Sontag wrote, 'Camp taste is, above all, a mode of enjoyment, of appreciation – not judgement. Camp is generous. It wants to enjoy'.

Left to right

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95,
worked in United States 1979–87

Rainbow Aphorisms series

1993–95
computer-generated colour laserprint

Purchased, 1994

P139.1-13-1994

Gilbert Baker

American 1951–2017

Rainbow flag

designed 1978, manufactured 2018
nylon

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2018

2018.1351

The first two rainbow flags were hand-dyed and stitched by Gilbert Baker and thirty volunteers for San Francisco's Gay Freedom Day Parade on 25 June 1978. Despite its modest beginnings, the rainbow flag is now widely considered a marker of queer pride. Baker's design has been produced in almost every conceivable format. The flag's legacy has also been questioned and reimagined. For his *Rainbow Aphorisms* series, produced between 1993 and 1995, David McDiarmid co-opted the familiar spectrum of colour to complicate the 'gay is good' politics it had been associated with during the gay liberation movement, which stood in stark contrast to the devastation wrought by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Thierry Mugler, Paris fashion house

France est. 1974

Thierry Mugler designer

French 1948–2022

Dress

1990, spring–summer 1990

acetate, viscose, metal

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2007

2007.519

Nan Goldin

American born 1953

Misty in Sheridan Square, NYC

1991, printed 2015

cibachrome photograph, ed. 20/25

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2015

2015.395

In 1978, Nan Goldin moved to New York and photographed her new life, lovers and friends, many of whom were queer, with great intensity. In 1990, her 'old obsession was reawakened' when she was introduced to a circle of drag queens, including Misty, whose lives she began to frequently document. In this candid photograph, Misty is participating in the 1991 New York Pride March. She looks directly into the camera with an expression at once challenging and inviting while a bemused police officer looks on. It is a celebratory expression of identity that aligns with Goldin's belief that her subjects were not 'people suffering gender dysphoria but rather expressing gender euphoria'.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95,
worked in United States 1979–87

Body language

1990

from the *Kiss of Light* series 1990

self-adhesive plastic collage and enamel paint on plywood

Purchased, 1997

1997.92

Body language was included in David McDiarmid's 1991 *Kiss of Light* exhibition at Syme Dodson Gallery in Sydney, which directly addressed issues of gay sexuality in the age of HIV/AIDS to fight against simplistic media connotations of sex with death.

The collaged mosaic both celebrates the world of queer dance culture and memorialises friends who passed away from AIDS-related complications. If this 'body' bespeaks the euphoria of the dance, the 'language' tattooed upon it points to the dark swathe which had cut through the disco crowds of McDiarmid's world. In 1984 Herb Gower had become the first friend of McDiarmid's to die from AIDS-related complications. His name is inscribed on *Body language*, along with the names of other friends McDiarmid had lost to the virus.

Brent Harris

New Zealander/Australian born 1956

The torn curtain

1988

oil on canvas

Margaret Stewart Endowment, 1988

DC1-1988

Fear, doubt, sexuality and spirituality are themes that Brent Harris has returned to in his work. This and the adjacent work were made in a period when many lives were lost to HIV/AIDS. They are meditations on mortality and reflect on the role of art in grieving practices throughout history.

The text 'curtain torn' evokes the biblical depiction of Christ's death on the cross when the curtain protecting the most holy temple tore, dissolving the boundary between earth and the afterlife. Harris came to religious imagery through art and was especially influenced by New Zealand artist Colin McCahon's abstract representations of spirituality. For Harris the long history of biblical subjects reinterpreted in art provides an avenue to explore the human condition.

Brent Harris

New Zealander/Australian born 1956

Requiem

1988

oil on canvas

Margaret Stewart Endowment, 1988

DC2-1988

Reflecting on the time of the HIV/AIDS crisis, Brent Harris has said, 'The 1980s was a decade of high anxiety for me... As the 1980s progressed so did the presence of death'. The requiem Mass is the name of the Roman Catholic service given for the deceased. The Latin words that appear in the work are from *Lux Aeterna*, sung during the Mass, and are taken from the phrase that translates as 'May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord'. The words 'And death shall have no dominion' is from Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans and refers to the resurrection of Christ over which death is powerless.

Ross T. Smith

New Zealander, Ngāpuhi/Māori, born 1961, emigrated to Australia 1987–

L'Amour et la mort (sont la même chose)

1990–92

gelatin silver photographs on plywood, tacks, unique

Gift of anonymous donors, 2016

2016.135

The title of this work is a play on words, since *l'amour* (love) and *la mort* (death) are pronounced similarly in French. Ross T. Smith draws our attention to the relationship between sexual intimacy and death in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In defiance of the misrepresentation of gay sex in the media at the time, this work conveys a sense of gentle intimacy through its tactility, which encourages us to imagine the sensation of touching or inhabiting the skin portrayed.

Paul Yore

Australian born 1987

The Evacuation of Mallacoota

2021

mixed media textile

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2021

This work is a response to the bushfires of 2019–20. It draws on several art historical sources: photographs from a homoerotic book; ancient Egyptian funerary art; and *Blue Nudes*, 1952 by Henri Matisse. Made from recycled fabric sourced from op shops, the fragmented collage reflects the visual excess of the post-internet media environment. Text is used to evoke cultural precedents of anarchistic punk and American Pop Art, and the various idioms, non-sequiturs and quotes create diverse, conflicting narratives. For example, the phrase 'FREEDOM OR DEATH' originated in the French Revolution and was later appropriated by American patriots. The work plays on the grandiosity of European and colonial painting traditions while undercutting authority by appealing to a camp, tongue-in-cheek sense of frivolity and queer defiance.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95,
worked in United States 1979–87

Plague boy

1994

colour laser print and plastic

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 1998

2002.369.a-p

Following the death of Peter Tully from AIDS-related complications in August 1992, David McDiarmid dedicated much of his practice to creating art that addressed the emotional experiences of the HIV-positive and the grief-stricken people in his community. He began to fabricate newspaper headlines and magazine covers reflecting the sensationalised and homophobic headlines published by media outlets.

Appropriating the title of the popular men's magazine *Playboy*, McDiarmid conceived *Plague boy*. Much like his *Rainbow Aphorisms* series (on display nearby), this faux cover is filled with text that at once shocks and devastates. *Plague boy* reflects the reality faced by queer communities during the crisis, succinctly summarised by Sally Gray, academic, curator and close friend of the artist, as 'disease, death, fear, rage, abjection and resistance'.

Ponch Hawkes

Australian born 1946

No title (Two women embracing, ‘Glad to be gay’)

1973, printed 2018

gelatin silver photograph

No title (Women holding hands in front of graffiti, ‘Lesbians are lovely’)

1973, printed 2018

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2018

2018.1372 & 2018.1373

These intimate photographs documenting lesbian love and friendship amid the gay liberation movement in Melbourne were captured by Ponch Hawkes for the former countercultural broadsheet *The Digger*. The pride expressed by the women in these photographs – Jane McConachie, Sue Jackson, Jenny Pausacker and Chris Sitka – counters the extreme discrimination lesbians faced in the latter part of the twentieth century. In both images, Pausacker wears a button badge on her chest that reads ‘Glad to be Gay’. These kinds of symbols, like Gilbert Baker’s rainbow flag (on display nearby),

...continued overleaf

were an important part of the language of lesbian activism during the gay liberation movement. Wearing pro-lesbian signs and symbols within a broader culture of oppression was an important form of protest.

José López

Cuban 1941–92

Luis Medina

Cuban 1942–85

Fullerton Avenue, Gay Parade

1976

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 1979

PH167-1979

José López and Luis Medina were childhood friends who both emigrated to America in the 1950s during the Cuban Revolution. Their shared interest in fine arts led them to enrol at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During their studies, they established a collaborative artistic practice, which may also have been romantic in nature.

This photograph was taken shortly before López and Medina ceased working together and captures three people standing atop a float making its way down Fullerton Avenue for Chicago's 1976 Gay Pride Parade. Much like the women depicted in Ponch Hawkes's photographs nearby, the people in this image counter systemic discrimination and oppression with courage and pride.

Left to right

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95,
worked in United States 1979–87

Mardi Gras

1978

collage of colour paper (streamers), cut metallic card and photocopied paper, blue fibre-tipped pen on cut paper, red ink, confetti, embossing tape, plastic, elastic and metal (staples) on brown handmade mulberry paper

Gay dollar

1978

collage of cut photocopied paper, offset lithograph with screenprint printed in pink ink and black embossing tape on brown handmade mulberry paper

Gifts from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 2017

2016.250 & 2016.256

These collages use a motif with a complex place in queer history: the inverted pink triangle. The symbol was conceived of and used during the Holocaust in concentration camps to identify gay men who had violated paragraph 175 of German criminal law by engaging in acts of 'unnatural indecency'. Women exposed as lesbians were made to wear an inverted

...continued overleaf

black triangle. Amid the rise of gay liberation, the symbol was reclaimed by queer people and worn as a badge of pride. *Mardi Gras*, spattered with blood and confetti, records the 1978 flashpoint at which Sydney's various gay and lesbian enclaves began to coalesce into a powerful political force.

Textaqueen

Australian born 1975

Gandhi returns (Self-portrait)

2013

from the *Unknown Artist* series 2013

colour fibre-tipped pens

Purchased NGV Foundation with the assistance of
The Docking Drawing Fund (NGV), 2013

2013.44

Textaqueen uses their art-making to imagine an ever-expanding universe. Depicted here is India's most globally famous cultural icon, Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was integral to the movement for Indian independence from the British through non-violent resistance. He was also known to have expressed anti-black, racist views about South Africa and has more recently been scrutinised for his behaviour towards young women. Textaqueen draws attention to the fallibilities and complexities of historical figures by depicting Gandhi as a dead and salivating zombie. In 2011, Gandhi's sexuality was also the subject of speculation in a biography by Joseph Lelyveld that claimed the love of Gandhi's life was actually a German-Jewish bodybuilder named Hermann Kallenbach.

Sean Loughrey

Australian born 1964

Desmond Tutu (laughing after the release of Mandela)

2001

number 1 from the *Yawangs* series 2001

computer-generated print

Purchased, 2003

2003.37

This work by Sean Loughry captures a moment of joy on the face of Nobel Prize winning South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 1990 on the release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison. Known for their work as human rights activists Tutu and Mandela are recognised as key figures in the struggle to end South African apartheid. As the first president of post-apartheid South Africa, Mandela ushered in the nation's new constitution, which included protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

This ultimately resulted in the later repeal of bans on military service by gay and lesbian people and marriage protections for same-sex couples. Before his death in 2021 Desmond Tutu was also an important advocate for LGBTQ+ rights in South Africa, making global headlines in 2013 with the statement 'I would rather go to hell than to a homophobic heaven.'

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Secret love

1976

metallic paint, red fibre-tipped pen, collage on graph paper

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 1998

2002.357

David McDiarmid's first solo exhibition, *Secret Love*, was staged in December 1976 at Hogarth Galleries in Sydney. The thirty-two collages presented in the exhibition addressed topics relevant to McDiarmid and the community of gay men of which he was a part, including gay iconography and sexual codes, Sydney's gay spaces and communities, and the systemic oppression of gay men in a time before sex between two consenting men was decriminalised in New South Wales. This poster, created by McDiarmid to promote the exhibition, prominently features the packaging for K-Y lubricating jelly, which he has playfully labelled 'tube of joy'.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

An exhibition of work by homosexual and lesbian artists

1978

colour screenprint, collage, fibre-tipped pen

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 1998

2002.391

David McDiarmid designed this poster to promote the opening of *An Exhibition of Work by Homosexual and Lesbian Artists*, which took place at Watters Gallery in Sydney on 23 July 1978. The exhibition was held in conjunction with the 4th National Homosexual Conference at Paddington Town Hall, and featured works by ten queer artists based in Sydney, whose names are listed on the poster. As the first group show in Australia devoted to the work of artists identifying as gay and lesbian, it represented a watershed moment in the country's queer history.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Gay liberation fundraising dance

1973

screenprint on silver paper

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 1998

2002.383

After moving to Sydney in 1972 with his first serious boyfriend, John Lee, David McDiarmid quickly immersed himself in the city's burgeoning gay liberation movement. He attended Sydney Gay Liberation meetings at 67 Glebe Point Road, where he met new friends, and volunteered his artistic skills to design promotional materials for various consciousness-raising activities and public actions coordinated by the group. One such design is this poster for a Sydney Gay Liberation fundraising dance at Paddington Hall on 5 May 1973.

Keith Haring

American 1958–90

Safe sex t-shirt

1987

screenprinted cotton

Gift of Robyn Beeche, 1992

CT11-1992

Keith Haring lived and loved as an openly gay man, and actively campaigned for queer rights. Diagnosed with HIV in 1988, Haring produced an extraordinary amount of art before his death from AIDS-related complications in 1990, much of which addressed the devastating impact of the virus on New York's queer community. While many of Haring's late works consist of dark imagery, he remained committed to sharing positive messages that normalise queer desire and advocate for sexual safety. Haring's design for *Safe sex t-shirt* features an animated, smiling penis holding a condom and instructing viewers to practise safe sex, thereby limiting the spread of the virus.

Susan Cohn

Australian born 1952

Cohndom box

1996

plastic

Presented through the NGV Foundation by John McPhee, Fellow, 2005

2005.284.a-b

2005.285.a-b

Susan Cohn conceived the *Cohndom box*, its title a pun on her own name, in 1995. The design was first displayed in a vending machine as a part of the 1995 exhibition *Reflections on a Safe Future* at Anna Schwartz Gallery. Visitors could purchase a box from the machine for two dollars. Cohn's design was subsequently released as a product for sale, and customers had the choice of silver, coloured aluminium or plastic. Like Haring's *Safe sex t-shirt* on display nearby, the *Cohndom box* promoted safe sex amid a sociopolitical climate of extreme fear, misinformation and discrimination directed towards queer people during the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Guerrilla Girls, New York art collective

United States est. 1985

Supreme Court Justice supports right to privacy for gays and lesbians

1992

from the *Guerrilla Girls Portfolio Compleat 1985–2012 + Upgrade 2012–2016*

1985–2016

poster: offset lithograph

Purchased with funds donated by Susan Jones and James McGrath, 2018

2018.86

Guerrilla Girls is a collective of anonymous feminist artists and activists, formed in New York City in 1985. Their posters, billboards, books, videos and live lectures merge statistics, humour and bold visuals to expose systemic inequality in and beyond the art world.

This 1992 poster carries an image of US Supreme Court judge Clarence Thomas. The photograph is accompanied by a quote from his opening statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee on 11 October 1991 (later cited in *The New York Times*), in which he addressed sexual assault claims lodged by Professor Anita Hill. The quote implies that all people, including queer people, have the right to privacy. It stands in stark contrast to the public vilification of queer people and their sexual preferences amid the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

David Wojnarowicz

American 1954–92

Untitled (ACT UP)

1990

colour screenprint on two sheets, ed. 20/100

Purchased, NGV Foundation, 2021

Queer and diagnosed HIV-positive in 1987, David Wojnarowicz advocated for people living with or lost to AIDS in much of his work. *Untitled (ACT UP)* was created by Wojnarowicz to raise funds for the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in New York City. One half of the diptych is populated by data, referencing the trading codes of US pharmaceutical companies that profited from the death of hundreds of thousands of people in America during the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The diptych's other half features text authored by the artist. Wojnarowicz references homophobic comments made by public figures such as former American politician Louie Welch, to demonstrate how conservative politics and government inaction compounded the widespread discrimination and loss associated with the crisis.

Peter Tully

Australia 1947–92

A rose is a rose..., brooch

1991

plastic, steel

Presented through the NGV Foundation by John McPhee, Fellow, 2005

2005.294

The title of this work refers to a line in the poem 'Sacred Emily' (1913) by American lesbian writer Gertrude Stein. The phrase suggests that things are as they are; it also suggests that the name of something can evoke not only the object itself but also the associations and emotions we identify with it. The shape hanging from the rose resembles a teardrop and lends the piece a sombre mood that may reference deaths in the queer community during the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Artist Peter Tully would himself die of HIV/AIDS-related illness one year after making this work.

eX de Medici

Australian born 1959

.308 (rifle)

2004

watercolour

Purchased, 2004

2004.597

During a residency at the CSIRO Division of Entomology eX de Medici studied moth species that have not yet been classified and that are threatened or extinct due to mining activities. In this work, a rifle is rendered as though covered in the delicate setae of an endangered moth. De Medici here references the art historical tradition of seventeenth-century Dutch vanitas painting that addressed mortality through the depiction of objects, such as skulls, dead animals, wilting flowers and rotting fruit, while engaging with contemporary issues of destruction, violence, corruption and greed. De Medici questions why opposition to corporate profiteering is often dismissed by those in power as anti-social subversion and likens it to the way certain groups have framed queerness as an aberration of human nature.

Hannah Brontë

Australian born 1991

Umma's Tongue – molten at 6000°

2017

colour video, sound, 4 min 50 sec, ed. 2/5

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2019

2019.239

Brisbane-based DJ, doula and video artist Hannah Brontë creates work that embodies blak and queer matriarchal power. Within this video, the word 'umma', or 'mother', is repeated by a cast of all blak womxn (the artist's preferred spelling of women). Mother Earth is personified as a community of queer and blak matriarchal figures, who collectively resist their own destruction within a dystopian, post-climate change landscape. As Brontë describes it, 'if Mother Earth were a rapper, then this is her new music video'.

Andy Warhol

American 1928–87

Self-portrait no. 9

1986

synthetic polymer paint and screenprint on canvas

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the National Gallery Women's Association, Governor, 1987

IC3-1987

Andy Warhol once said, 'The 1980s are so much like the '60s that it's sort of peculiar'. In his self-portrait of 1986, completed a year before his death, Warhol references, through the overlaying of psychedelic forms and colours on his face, the 'world' of Andy Warhol and his now infamous activities of the 1960s. Warhol's world included 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. Warhol's openly homoerotic and often camp art reflected gay underground culture throughout his career, making him a celebrated queer icon. His experimental films of the early 1960s brought alternative sexualities to the fore in arthouse cinemas throughout the world.

William Blake

English 1757–1827

Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims

1810

etching and engraving, 3rd of 5 states

Felton Bequest, 1939

933-4

In his recent history of gay London, *Queer City*, novelist and critic Peter Ackroyd notes how, in his *The Canterbury Tales*, composed in the late fourteenth century, 'Geoffrey Chaucer provided one of the first portraits, or caricatures, of a London queer'. This was in the character of the Pardoner pilgrim, whose long blond hair, high-pitched voice, beardless face and eyes shining bright like a hare mark him out as an ambiguous character. Chaucer's narrator alludes to the ambiguity of the Pardoner's gender, declaring, 'I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare'. Another pilgrim, the Summoner, 'bar to hym a styf burdoin', suggesting a possible sexual liaison between the two.

Minton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

manufacturer

England est. 1793

John Bell modeller

English 1812–95

Shakespeare

1858

porcelain (parian)

The Dr Robert Wilson Collection. Gift of Dr Robert Wilson, 2007

2007.107

Robert Dunkarton mezzotinter

English 1744–1815

George Perfect Harding intermediary
draughtsman

English 1781–1853

Unknown (after)

**Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of
Southampton**

published 1814

mezzotint

Felton Bequest, 1926

2755-3

As originally published in 1609, William Shakespeare's sonnets comprised 126 poems addressed to 'a man right fair', and twenty-eight addressed to 'a woman colour'd ill'. When John Benson published the second edition of the sonnets in 1640, however, he rearranged the order of the poems, combining some of them together and retitling others to make the collective appear to have been addressed solely to a woman. This may have been done to mask the identity of the 'man right fair' to whom so many of Shakespeare's love sonnets were directed. Some Shakespeare scholars believe this man to have been the dashing young Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, although the exact nature of their relationship remains undetermined.

André Kertész

Hungarian/American 1894–1985, worked in
France 1925–36

Colette, Paris

1930, printed c. 1974
gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 1976

PH86-1976

Novelist, journalist and performer Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette is best remembered for her 1944 novella *Gigi*, but it was with her series of semi-autobiographical *Claudine* novels, published under her then husband's name, that she rose to prominence, and first gave literary expression to her bisexuality. In addition to several much-publicised liaisons with women, Colette also fostered long-term same-sex relationships, most notably with Mathilde 'Max' de Morny, with whom she cohabited. In 1907, an onstage kiss between Colette and Max in the pantomime *Rêve d'Égypte* provoked a near-riot, and in its wake, the couple were no longer able to live together openly. Nonetheless, their relationship lasted another five years, and Colette would continue to express her bisexuality throughout her long life.

André Kertész

Hungarian/American 1894–1985, worked in
France 1925–36

Grand Boulevard, Paris

1934, printed c. 1975
gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 1976

PH93-1976

In this photograph by André Kertész of a street scene in 1930s Paris, a woman rests on a bench while, behind her, a man walks by wall posters advertising a then-popular aperitif, Dubonnet. At the centre of the composition, however, is a cut-out silhouette of a gender non-conforming person in a suit and top hat, literally attached to the bench, which is advertising a film called *Georges et Georgette* (1934). This was the French-language version of the German musical comedy film *Viktor und Viktoria* (1933), whose queer plot involved a woman pretending to be a male female impersonator and, after enjoying great success on the stage, having trouble concealing her secret when she falls in love with a man.

Max Beerbohm

English 1872–1956

Mr Lytton Strachey

1920

pencil and brown wash

Felton Bequest, 1921

1211-3

Best known for writing *Eminent Victorians* (1918), Lytton Strachey attended Cambridge University with artists and writers including Clive Bell, Gisèle Freund, Vita Sackville-West, Leonard Woolf, E. M. Forster and Thoby Stephen (brother of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell). After he was elected to the Cambridge Apostles – an intellectual society at Cambridge – he came to view queerness as central to his ostentatiously modernist values. With physical features as distinctive as his personality, Strachey was an enticing subject for artists and writers, and the character of St John Hirst in Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) was modelled on him. Like many of Bloomsbury's men, Strachey's sexuality wasn't widely known until Michael Holroyd's two-volume biography was published in 1967–68.

Bill Brandt

German/English 1904–83

Edith and Osbert Sitwell, beneath family portrait by Sargent, Renshaw Hall, Yorkshire

1945, printed 1974

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 1974

PH224-1974

Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell were three siblings who formed a literary and artistic circle in London between 1916 and 1930. Edith was a prolific writer of poetry, much of which she set to avant-garde music. Highly social and renowned for the theatricality of her appearance, she often dressed in gowns of brocade or velvet, with gold turbans and numerous heavy rings. Edith never married, but in 1927 she fell in love with the gay Russian painter Pavel Tchelitchew, and their close but somewhat fraught and ambiguous relationship lasted until his death in 1957. In the mid 1920s her brother Osbert met David Stuart Horner (1900–83), who was thereafter his lover and companion for most of his life.

Gisèle Freund

German 1908–2000, worked in Mexico
1950–52, France 1946–2000

Virginia Woolf

1939, printed c. 1975
type C photograph

Purchased, 1981

PH64-1981

Virginia Woolf was one of the most important modernist writers of the twentieth century, a pioneer of stream-of-consciousness writing, and a champion of women's struggle for practical and intellectual autonomy. A central member of the Bloomsbury Group, Woolf rejected conventional limitations around gender and sexuality. Her most famous same-sex relationship – with Vita Sackville-West – lasted ten years. When Woolf asked Sackville-West for her permission to write *Orlando* (1928) – a novel about the 'lusts' of Sackville-West's 'flesh' and the 'lure of her mind' – Woolf cautioned that their friends were likely to react with 'chaws' and 'guffaws'. *Orlando* is Woolf's playful, queer tribute to Sackville-West, cleverly deconstructing the binaries governing gender and sex and rendering them ridiculous.

Gisèle Freund

German 1908–2000, worked in Mexico 1950–52,
France 1946–2000

Vita Sackville-West

c. 1946–47

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 1981

PH68-1981

'She ought to have been a boy!' So proclaimed Vita Sackville-West's mother of her young daughter, upon observing Vita dressed in corduroy breeches. Later, Vita adopted masculine attire and an alter ego – Julian – to carry on her passionate affair with Violet Keppel in public, the two posing as a married couple. Sackville-West's same-sex relationships were intense and abundant; her lovers included Bloomsbury socialite Mary Garman and broadcaster Hilda Matheson, as well as novelist Virginia Woolf, who wrote *Orlando* in her honour. She was aristocratic and acclaimed as a writer, her life marked both by conservative and radical impulses. Sackville-West's marriage to Harold Nicolson served them both well; grounded in genuine affection, it also camouflaged her many affairs with women, and his with men.

Christopher Wood

English 1901–30

Portrait of a gentleman

1925–26

pencil

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2020

2020.714

Christopher Wood began his artistic career under unusual circumstances, when at fourteen he took up drawing while recuperating from blood poisoning. In 1920, after Wood had undertaken a brief period of architectural training, the French collector Alphonse Kahn invited him to Paris. There Wood studied drawing at the Académie Julian and was immediately at home in the city's bohemian artistic circles, where he met artist Augustus John and the Chilean diplomat Antonio de Gandarillas, with whom he began an intimate relationship. As well as providing accommodation and financial support, Gandarillas introduced Wood to Pablo Picasso and Jean Cocteau. These acquaintances would prove influential upon Wood's artistic practice, and much of his subsequent work evokes the elegant line of Cocteau's drawings.

Richard Hamilton

English 1922–2011

Bronze by gold

1987

from the *Ulysses* series 1948–98

colour soft-ground and lift-ground aquatint, engraving,
scraper and burnishing,

ed. 2/120

Gift of Dr Douglas Kagi through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013

2013.450

This is one of a suite of works that Richard Hamilton created to illustrate Irish author James Joyce's landmark modernist novel *Ulysses*. Here two characters from the novel, barmaids Miss Lydia Douce and Miss Mina Kennedy, pull beers with phallic suggestiveness. Parts of *Ulysses* first appeared in the American journal *The Little Review* in 1918; however, the resulting scandal over the text's overt sexual content meant that Joyce's novel would not be published in the USA in book form until 1934. The first edition of *Ulysses* was published in Paris in 1922 by Shakespeare and Company, a bookstore and publishing house run by a famous same-sex couple, the American expatriate Sylvia Beach and her French lover Adrienne Monnier.

Edward Steichen

American 1879–1973, worked in France 1906–23

Isadora Duncan at the portal of the Parthenon

1920, printed 1981

from the *Early Years* portfolio 1900–27

photogravure

Purchased, 1984

PH310-1984

Isadora Duncan's revolutionary philosophy of dance signalled a shift away from rigid classical ballet technique and towards an ideal of organic movement. Her personal life was similarly unbound by convention and, throughout her life, she embraced relationships with women and men. Her three children were all born outside marriage, and her lovers included the actor Eleonora Duse and poet Sergei Yesenin, who was eighteen years Duncan's junior. Her relationship with the poet and playwright Mercedes de Acosta is documented in their extensive romantic correspondence; in one letter, Duncan wrote, 'Mercedes, lead me with your little strong hands and I will follow you – to the top of a mountain. To the end of the world. Wherever you wish'.

Nora Heysen

Australian 1911–2003

The faun

1933

oil on canvas

Presented through the NGV Foundation by Mrs Lisl Singer, Governor, 2002

2002.139

The subject of this painting was Nora Heysen's friend Kester Baruch, an actor, dramatist and journalist, known for his exuberant and theatrical persona, both on stage and off it. An apocryphal account of Baruch visiting Heysen's family home and cavorting semi-naked in a one-man Bacchanal across the rolling Adelaide hills, scandalising Heysen's conservative mother in the process, lends rich and amusing context to this portrait. Visually, it is a strange and other-worldly painting, with the waxy flatness of a theatrical mask amplifying the curious persona of its sitter. Baruch, who was openly gay, spent the final twenty-three years of his life in Greece, and his life there inspired one of the storylines in Robert Dessaix's novel *Corfu*.

Jean Cocteau

French 1889–1963

Nude male reclining on a pillow

c. 1960–63

lithograph

Gift of the Reverend Ian Brown, 2017

2017.644

Untitled

c. 1962

lithograph

Gift of the Reverend Ian Brown, 2021

2021.623

French artist, writer, designer, filmmaker and critic Jean Cocteau was openly queer throughout his life. Cocteau had many affairs with men (and the occasional one with women), but his most lasting relationships were with actors Jean Marais and later Édouard Dermit, who became his muse. Many of Cocteau's works are imbued with a queer sensuality, varying from the delicately erotic to the more explicit. A playful camp sensibility also pervades many of his theatrical designs. Although Cocteau's homoerotic semi-autobiographical novel *Le Livre blanc* (*The White Book*, 1928) was published anonymously, he never denied authorship of it, and went on, later in life, to contribute a foreword and a set of illustrations.

Catalina, Los Angeles manufacturer

United States est. 1928

Orry-Kelly designer

Australian 1897–1964, worked in United States 1923–64

Swimsuit

c. 1935

wool, elastic

Gurnett-Smith Bequest, 2001

2001.139

Australian designer Orry George Kelly set off for New York in 1921 with aspirations to become an actor. He soon became involved with Archibald Leach, an ambitious young English actor (later known as Cary Grant). Grant and Orry-Kelly lived together for nine years, on and off. While many in Hollywood at the time submitted to the pressure to remain closeted, Orry-Kelly lived and worked as an openly gay man. He is now acknowledged as one of Hollywood's pioneering and most successful costumiers. In a career that spanned more than thirty years and 295 films, he received three Academy Awards for his designs.

Adrian, Los Angeles fashion house

United States 1941–52

Gilbert Adrian designer

American 1903–59

Gingham bustle dress

1944

cotton, metal (fastenings)

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles, 2018

2016.1.a-b

Adrian Adolph Greenburg, who took his father's name Gilbert and also worked under the single name Adrian, was the costume designer on some 200 Hollywood films produced by MGM Studios, for whom he worked from 1928 to 1941. Adrian famously dressed Judy Garland in a simple blue gingham dress in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), created Joan Crawford's signature look by giving her wide shoulder pads to make her waist look narrower, and designed more than 4000 historical costumes for a single film, *Marie-Antoinette* (1938). Adrian was open about his sexual relationships with men before marrying actor Janet Gaynor in 1939.

Athol Shmith

Australian 1914–90

Cecil Beaton

c. 1970

gelatin silver photograph

Presented through The Art Foundation of
Victoria by the Shmith Family, Governor, 1995

1995.165

Cecil Beaton (1904–80) was a celebrated British fashion and portrait photographer, graphic and interior designer, and costume designer for numerous stage and film productions. He won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design twice, for the musicals *Gigi* in 1958, and *My Fair Lady* in 1964. As expressed in his voluminous diaries, Beaton had numerous affairs with both men and women, including Peter Watson, heir to a margarine fortune; the socialite Doris Castlerosse; the Australian actor Coral Browne; the Hollywood star Greta Garbo; and the American fencing champion and art historian Kinmont Hoitsma, who had competed at Melbourne's Olympic Games in 1956 and whom Beaton met in San Francisco's gay leather bar The Toolshed in 1963.

Max Dupain

Australian 1911–92

Patrick White

1986, printed 1987

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased with funds donated by Hallmark Cards Australia Pty Ltd, 1987 PH198-1987

Acclaimed for the intricacy of his prose and tendency to shift between narratorial perspectives, Patrick White was the inaugural recipient of the Miles Franklin Award, and is the only Australian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1936, White met the painter Roy de Maistre, eighteen years his senior, who became an important influence on his life and work. They never became lovers, instead forging a lasting friendship, both having felt like outsiders on account of their sexuality. It was while serving as an intelligence officer in the Middle East during the Second World War that White met Greek army officer Manoly Lascaris, who would become his life partner. They lived together for the rest of their lives.

Bryan Kneale

English born 1930

Charles Laughton

1958

oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1959

340-5

Renowned English stage and film actor Charles Laughton starred in more than fifty motion pictures between 1928 and his death in 1962. He notably played the role of Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939) and in 1933 won the Oscar for Best Actor in *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. In 1929 he married the English actor Elsa Lanchester. Early in their marriage, Laughton revealed his attraction to men to his wife, who asked him whether he had ever had sex with a man in their home. Laughton replied 'yes', on the couch. The couch was removed, and their lifelong marriage continued. Accepting her husband's sexual needs, Lanchester later recalled that 'we both married for protection from society'.

Giorgio de Chirico

Italian 1888–1978

Alexandros

1948

no. 6 from the *I Cavalli (Horses)* series 1948

lithograph, ed. 11/94

Purchased, 1955

3155.6-4

Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), the celebrated king of ancient Macedon whose territorial conquests are credited with having spread Hellenistic Greek culture both west to the Roman Empire and east to Egypt and India, married three times, apparently for both personal and dynastic reasons. Ancient accounts also record the intensity of Alexander's relationships with the beautiful Persian eunuch Bagoas, and with his cavalry commander Hephaestion 'who was of all men most dear to him' according to Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* (second century CE). Alexander visited the tombs of Achilles and Patroclus at Troy with Hephaestion, which has led to speculation that their relationship was a love bond like that attributed by many to the hero warriors from Homer's *Iliad*.

Aegidius Sadeler II

Flemish c. 1570–1629,
worked in Bohemia 1597–1629

Titian (after)

Julius Caesar

1585–1629

plate 1 from the
Roman Emperors and Empresses series
etching and engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

3090-3

The renowned Roman general Julius Caesar (100–44 BCE) was a noted dandy and womaniser who married three times and had numerous mistresses, including Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt. According to the Roman historian Suetonius, whose position as secretary to Roman emperors Trajan (r. 98–117 CE) and Hadrian (r. 117–138 CE) arguably gave him access to archival sources that no longer survive, Julius Caesar was also satirised for his bisexuality by his own troops, who believed he had a youthful affair with Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia. He was dubbed by one of his political rivals, the statesman and orator Gaius Scribonius Curio, ‘*omnium mulierum virum et omnium virorum mulierem*’ (every woman’s man and every man’s woman).

The Master of the Santa Felicità Adoration of the Magi

Italian active mid 15th century

Trajan and the Widow: a panel from a cassone

c. 1450

tempera and gold on panel

Gift of Robert Compton Jones through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2019

2019.410

In his *The Caesars*, a satirical account of a competition held in the heavens between former Roman emperors, composed in 362 CE by a later emperor, Julian (r. 361 – 363 CE), a joke is made among the gods when emperor Trajan (r. 98 – 117 CE) appears. 'Now is the time for Zeus our master to look out, if he wants to keep Ganymede for himself'. Reference to Trajan's attraction to handsome young men is also made in Cassius Dio's *Roman History* (211 – 233 CE), where it is stated that Trajan was a popular leader 'loved by all' whose same-sex desires 'harmed no-one'. Trajan is here shown in dialogue with a widow who sought justice for her murdered son.

Cornelis Cort engraver

Dutch 1533–78, worked in Italy 1566–78

Frans Floris (after)

Rhetoric

1565

plate 4 from the *Seven Liberal Arts* series, 1st edition, published by Hieronymous Cock, Antwerp, 1565
engraving, 1st of 2 states

Felton Bequest, 1923

1278.223-3

While ancient Greek society seems to have been more tolerant of same-sex relationships between men than other eras, these relationships could still be used to attack a man's moral character under certain circumstances. In 346 BCE the Greek orator Aeschines was brought to trial in Athens on charges of treason. A tome by Aeschines sits atop the pile of books to the left of this engraving. His speech in self-defence at the trial survives intact. In it, Aeschines argues that sexual relations between men are nothing to be ashamed of when motivated by love, and while he himself enjoys same-sex love, his accuser, the politician Timarchus, engages in prostitution with men for profit and therefore cannot be trusted. The jury acquitted Aeschines.

Gianantonio Faldoni engraver

Italian 1689 – c. 1770

Anton Maria Zanetti draughtsman

Italian 1680–1767

Parmigianino (after)

Ganymede serving nectar to the gods

1724

plate 6 from the *Varii Disegni (Various Drawings)* folio,
published Venice, 1786

engraving

Gift of Mr Peter Roberts, 1985

P125.7-1985

Greece, Attica

The Splanchnopt Painter

Cup (Attic red-figure ware)

450 BCE

earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1956

1644-D4

Homer's ancient poem *Iliad* tells the story of a handsome male youth, the 'godlike Ganymede who was the loveliest born of the race of mortals, and therefore the gods caught him away to themselves, to be Zeus's wine-pourer, for the sake of his beauty'. Ganymede became associated in ancient Greece with same-sex attraction, and also with drinking parties or *symposia*. These affairs between men commonly involved the exchange of specially decorated drinking vessels, which often bore inscriptions praising male beauty, suggesting they were love gifts. This *kylix* or wine-drinking cup, made around 450 BCE, bears the inscription ὁ παῖς καλός, 'The youth is handsome'.

Laurent Cars engraver

French 1699–1771

François Lemoyne (after)

Hercules and Omphale

1728

engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

2949-3

The ancient Greek hero Herakles (Hercules in Roman mythology) was renowned for his great strength and muscular physique. Married four times, he also took dozens of lovers, of both sexes. The Greek philosopher and historian Plutarch (46 – after 119 CE), in a text considering same-sex love between men, proclaimed that: ‘As for Herakles, it would be difficult to list all his [male] loves, they were so numerous’. This engraving depicts the ancient tale in which, as atonement for having committed a murder, Herakles was forced to serve as a slave for a year to Omphale, the queen of Lydia. Omphale required Herakles to wear women’s clothes and do work normally performed by women, such as spinning and weaving, during this time.

Pieter de Jode II

Flemish 1606 – c. 1674

Peter Paul Rubens (after)

The union of Sea and Earth

mid 17th century

engraving

Felton Bequest, 1925

1674-3

The ancient Greek god of the sea Poseidon (shown on the left here) was believed to have had countless affairs with women, both divine and mortal. According to the poet Pindar, who lived in Thebes in the fifth century BCE, Poseidon also fell in love with the handsome young man Pelops, future king of Pisa (near Olympia in Greece). Claudius Aelianus, known as Aelian (c. 175 – c. 235 CE), also wrote of Poseidon's love affair with the male sea deity Nerites, 'the most beautiful of men and gods' who 'returned his love'. From their union was born another deity, Anteros, the god of requited love. The goddess Cybele, at right, was served by a cult of castrated cross-dressed priests called galli.

James Barry

Irish 1741–1806, worked in England 1764–1806

Orpheus

1791

etching and engraving

Presented by the Society for Encouragement of Arts, 1881

p.183.201-1

According to the *Metamorphoses*, composed in 8 CE by the Roman poet Ovid, the mythical Greek songwriter Orpheus, following the death of his wife Eurydice, turned towards relationships with young men. This followed the ancient Greek custom whereby same-sex couples were often made up of an older man, the *erastês* (ἐραστής, meaning 'lover' in the ancient Greek language), and a younger man, the *erômenos* (ἐρώμενος, the 'beloved'). Known as pederasty, these relationships between grown men and adolescent youths are now deemed exploitative and are illegal in many parts of the world. Orpheus was later killed by being violently torn apart by women followers of the wine god Dionysus, who felt that Orpheus had abandoned his former devotions to this deity.

Richard Earlom etcher

English 1743–1822

Giovanni Battista Cipriani (after)

The death of Orpheus

1787

plate 35 from *A Collection of Prints*,

*After the Sketches and Drawings of the Late Celebrated
Giovanni Battista Cipriani* series 1787–89, published 1789
etching and aquatint printed in sepia ink

Felton Bequest, 1923

1278.1197-3

James Basire I engraver

English 1730–1802

Benjamin West (after)

Pylades and Orestes

1771

engraving

Felton Bequest, 1925

1571-3

In ancient Greek mythology, Orestes was the son of Agamemnon, the king of Mycenae, and his wife Clytemnestra. Believing that Agamemnon had slain their daughter Iphigenia as a sacrifice to summon winds that would carry his war fleet to attack the enemy city of Troy, Clytemnestra murdered her husband after his return from the Trojan War. In turn, Orestes avenged his father's death by murdering his mother Clytemnestra. Orestes later travelled to Tauris (Crimea today) with his friend and cousin Pylades, where they discovered Iphigenia to be alive after all. In the *Amores* (*Kinds of Love*), a philosophical dialogue written probably in the mid third century CE, it is claimed that Orestes and Pylades were not just friends, but lovers.

Fontana Workshop, Urbino

manufacturer

Italy active 1520s–80

Alpheus and Arethusa, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, double-spouted ewer

c. 1570–80

earthenware (maiolica)

Felton Bequest, 1971

D98A-1971

The Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, written during the reign of Emperor Augustus in 8 CE, recounts the story of the water nymph Salmacis, who bathed in a spring near the Greek city of Halicarnassus (today Bodrum, in Turkey). When she caught sight of the handsome youth Hermaphroditus, Salmacis fell in love with him. When Hermaphroditus bathed in her spring, Salmacis dove in after him, fusing her body with his, such that they 'were no longer two, but a single form, possessed of a dual nature, which could not be called male or female, but seemed to be at once both and neither'.

John Buckland-Wright illustrator

New Zealander 1897–1954, emigrated to England 1908,
worked in Belgium and France 1924–39

Francis Beaumont (attributed to) author

English 1584–1616

Gwyn Jones editor

Welsh 1907–99

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

1951

book: letterpress, wood-engravings, 52 pages, cloth and
cardboard cover, gold embossing, stitched binding, ed.

214/380

Bequest of Erwin and Anne Marie Herzenberg, 2005

2005.119

Salomon Gessner

Swiss 1730–88

Apollo and the python

1771

etching

Felton Bequest, 1926

3141-3

Apollo, the ancient Greek god of the sun, music and dance among other things, was renowned for having a host of men and women as lovers. Among the men, according to ancient sources, were Admetus, king of Pherae, whom Apollo subsequently helped to marry; the Spartan prince Hyacinth, whom he accidentally killed with a discus; and the shepherd Branchus, to whom he gave the gift of prophecy. In this eighteenth-century etching by Salomon Gessner, Apollo is shown standing next to the mythical Python, the dragon serpent that guarded the sacred oracle at Delphi, which Apollo has just slain with multiple arrows. The ruins of a Temple of Apollo, constructed in the fourth century BCE, still survive today at Delphi.

Wenceslaus Hollar etcher

Bohemian 1607–77, worked in England 1636–44, 1652–77, Flanders 1644–52

Paulus Pontius engraver

Flemish 1603–58

Peeter van Avont (after)

Diana the huntress, lying under a tree

1644–52

etching and engraving, 1st of 2 states

Purchased, 1900

74-2

Same-sex relations were not confined to the ancient gods. Artemis (Diana in Roman mythology), the Greek goddess of the hunt and the god Apollo's twin sister, forsook the love of men and surrounded herself with beautiful nymphs. According to the poet Callimachus, writing in the third century BCE, Artemis/Diana was especially enamoured of the archer Britomartis, the hunting-enthusiast princess Cyrene (who would eventually be seduced by Apollo himself), and Anticleia, mother of the Trojan War hero Odysseus. The principal Greek god Zeus fell in love with Callisto, one of Artemis's warrior nymphs who had vowed never to sleep with a man. Disguising himself as Artemis, Zeus took on the form of a woman to seduce Callisto.

Jan Saenredam

Dutch 1565–1607

Hendrick Goltzius (after)

Two nymphs of Diana holding pitchers

1616

plate 2 from the *Nymphs of Diana* series

engraving, 2nd of 2 states

Felton Bequest, 1923

1278.1255-3

Johann Gottlieb Facius engraver

German 1750 – c. 1802, worked in England 1776 – c. 1802

George Sigmund Facius engraver

German 1750–1814, worked in England 1776–1814

Angelica Kauffman (after)

Achilles discovered

1786

stipple engraving printed in sepia ink

Felton Bequest, 1925

1892-3

The Roman poet Statius in his *Achilleid* (c. 94 – 96 CE) told the story of how the goddess Thetis, mother of the great Greek warrior Achilles, fearful of the coming Trojan War, hid her son so that he would not be drawn into the bloody conflict. Achilles was hidden among the daughters of King Lycomedes on the island of Scyros, disguised by being dressed as a young woman himself. Here he was discovered by Odysseus and was persuaded to join the war against Troy, a conflict in which he was eventually killed by the Trojan prince Paris.

Benjamin Robert Haydon

English 1786–1846

Achilles returning to the battle

1810s

pen and ink over pencil

Purchased, 1959

362-5

Pietro Testa

Italian 1612–50

Achilles dragging Hector's corpse around the walls of Troy

c. 1648–50

etching

Felton Bequest, 1961

1043-5

Homer's *Iliad* narrates how Achilles is shattered when Patroclus is killed by the Trojan warrior Hector, during the war between Greece and Troy in ancient times, crying: 'I will not forget him, never'. In a furious rage, Homer tells us, Achilles pursues Hector and slays him in revenge. Achilles then defiles Hector's body, dragging it around the walls of Troy. Opinion remains divided about the exact physical nature of the relationship between Homer's famous warrior couple, although ancient authors as well as numerous commentators since the early twentieth century have sided with the belief that theirs was a sexual coupling.

Greece, Chalkis/Italy

The Inscriptions Painter (attributed to)

Psykter amphora (Chalkidian black-figure ware)

540 BCE

earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1956

1643.a-b-D4

The friendship between the celebrated Greek warriors Achilles and Patroclus is one of the central stories within Homer's *Iliad*, a narrative of the war between Greece and Troy, composed in the eighth century BCE. This Chalkidian vase from 540 BCE depicts Achilles fatally spearing a fallen Trojan warrior. We learn in the *Iliad* that Achilles enslaves a woman, Briseis, as a prize of war and possibly also a sexual partner. His principal relationship in the poem, however, is with his warrior comrade-in-arms, Patroclus. Numerous ancient authors, such as the philosopher Plato and the tragedian Aeschylus, declared Homer's warrior couple to be lovers.

Paul Montford

English 1868–1938, worked in Australia 1923–38

Atalanta defeated

c. 1930

bronze

Felton Bequest, 1933

3526-D3

According to the *Catalogue of Women*, a Greek poem from the seventh century BCE, 'fair Atalanta, swift of foot' was a peerless athlete who 'though she was ripe for wedlock rejected the company of her equals and sought to avoid marriage with men'. Men wanting to marry Atalanta had to challenge her to a race, with execution as the penalty if they lost, and many subsequently died. Eventually one suitor, Hippomenes, cheated by scattering golden apples in Atalanta's path, enabling him to win the race when she stopped to collect them. Atalanta was thus tricked into a heteronormative marriage against her will.

Clifford Webb engraver

English 1895–1972

Ivor Bannet author

English active mid 20th century

The Amazons

1948

book: letterpress and 12 wood engravings, 256 pages, paper, cloth and cardboard cover, stitched binding, ed. 416/500

Bequest of Erwin and Anne Marie Herzenberg, 2005

2005.112

Italy, Apulia

The Painter of the Berlin Dancing Girl

(attributed to)

Pelike (Apulian red-figure ware)

420 BCE

earthenware

Felton Bequest, 1966

1391-D5

Despite their once-yearly mating with men, the Amazons functioned in a decidedly queer women-only realm. In ancient Greek art, the Amazons are often imaged wearing eastern-style clothing, signifying their symbolic role in Greek culture as the Other. The axe-wielding, horseriding Amazon Andromache and her companion are shown attired in patterned shirts and trousers on this vase made in the Greek colony of Apulia, Italy, in 420 BCE. The pair also sport distinctive pointed caps resembling those worn by contemporary Scythian archers, nomadic eastern warriors who were familiar sights on the streets of Athens at this time.

Napier Waller

Australian 1893–1972

The Amazons

c. 1924

watercolour over pencil

Felton Bequest, 1925

1784-3

The Amazons were the legendary tribe of warrior women who led a separatist existence on the physical fringes of the ancient Greek world. They lived apart from men, with whom they copulated solely for procreation, raising only the girls from those brief unions within their women-only military community. Ancient stories tell of how Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, was kidnapped so that she could be coerced into marrying Theseus, the Greek hero and founder of Athens. Her Amazon tribeswomen subsequently invaded Athens to rescue her. Jean Broome-Norton's sculpture, displayed adjacent, shows Hippolyta and her companions triumphing over this abduction.

Italy

Mercury

16th century

bronze

Felton Bequest, 1961

339-D5

The Olympian deity Hermes (Mercury in Roman mythology), messenger of the gods, fathered numerous children with women, while also taking men as lovers, including Zeus's sons Amphion and Perseus. In Homer's *Iliad* (eighth century BCE), Hermes is a harbinger of good luck. It has been recorded that Hermes/Mercury was called upon in both homoerotic and lesbian love spells undertaken in Alexandria, Egypt, during the third century CE. Ancient herm sculptures, comprising a naturalistic head of usually (but not always) Hermes, attached to an oblong stone column adorned with (often erect) male genitals, were believed to ward off evil.

Hubert Le Sueur

French c. 1580–1658, worked in England 1631–43

The Greek philosopher Zeno

18th century

bronze

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

3980-D3

Born in Cyprus around 334 BCE, Zeno of Citium became a revered philosopher in Athens, where he founded a system of personal ethics known as Stoicism. Zeno's writings survive only in fragments quoted by other ancient authors. Diogenes Laërtius recorded in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (third century CE) that Zeno argued for 'a community of wives with free choice of partners' in which men would feel 'paternal affection for all the children alike, and there will be an end of the jealousies arising from adultery'. Zeno is also known to have argued for social acceptance of sex work and same-sex desire.

Sabatino de Angelis

Italian 1838 – c. 1900

Sabatino de Angelis and Sons, Naples

foundry

Italy 1840–1915

Italy, Herculaneum (after)

Dionysus

1892

bronze

Purchased, 1892

916-D1M

Dionysus was the ancient Greek god of wine and grapes. While he had many lovers who were women, he was also romantically smitten with the handsome satyr Ampelos, whom he turned into the first grapevine. The son of the supreme god Zeus and the mortal woman Semele, Dionysus was threatened as an infant by Zeus's jealous consort Hera, queen of heaven. Zeus placed him in the protective custody of Semele's sister Ino and her husband Athamas, with instructions that he was to be raised as a girl until he reached adulthood. He became associated in alcohol-fuelled ancient Dionysiac rites with gender slippage.

Greece/Italy

Torso of an athlete

1st century BCE – 1st century CE
marble

Felton Bequest, in memory of Professor A. D. Trendall, 1997

1997.85

In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides (c. 460 – c. 400 BCE) wrote that the Spartans ‘were the first to bare their bodies and, after stripping openly, to anoint themselves with oil when they engaged in athletic exercise’. Male athletic nudity seems to have become accepted in Greek society by the fifth century BCE. In a culture where male same-sex relationships were common, artistic homages to the beauty of man’s naked form were also widespread. This was an ageist culture, however. Plato’s *Republic* (c. 375 BCE) referred disparagingly to ‘old men in gymnasiums ... wrinkled and unpleasant to look at’.

Italy

Aphrodite

2nd century CE
marble

Felton Bequest, 1929

3071-D3

Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of love. In some ancient sources, Aphrodite is the daughter of the god Zeus and goddess Dione. In others, Aphrodite was born from the genitals of the god Uranus, which had been cut off and thrown into the sea by a rival god, Cronos. Aphrodite was married to Hephaistos, the god of fire, and also took several men as lovers. She is associated with same-sex unions between women through the surviving poetry of Sappho of Lesbos, in whose *Prayer to Aphrodite* the goddess fulfils 'the greatest wish of my mad heart', to win the love of another woman.

Jean Broome-Norton

Australian 1911–2002

Hippolyta and the Amazons defeating Theseus

1933

patinated plaster, wood

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of
the Helen M. Schutt Trust, Governor, 2000

2000.52.a-c

R. Page

English active 1811–32

Martial

1814

colour stipple engraving and etching

Felton Bequest, 1939

698-4

Born in Hispania (Spain today), the poet Martial moved to Rome in 64 CE, where he published his *Epigrams*, twelve books of satirical poems, between 86 and 103 CE. Both cynical and explicit, these offer fascinating glimpses into the erotic life of the Roman Empire during the reigns of emperors Domitian, Nerva and Trajan. They include some of the few surviving mentions of the lives of lesbian (*tribad* in Latin) women in the capital. Martial's catalogue of contemporary sexual possibilities is wide reaching, and includes references to practices one would have thought impossible before more enlightened modern times, such as marriage rites being performed between men. Martial himself was primarily attracted to men while also occasionally having sexual encounters with women.

Napier Waller

Australian 1893–1972

Virgil

1922

watercolour over pencil on paper on cardboard

Felton Bequest, 1922

1257-3

The epic poem *Aeneid*, composed by the Roman poet Virgil between 29 and 19 BCE, is set at the end of the Trojan War. In Virgil's tale the reader is told about the Trojan warrior Nisus and his younger boyfriend Euryalus, whose devotion to one another, even to the death in battle, parallels that of Achilles and Patroclus in Homer's epic *Iliad* (eighth century BCE). There is also passing reference in Virgil's text to another same-sex attracted warrior, Cydon, with these homoerotic preferences presented by the Roman poet as matter of fact. In the late first century CE the Roman epigrammatist Martial satirised the whole *Aeneid* as having been inspired by its author having tasted the lips of one of Virgil's young male companions.

Norman Lindsay

Australian 1879–1969

Petronius

c. 1909

pen and ink on card

Felton Bequest, 1935

278-4

In the surviving sections of Petronius's *Satyricon*, probably composed during the reign of Emperor Nero (r. 54 – 68 CE), the reader follows the exploits and excesses of the former gladiator Encolpius, his adolescent boyfriend Giton, and another man, Ascyltos (who also seduces Giton). The narrative features numerous sexual exploits, among which the three-way relationship between the central characters is presented as just another variant in social interaction. The almost prosaic non-heteronormative sexuality of these central characters stands out as something quite exceptional in Western literature prior to the advent of gay-liberation politics. Encolpius, Ascyltos and Giton are depicted here, in one of the many illustrations that Norman Lindsay created to accompany his son Jack Lindsay's translation of the *Satyricon* (displayed adjacent).

Norman Lindsay illustrator

Australian 1879–1969

Jack Lindsay translator

Australian 1900–90, worked in England 1926–90

**The Complete Works of
Gaius Petronius**

1927

book: 100 lithographic plates

Purchased, 1956

3355-4

Michael Ayrton (illustrator)

English 1921–75

Lucius Apuleius (author)

North African/Roman 124–180 CE

Robert Graves (translator)

English 1895–1985

The Golden Ass

1960

book: typeset, lithographic illustrations, 208 pages, leather and cardboard cover, gold and coloured embossing, stitched binding, ed. 38/250

Bequest of Erwin and Anne Marie Herzenberg, 2005

2005.134

The Golden Ass, written towards the end of the second century CE by Lucius Apuleius (124–180 CE) is the only novel composed in Latin during the Roman Empire that has survived in its entire form. It tells the story of a Greek man, Lucius, who is magically transformed into an ass, in which form he experiences a series of bizarre escapades and adventures. At one point in the novel, he falls into the hands of a band of queer eunuch priests. These are cross-dressed devotees of the goddess Cybele, known as *galli*, who castrated themselves in her honour.

Eric Fraser illustrator

English 1902–83

Xenophon of Ephesus author

Greek 2nd century – 3rd century CE

Paul Turner translator

English born 1917

The Ephesian Story

1957

book: letterpress, collotypes, 64 pages, cloth, leather and cardboard cover, gold embossing, stitched binding, ed. 102/300

Bequest of Erwin and Anne Marie Herzenberg, 2005

2005.127

Written towards the end of the second century CE, the Ἐφεσιακά or *Ephesian Story* by Xenophon of Ephesus tells the story of star-crossed young lovers, the impossibly handsome Habrocomes and his exquisite girlfriend Anthia, who endure enslavement at the hands of pirates, separation, torture and imprisonment, before finally being reunited. Along the way, they encounter a cast of colourful queer characters, including the man-loving pirate Corymbus and the robber Hippothous, who tells Habrocomes the heartbreaking story of his love affair with a boyfriend who subsequently drowned. Habrocomes non-judgementally befriends Hippothous, who takes a new boyfriend at the novel's end.

Robert Ashwin Maynard illustrator

English 1888–1966

Horace Walter Bray illustrator

English active 1930s

Gilbert Murray translator

Australian 1866–1957, lived in England 1877–1957

The Plays of Euripides, vol. 1

1931

book: wood-engravings

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Dr Orde Poynton, Fellow, 1980

P110.1-1980

Euripides (c. 480 – c. 406 BCE) was, along with Aeschylus and Sophocles, one of the three great authors of the dramatic plays performed at the Theatre of Dionysus in ancient Athens in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Euripides is believed to have written more than ninety plays, the texts for only nineteen of which have survived. Little is known about Euripides's life. In his *Moralia*, however, the Greek author Plutarch (46 – after 119 CE) records that when Euripides moved to the court of Archelaus of Macedonia in 408 BCE, he fell in love with the handsome young Athenian poet Agathon.

Yolanda Sonnabend

English born 1935

Costume design for Clytemnestra

1964

for the play *Electra* by Sophocles, performed by Old Vic Company, Old Vic Theatre, London, 1951. Reused for *Entwürfe für Tänzer*, performed by the Stuttgart Ballet, Stuttgart, 1964

oil paint, gouache, watercolour, blue chalk and pencil

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Peter Corrigan, Member, 1993

P74-1993

The ancient Athenian tragedian Sophocles (c. 497/6 – 406/5 BCE) wrote more than 120 plays, most of which are now lost or have come down through history as only fragments. Seven plays by Sophocles survive in their entirety, including *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Electra*, psychologically intense works that reveal the author's mastery of presenting human dilemmas on stage. Sophocles married twice and one of his sons, Iophon, also became a playwright. In the *Deipnosophistae* or *Sophists at Dinner*, written by the Greek rhetorician Athenaeus early in the third century CE (and citing the testimony of the third-century BCE Athenian literary historian and philosopher Hieronymus of Rhodes), Sophocles is portrayed as also having been frequently enamoured of handsome young men.

Robert Strange engraver

Scottish 1721–92

Carlo Dolci (after)

Sappho to Phoebus consecrates her lyre

1787

etching and engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

2851-3

Same-sex relations between women permeate what survives from the hand of the ancient Greek poet Sappho, a writer from the island of Lesbos who composed a large body of work at the turn of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE (the modern term 'lesbian' derives from her homeland). Same-sex erotic readings of Sappho's love poetry only appear in Rome late in the first century BCE. It is presumed that earlier commentators either did not read this content into her work, or did not find its presence there remarkable for the time. Only fragments of Sappho's poetry survive. In one of these the poetess asks the goddess Aphrodite for help with securing the love of another woman.

Pleats Please, Tokyo manufacturer

Japan est. 1993

Issey Miyake designer

Japanese born 1938

Yasumasa Morimura designer

Japanese born 1951

Top

1996

polyester

Gift of Ron Ramsey, 1998

1998.213

From 1996 to 1998, Issey Miyake invited several contemporary artists to collaborate with him for his 'Pleats Please' line, including photographer Yasumasa Morimura. Renowned for his drag interpretations of well-known Western paintings, Morimura chose to position a photographic reproduction of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *La Source*, 1856 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), across the torso of the pleated garment. Morimura has also imposed himself into the scene, wrapped in red mesh and embracing the image of the painting. His appropriation of Ingres's renowned Neoclassical painting reflects the legacy of classical Greek sculpture in art and design, examples of which are on display nearby.

Jean Paul Gaultier, Paris fashion house

France est. 1976

Jean Paul Gaultier designer

French born 1952

Shirt

1996

Pin-up Boys collection, spring–summer 1996

printed silk, shell (buttons)

Gift of Ron Ramsey, 1998

1998.217

‘Except for the medieval codpiece and the bra, garments have never had a gender.’

– Jean Paul Gaultier, 2011

Born in Arcueil, a suburb of Paris, Jean Paul Gaultier spent his teenage years making sketches and taking inspiration from magazines, films and television. He developed a critical and analytical sense of fashion characterised by the notion that all people have both a masculine and a feminine sensibility. Since his early days as a designer, Gaultier has been inspired by both the hypermasculine and feminine, as well as androgyny. There is a strong social message in his designs, catwalk shows and advertising campaigns, which champion fashion as a form of expression and inclusivity, and as a celebration

...continued overleaf

of diversity. In this shirt from his *Pin-up Boys* collection, Gaultier references the classical heritage of queer aesthetics.

Peter Lyssiotis

Australian born 1949 in Cyprus, emigrated to Australia
1953–

No title (Billy says that a person's broken heart, can sometimes smell of roses)

1992

leaf 11, recto, from *The harmed circle* published 1992, ed.
5/10 type C photograph

Purchased, 1993,

PH181-1993

Peter Lyssiotis's practice often addresses socio-political subjects using photomontage which he calls 'the pitbull of the arts'. He has said of the medium: 'Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword forgot the scissors'. The images he used to make *The harmed circle*, the book from which this page is taken, were cut from magazines and brochures, collaged and then re-photographed. Lyssiotis observed in 1992 the dignity of the community affected by the HIV/AIDS crises and responded with this sensual book which combines lyrical imagery and poetic titles to evoke the strength of love as it transcends death.

Paul Knight

Australian born 1976

Untitled

2011

type C photograph

Purchased with funds donated by the Bowness Family, 2013

2013.707

Paul Knight's camera captures a couple embracing in bed, both representing and rupturing the privacy of that space. The image is at once banal and emotionally charged. The bodies are entwined, however a fold in the paper brings the couple closer together in an intervention that intensifies the sense of intimacy. The fold also draws awareness to the materiality of the photograph reminding us of the construction of photographic images.

Paul Knight

Australian born 1976

Untitled #16

2001

type C photograph

Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for
Contemporary Australian Photography, 2005,

2005.414

Albrecht Dürer

German 1471–1528

St Sebastian at the column

1499

engraving

Felton Bequest, 1956

3469–4

Devotional images can also be erotic images, and since the fifteenth century, the figure of Saint Sebastian, shot through with arrows, has inspired this multivalence. In 1550, Vasari wrote that Fra Bartolomeo's nude depiction of the saint at the church of San Marco, Florence, was so sexually 'corrupting' of female congregants that the monks felt it necessary to remove it from the church in order to preserve propriety. In addition to his notable effects upon female worshippers, Sebastian was to acquire an illustrious homoerotic afterlife. Oscar Wilde, who adopted the pseudonym 'Sebastian Melmoth' when in exile, maintained a lifelong attachment to Guido Reni's depiction of the saint, admiring his 'crisp, clustering hair and red lips'.

Albrecht Dürer

German 1471–1528

St Sebastian at the tree

1501

engraving

Felton Bequest, 1956

3468–4

Devotional images can also be erotic images, and since the fifteenth century, the figure of Saint Sebastian, shot through with arrows, has inspired this multivalence. In 1550, Vasari wrote that Fra Bartolomeo's nude depiction of the saint at the church of San Marco, Florence, was so sexually 'corrupting' of female congregants that the monks felt it necessary to remove it from the church in order to preserve propriety. In addition to his notable effects upon female worshippers, Sebastian was to acquire an illustrious homoerotic afterlife. Oscar Wilde, who adopted the pseudonym 'Sebastian Melmoth' when in exile, maintained a lifelong attachment to Guido Reni's depiction of the saint, admiring his 'crisp, clustering hair and red lips'.

Jan van Troyen engraver

Flemish c. 1610–66

David Teniers II draughtsman

Flemish 1610–90

Andrea Mantegna (after)

The martyrdom of St Sebastian

1656–60

from the *Theatrum Pictorium (Theatre of Pictures)* series by David Teniers, published by Jacob Peeters, Antwerp,

1660–1755

etching and engraving

Presented by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1963

1347–5

The nature of Saint Sebastian's martyrdom is conducive both to erotic interpretation and sympathetic identification. His nudity, his binding, his piercing, and his persistent beauty and calm make him at once an icon of fetishistic desire and of steadfast endurance. As American writer Susan Sontag contended, Sebastian's face never expresses the torture of his body – his beauty and his pain are eternally separated and he becomes a highly aestheticised 'exemplary sufferer'. Many historical depictions of Sebastian undermine traditional gender binaries. The passivity of his form and averted gaze are reminiscent of conventions of portraying the female nude, and their application to a male subject is interpretable as a form of queering.

Louise Bourgeois

French/American 1911–2010

Ste Sébastienne

1992

drypoint, ed. 25/50

Purchased, 1999

1999.281

Louise Bourgeois' *Ste Sébastienne* re-imagines and re-genders the saint as a mutilated, headless woman peppered with arrows, simultaneously evoking conventional martyrdom and a comprehensive cosmetic surgical plan. Bourgeois is best known for her large-scale installations and sculpture, but she was also a prolific printmaker, painter and draftsman. She was a champion of LGBTQ+ equality, who explored a wide variety of themes over the course of her long career, including gender, sexuality and the body, the family and domestic life, the unconscious and subconscious minds, and mortality. Although she exhibited with the Abstract Expressionists and her work had strong links to Surrealism, she never formally allied herself with any particular movement.

Maithil

Shiva in the form of Ardhanarisvara

c. 1980

watercolour, opaque watercolour and ink on paper

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2007

2007.65

This painting depicts the Hindu deity Ardhanarisvara – ‘The Lord Who Is Half Woman’. The god Shiva and the goddess Parvati are fused into one body. Shiva is on the left, facing forward, while Parvati is on the right, shown in profile. Ardhanarisvara, whose iconography has been reported from as early as the Kushan Empire (30–375 CE), can be understood as a union of opposites: the renunciant and the domestic, the wild and the tamed, purusha and prakriti – that is, the male and the female aspects of creation. Indian supporters of LGBTQ+ rights have often referenced Hindu mythology to argue for the naturalness of trans and queer people. They point to Ardhanarisvara as one of many examples of Hindu deities manipulating gender.

Clinton Naina

Meriam Mir/Ku Ku born 1971

Mission brown heart

2003

enamel paint and synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of The Hon. Justice David Angel through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2009

2009.371

Clinton Naina's *Mission brown heart* is a figurative metaphor for the diverse ways of loving that existed for Aboriginal people, prior to the arrival of missionaries and the introduction of Christianity. As Naina explains, 'To understand blak history and culture before invasion, you must firstly learn to remove and detach your mind from thinking and observing through the lens of the dominant culture, that derives from colonialism, imperialism and capitalism'. *Mission brown heart* challenges audiences to consider how the legacy of colonisation is continually used to dominate and derail Indigenous peoples' ways of thinking, which existed before the British came, 'breaking all links to our historical and cultural past before invasion'.

Edward Burne-Jones

English 1833–98

Study for *The Briar Wood*

c. 1875–85

gouache and metallic paint

Purchased, 1958

8-5

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the Pre-Raphaelite and Arts and Crafts movements spearheaded a return to medievalist and fairytale imagery, full of imagination and escapism. *The Briar Wood* is a scene from the story of Sleeping Beauty, and in Edward Burne-Jones's finished painting, the slumbering knights are depicted wearing their armour. The subtle homoeroticism of the scene is far more pronounced in the sketch, in which Burne-Jones presents a mass of sinuous, somewhat androgynous slumbering nude men, their limbs entangled like briars. The androgyne was a key archetype of the late nineteenth century, and Burne-Jones endowed both men and women with androgynous beauty, sometimes eroticised, sometimes representing a powerful serenity that bordered upon the divine.

Alfred Gilbert

English 1854–1934, worked throughout
Europe 1875–1934

Perseus arming

1882

bronze

Felton Bequest, 1905

239-2

First exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, London, a centre for Aestheticism, Alfred Gilbert's classical subject is imbued with the ambiguous delicacy of a nymph or dryad. *Perseus arming* was inspired by a visit to Florence, where Gilbert had encountered Donatello's David, already celebrated within the period's burgeoning queer culture. Gilbert became the foremost sculptor of the Aesthetic movement – a close friend of Wilde and his circle – known for the subtle daring of his compositions and later for his extravagant lifestyle, which led to a period of near destitution and exile. Much of the tension, and the fascination, in the Aesthetic persona lay in the fragile boundary between fantastic vision and real-world consequence.

Peter Behrens

German 1868–1940

The kiss (Der Kuss)

1898

from *Pan*, vol. 4, no. 2, July–Sep. 1898

colour woodcut, edition of 1100

Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2020

2020.622

In Peter Behrens's celebrated Art Nouveau woodblock print *The kiss*, two faces are framed by an entwining, serpentine mass of hair. From the 1860s, abundant, eroticised hair had become a motif for artists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, who applied it to various feminine archetypes. As the century progressed, the iconography shifted to encompass a broader spectrum of desire and identity. In Behrens's image, the androgyny of both faces, paired with their creeping tresses, half animal, half plant, suggests an amorphous relationship between nature, gender and sexuality. The hair forms an inescapable web of erotic enchantment, and in the absence of traditional markers of gender difference, the two subjects exist as fantastic, fluid forms onto whom diverse desires might be mapped.

Charles Conder

English 1868–1909, worked in Australia 1884–90,
throughout Europe 1890–1905

In the land of dreams

c. 1903

watercolour on silk

Bequest of Alison Puzey, 2018

2018.331

Dubbed 'The strange Bird' by his English contemporary A. S. Hartrick, Charles Conder was a truly international artist, whose real-world voyages inspired similar excursions in style and subject. Though Conder is best remembered today for his Australian Impressionist works, it was in the more diverse bohemianism of fin-de-siècle Paris, in the company of British Francophiles Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson and Aubrey Beardsley, that Conder would feel most at home. Wilde praised Conder's indecipherability, advising publisher Leonard Smithers: 'You must make friends with Conder: it is absurd not to know the unknowable'. This sensual scene of nude women embracing in a picturesque coastal landscape has an aura of fantastic timelessness, affirmed by the work's title.

Romance Was Born, Sydney

fashion house

Australia est. 2005

Luke Sales designer

Australian born 1981

Anna Plunkett designer

Australian born 1982

Granny knit outfit

2009

from the *Doilies and Pearls, Oysters and Shells* collection,
spring–summer 2009–10

cotton and metallic yarn, metallic paint, plastic and shells
on synthetic material and vinyl, synthetic fleece lining,
nylon lace, cotton thread, elastic, adhesive, varnish,
synthetic thread, metal

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2009

2009.541.a-j

Sydney-based fashion house Romance Was Born was founded by Anna Plunkett and Luke Sales in 2005, dedicated to creating fantastical, imaginative and emotive designs. Humour and nostalgia are key ingredients in their outfits, which produce playful juxtapositions of high fashion and traditional craft including crochet, knitting and collage. The *Granny knit outfit*, part of the *Doilies and Pearls, Oysters and Shells*

...continued overleaf

collection, refers to the treasures of the sea, as well as a grandmother's 'pearls of wisdom'. Plunkett and Sales cite the formative influence of Linda Jackson and Jenny Kee, flamboyant forerunners in Australian fashion design.

Paul Berthon

French 1872–1909

Sarah Bernhardt

1901

colour lithograph, edition of 200, 2nd state

Purchased, 1976

P154-1976

Sarah Bernhardt, pioneering actor, artist and avatar of style, was expert in the cultivation of celebrity. In 1894, she was the first producer of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, in which she starred over several productions. On stage, Bernhardt forged a fantastically fluid identity, shifting from coquette to femme fatale to androgyne. Her public persona was amplified by her bisexuality and enthusiasm for masculine costume, and her performances inspired tributes across media. Paul Berthon's Art Nouveau poster depicts a hyperfeminine Bernhardt playing Mélisande in Maurice Maeterlinck's Symbolist romance *Pelléas and Mélisande*. In 1904, having apparently exhausted the possibilities of the female lead, Bernhardt invited her friend and fellow actor Mrs Patrick Campbell to appear in the play as Mélisande, opposite Bernhardt herself as the male Pelléas.

François-Raoul Larche sculptor

French 1860–1912

Siot Decauville, Paris foundry

France 1881–1926

Loïe Fuller, the dancer, lighted sculpture

c. 1900

gilt-bronze, electrical wiring, other materials

Purchased with funds donated by Peter and Ivanka Canet, 2016

2016.455

Loïe Fuller was an American dancer whose artistically and technologically innovative performance captivated fin-de-siècle Paris. The famed fluidity of Fuller's dancing was paralleled in her romantic life. Her first lesbian relationship was purportedly with Sarah Bernhardt's former lover Louise Abbéma, who introduced Fuller to Paris's flourishing sapphic circle. In 1905, Fuller began a relationship with Gabrielle Bloch (known professionally as Gabrielle Sorère and renowned for her distinctive wardrobe of dapper suits), with whom she cohabited and collaborated for twenty-three years, until her death. Fuller's performances, in which she manipulated great flowing silk wings with wooden wands, illuminated by coloured light, inspired numerous decorative portraits and homages.

Charles Robert Ashbee

English 1863–1942

Guild of Handicraft, London

England 1888–1908

Standing cup and cover

1901

silver, turquoise

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2006

2006.485.a-b

Founded by Charles Ashbee on egalitarian principles, the Guild of Handicraft specialised in traditional metalworking, producing decorative objects with a medievalist aesthetic. Ashbee's Utopian ideals were also expressed in his membership of the Order of Chaeronea, a queer secret society with an ethos of love and acceptance. Ashbee was a gay man at a dangerous time in history, immediately following the Wilde trial, and it was in this context that he married Janet Forbes in 1898. Ashbee discussed his sexuality with Forbes prior to their wedding, and she proceeded in full knowledge. Both had affairs, but they nonetheless produced four children, and forged an enduring companionship.

Frederick Henry Evans

English 1853–1943

Aubrey Beardsley

1895

photogravure

Felton Bequest, 1977

PH80-1977

Eroticism, ambiguity and decorative excess were intrinsic ingredients in the work of Aubrey Beardsley, the pre-eminent illustrator of the 1890s. Beardsley's most celebrated commission – a series of illustrations to accompany Oscar Wilde's 1894 play *Salome* – consolidated his status as an artist and provocateur, but his career was damaged irrevocably by the scandal surrounding Wilde's trial. His moniker in the conservative press – 'Awfully Weirdly' – attested to an association with queerness in the word's older sense: that which is curious or uncanny. For his portraits, he assumed a mask of immaculate dandyism, emphasising his unusual physical features; the composition of Frederick Evans's photograph came about when Evans compared his sitter to a gargoyle, and Beardsley adapted his pose to maximise the effect.

John Buckland-Wright illustrator

New Zealander 1897–1954, emigrated to England 1908, worked in Belgium and France 1924–39

Algernon Charles Swinburne author

English 1837–1909

Laus Veneris

1948

book: letterpress, wood-engravings, 28 pages, paper, cloth and cardboard cover, stitched binding, ed. 345/750

Bequest of Erwin and Anne Marie Herzenberg, 2005

2005.115

New Zealand-born artist John Buckland-Wright followed the path of many fin-de-siècle aesthetes, studying at Magdalen College, Oxford, and spending time at the Ashmolean Museum, drawing classical sculpture and developing a repertoire of nymphs, satyrs and other fantastic figures. His best-known subjects derive from fin-de-siècle literature and, like Aubrey Beardsley, Buckland-Wright produced numerous images of ostensibly heterosexual lovers which undermine the conventional gender binary. The woodblock illustrations made to accompany reprints of Algernon Charles Swinburne's poetry are seductively ambiguous. Though the lovers in the claustrophobically erotic *Laus Veneris* are nominally man and woman, Buckland-Wright's interpretation is more evocative of a passionate lesbian embrace.

Dora Ohlfsen

Australian 1869–1948

The awakening of Australian art

1907

bronze

Presented anonymously, 1991

D89-1991

Australian-born artist Dora Ohlfsen was, in the early twentieth century, among the world's most esteemed sculptors and designers of medals and medallions. Here, she employs a statuesque nude woman's form to embody what she described as Australia's 'feeling of newness and vitality and power. Australians ...desire to get everything out of life. We are untrammelled by traditions'. Ohlfsen met her life partner, Russian countess Hélène de Kuegelgen, in Saint Petersburg in 1902, and they later moved together to Rome, where they became supporters of Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime. They died in 1948 and were buried together in the city's non-Catholic cemetery.

Harriet Whitney Frishmuth

American 1880–1980

Gorham Manufacturing Company, Providence, Rhode Island manufacturer

United States 1831–1989

Speed

1921, cast 1922

silver-plated bronze

Purchased with funds donated by the Nicole Chow Foundation, 2017

2017.1256

Nude female dancers, sea nymphs and athletes became the mainstay of Harriet Frishmuth's art prior to the Second World War, bringing her tremendous popular and financial success. Most of Frishmuth's graceful bronze sculptures of dancing women were inspired by her friendship with the Yugoslavian-born dancer Desha Delteil. Symbolising modernity as a sleek female form, *Speed* became an iconic symbol of a progressive and hopeful USA in the pre-Depression period. Although, understandably, Frishmuth was not open about her sexuality in press interviews of the day, she was same-sex attracted (her life partner Ruth Talcott lived with her from the 1940s until Frishmuth's death in 1980).

Ethel Walker

Scottish 1861–1951, emigrated to England early 1870s

Lilith

c. 1920s

oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1948

1842-4

As the women's movement gained momentum in the early twentieth century, icons of female power assumed new currency. Scottish lesbian artist Ethel Walker's fascination with the subject of Lilith reflects her personal identification with an ideal of feminine mystery and dominance in harmony with the natural world. Banished from Eden for her refusal to 'lie beneath' Adam and associated in the artistic and literary tradition with witchcraft, Lilith was reclaimed at the fin de siècle as a figure of defiance, freedom and equality. Walker's *Lilith*, classical and statuesque, is serenely at one with the fertile natural environment. Far from the cruel archetype of the Christian tradition, Lilith is here absorbed into an emerging queer feminist vision which embraced new pantheistic spiritual movements.

Austin Spare

English 1886–1956

Nude female figure

1920s – early 1940s

pastel and pen and ink over pencil

Gift of Sir Michael Sadler and his son Mr Michael Sadler, 1944

1402-4

Known today primarily for his occultism, English artist Austin Osman Spare was celebrated early in his career for his precocious facility in drawing the human body. Engaging this aptitude to unconventional effect, he created supernatural figures whose erotic, powerful forms blurred gender boundaries. His *Nude female figure*, summoning a swirling vortex of supernatural beings, is endowed simultaneously with generous breasts and rippling back muscles that would make any Greek athlete proud. The sexual non-conformity of Spare's work resulted in an enthusiastic queer following, spearheaded (ultimately to the detriment of the artist's reputation) by notorious bisexual occultist Aleister Crowley. As recent scholarship has shown, however, Spare's own spiritual philosophy (however obscure) was more closely aligned to his nature-loving feminist Theosophist contemporaries.

Leonor Fini

Argentinian/Italian 1907–96, worked in France
1931/32–1996

Sleep

1940s–50s

colour lithograph, ed. 26/30

Felton Bequest, 1959

328-5

Over her seven-decade career, Leonor Fini subverted the gendered roles imposed by mainstream society, creating images of enigmatic, powerful women inspired by the goddesses of Greek mythology. In *Sleep* Fini references a mainstay of Symbolist and Surrealist art, the idea of the coexistent conscious and unconscious minds, here embodied in feminine faces. Notions of doubling pervade Fini's work, and her interest in gendered identity has been linked to her childhood. After her parents' acrimonious separation, she recalled that for the first seven years of her life, she was disguised as a boy whenever she left home to thwart her father's attempts at kidnap. Although she has been widely described as bisexual, Fini herself resisted the notion of labelling.

Marie Laurencin

French 1883–1956

The swan (Le Cygne)

1925

photo-mechanical reproduction

Purchased, 1949

2094-4

Described in *Vogue* as ‘a sister of Sappho’, queer painter and printmaker Marie Laurencin was an important member of the Parisian avant-garde. Although she was influenced by Cubism, she differentiated her work with an intentionally ‘feminine’ aesthetic of curvilinear forms and pastel colours, applying her own signature shade of pink to her society portraits, and to her pantheon of fantastic, symbolic feminine subjects. As the *Vogue* reviewer declared, Laurencin’s art communicated ‘a sort of wittiness mixed with wantonness ... The spectator is being continually reminded of the peculiar perverse desirability of women.’

James Gleeson

Australian 1915–2008

Pausanias. Olympia in Elis II.XI.7

1976

synthetic polymer paint, collage, pen and black and brown inks, frottage, wash, turps rubbing and metallic paint

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Frank O'Keefe, Governor, 1996

1996.408

James Gleeson was one of very few Australian artists of the mid twentieth century to identify openly as gay during his lifetime. His fascination with the Surrealist movement was fuelled in the 1940s as he travelled around Europe, absorbing the work of Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, André Masson and Giorgio de Chirico. Returning to Australia, Gleeson forged his own distinctive brand of composition featuring classically inspired nude men juxtaposed against turbulent psychedelic landscapes. As a critic he argued passionately in favour of Surrealism's imaginative qualities as a force of positive social change, declaring, 'It is the phantastic, used as a method of elucidation. It aims at the re-orientation of values through a broadening of the concept of reality'.

Jane R. Price

English 1860–1948, worked in Australia 1880–1948

Bush scene

c. 1900

oil on canvas

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Australian Art, 2020

2020.220

Ina Gregory

Australian 1874–1964

Charterisville

1890s

oil on canvas

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.618

Australian painters Ina Gregory and Jane Price fostered close personal relationships with one another and other like-minded contemporaries, sharing an approach to painting, politics and spirituality. In Sydney, Price was one of the foundation members of the Society of Women Painters, and her strong ethical principles, many of these at odds with the governing values of her time, shaped much of her life. In 1938, Price moved into Gregory's home at Rosedale, St Kilda, where they lived

...continued overleaf

and painted together until Price's death in 1948. Deeply absorbed in the teachings of Theosophy, they immersed themselves in a holistic, reverent approach to nature and art, imbuing their soft tonal landscapes with a wealth of spiritual meaning.

May Vale

Australian 1862–1945

The orchard

c. 1904

oil on canvas

Purchased, 1971

A5-1971

A versatile artist who worked across media and travelled extensively, May Vale defied convention in both her personal and her professional life. After two decades of international study, she set up a home and studio in Diamond Creek, Victoria. Around the time of the First World War, fellow artist Jane Price followed her there, renting a log cabin nearby. Their time together would be relatively short-lived, however, and Price's return to Sydney has been attributed to an acrimonious 'falling out' with Vale. Vale later married, but she and her husband never shared a bed – he departed the night of the wedding on an international safari, and while they 'cherished each other by correspondence' they never met again.

Cedric Morris

Welsh 1889–1982, worked in France
1920–26, England 1926–82

Virginian partridges

1929

oil on canvas

Purchased, 1953

2994-4

A self-trained artist, Cedric Morris absorbed influences from a wide variety of artists and sources, living in artistic communities in Cornwall and Paris in the 1920s. He travelled extensively, and his two passions aside from art were ornithology and horticulture. Morris's life was changed forever in November 1918, when he met fellow artist Arthur Lett-Haines (1894–1978) and the two fell immediately in love, despite Lett-Haines being already married at this time. Morris and Lett-Haines were to spend the rest of their lives together until Lett-Haines's death in 1978. The couple established the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing in Essex in 1937. The school's most famous pupil remains Lucian Freud, who first attended classes there while still a teenager.

Adrian Feint

Australian 1894–1971

Tribute to night

1950

oil on composition board

Purchased, 1950

2339–4

Immaculately presented, diligent and famously polite, Adrian Feint began his artistic training before enlisting as an ambulance driver and medic in Europe during the First World War. Feint was commended for gallantry and was granted leave in 1919 to study at the Académie Julian, Paris. Upon his return to Australia, he joined Sydney Ure Smith, publisher of *Art in Australia* and *Home* magazines, for which Feint designed covers. It was around this time that he met his life partner, John Winter, with whom he lived for twenty-three years. Having established his reputation as a printmaker, from the 1930s Feint came to specialise as a flower painter, imbuing many of his flamboyantly decorative subjects with symbolic or surrealist elements that lend a subtle queer sensibility.

Burway Prints, Melbourne manufacturer

Australia 1937–42

Frances Burke designer

Australian 1907–94

Magnolia

1940

screenprinted cotton

Presented by Dr Frances Burke, 1989

CT61-1989

In the field of mid-century Australian design, Frances Burke holds a pre-eminent position as a designer, design activist and entrepreneur. With her vibrant colours and bold motifs, she forged a distinct identity for Australian textiles at a key moment in international design history, becoming renowned for her innovative collaborations with contemporary designers and architects. Burke had begun her professional life as a nurse, and it was in that capacity that she met her life partner – fellow nurse Fabie (Frances Mary) Chamberlain. Chamberlain played a key role in supporting Burke's solo design practice, and after Burke's death in 1994, she ensured her partner's legacy by donating the contents of Burke's studio – including textile samples, photographs and ephemera – to RMIT University.

Alan Oldfield

Australian 1943–2004

Vase study

1971

pencil

Purchased, 1974

A4-1974

An artist defined by his many apparent contradictions, Alan Oldfield is remembered for his artistic versatility, his devout Christianity, and his sometimes scandalous humour. He was an influential member of the Sydney art scene in the 1960s and 1970s and a favourite of Patrick White; Oldfield believed that he had been the inspiration for the character of the young painter in White's 1970 novel *The Vivisector*. Oldfield met his life partner, research scientist Jim Davenport, in the early 1970s, and the couple remained together until Davenport's death in 1997. Always an accomplished draughtsperson, Oldfield combined sensual hedonism with the discipline of hard-edge abstraction in his early work, but this gave way later in life to a more contemplative style shaped in part by his religious faith.

Edna Walling

English 1895–1973, emigrated to Australia 1915

No title (Album)

1950s–60s

album: gelatin silver photographs, 48 pages, cardboard, leather and colour photo-lithograph cover, metal screw binding

Gift of Mrs Barbara Barnes, 1983

PH10-1983

This album by Edna Walling, an influential Australian garden designer, was a personal project to capture the creative effervescence of the community she created at Bickleigh Vale with her partner Lorna Fielden, and its visitors including landscape designer Daphne Pearson and her partner war hero Mervyn Davis, author Estelle Thompson, ballet dancer Algernoff, builder Esme Johnson and Walling's earlier partner Rosamond Dowling. Walling designed Bickleigh Vale as a community away from the city. It was nicknamed Trouser Lane as it was the home of many independent women who shared Walling's vision.

Vivienne Binns

Australian born 1940

Untitled

1965–66

ballpoint pen

Untitled

1965–66

ballpoint pen

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2008

2008.551

2008.553

Vivienne Binns was actively involved in feminist, rural and performance art communities in Sydney and throughout New South Wales in the 1970s and founded the Artist in Community and Participation Projects at Blacktown in 1979. Binns was included in *An Exhibition of Work by Homosexual and Lesbian Artists* at Watters Gallery in 1978, the first exhibition of works by gay and lesbian artists in Australia, the poster for which is on display in this exhibition. Her explosive 1967 exhibition at Watters Gallery, Sydney, anticipated 1970s feminist art in its powerful sexual symbolism. These exuberant early linear drawings, from a series of almost 100 drawings of women's bodies and internal organs, demonstrate her interest in spontaneity, humour and the exploration of sexuality and societal expectations of women.

Yasumasa Morimura

Japanese born 1951

An inner dialogue with Frida Kahlo (HANAWA / Flower wreath and tears)

from the series *An inner dialogue with Frida Kahlo*

1991–2001

photograph, plastic, ed. 1/3

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2021

‘It’s all a conception of my imagination. In that fantastic sphere, the various elements of Doña Frida and myself mix into a muddle, a chemical reaction occurs, creating this imaginary Frida of mine.’

– Yasumasa Morimura

Morimura takes on the guise of painter Frida Kahlo in her self-portrait *Diego on my mind*, 1943. He explores the construction and performativity of identity in his ‘self-portrait’ series, which simultaneously deconstructs, subverts and pays homage to the work of other artists. Re-creating masterpieces from art history, he substitutes the subject’s face with his own using make-up, costumes, painting and digital manipulation. These works transgress the borders between essentialist categories of gender and subvert conceptions of ‘Oriental’

...continued overleaf

and 'Occidental' culture, including constructions of femininity and certain Western conceits of Asia.

Eddy Batache

Lebanese born 1939

Reinhard Hassert with Francis Bacon in the Père Lachaise Cemetery

1980, printed 2014

inkjet print, ed. 5/5

Gift of the artist through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

2016.522

Irish author Oscar Wilde's 1895 trial and imprisonment for 'gross indecency' was a turning point in queer history. Wilde's defence of 'the love that dare not speak its name' positioned same-sex attraction within a long history, within which emotional, intellectual and spiritual experiences must be acknowledged alongside the physical. However, the judge was unmoved, and Wilde was sentenced to two years' hard labour. Wilde's premature death in 1900 – in part a consequence of the harsh conditions he suffered during his imprisonment – canonised him as a martyr to queerness. Wilde was buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, where his tomb, featuring a white marble sphinx carved by Jacob Epstein, remains a site of pilgrimage to this day.

Glyn Warren Philpot

English 1884–1937

Oedipus

1931–32

oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1932

4663-3

A fashionable society portrait painter in Britain in the 1910s and 1920s, Glyn Philpot experimented in 1931–32 with radical new paintings that engaged with Surrealism and the works of Pablo Picasso, while also revealing his hitherto hidden queerness. This painting features a strangely nubile and scantily clad Oedipus, who bears the noble features of Philpot's handsome young German boyfriend, Karl Heinz Müller. The Sphinx also echoes the controversial guardian spirit Jacob Epstein had carved in 1908–12 for Oscar Wilde's tomb in the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Works like this one scandalised London's art world in 1932, effectively destroying Philpot's career. He became increasingly beset by financial problems, the stress of which may have led to his early death in 1937.

Christian Thompson

Bidjara born 1978

Otherring the ethnologist, Augustus Pitt Rivers

2015, printed 2016 from the *Museum of Others* series

2015–16

type C photograph on metallic paper

Gift of an anonymous donor through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2017

2017.113.3

Augustus Pitt Rivers was an English ethnologist and archaeologist. In 1884 he founded the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford by donating his private collection of ethnographic artefacts to the university. More than a century later, in 2010, Christian Thompson made history when he became the first Aboriginal person to be admitted to Oxford in its 900-year history. In a delightfully ironic twist, the Pitt Rivers name is also linked to queer histories via Augustus's great-grandson Michael Pitt-Rivers, who in the 1950s became infamous in Britain when he was put on trial for buggery. The case brought public attention, including opposition, to the laws criminalising sex between men throughout the UK at the time.

Greece

Saints Basil, Chrysostom and Gregory with a kneeling donor

early 18th century

oil and gold leaf on wood panel

Felton Bequest, 1949

1981-4

As the Greco-Roman era came to a close, the Early Church Fathers used Christianity as a weapon against same-sex attraction, which they denounced as a pagan vice. Two of the men depicted here, St Basil (330 – 379 CE) and St John Chrysostom (c. 347 – 407 CE), preached a new creed of asceticism that was opposed to the pleasure of the flesh, rejecting any sexual expression that was not linked to procreation within heterosexual marriage. John Chrysostom was particularly vehement in his denunciation of male same-sex desire, which he called ‘lawless lust’, ‘a terrible and incurable disease’ and ‘a plague more terrible than all plagues’. He was also one of the few early Christian preachers who openly denounced lesbianism.

William Walcott

Scottish/Russian 1874–1943, worked in England 1907–43

Justinian weds Theodora

1925

etching and drypoint, ed. 26/50

Felton Bequest, 1930

4260-3

Emperor Justinian, who ruled the Christian Byzantine Empire from 527 to 565 CE, drafted a new legal code that shaped law in the Western world until the nineteenth century. Justinian's Code introduced the death penalty for same-sex relations between men. The emperor unleashed an aggressive campaign of persecution during his reign, declaring that sex between men would 'incur the just anger of God' and was thus to blame for natural calamities such as famines and earthquakes. Even church leaders were caught up in a pogrom that Justinian undertook in 528 CE, when bishop Alexander of Diospolis was among those who had their testicles cut off and their penises mutilated, before being paraded naked through the streets of Constantinople until they bled to death.

Peter Isselburg engraver

German 1568–1630

Cornelis Massys (after)

Henry VIII, King of England

1616

engraving

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

457-5

Despite the influence of medieval ecclesiastical authorities in regulating sexual behaviour, it was not until 1533 that a civil statute was enacted in Britain to punish sexual relations between men. King Henry VIII's Buggery Act adjudged 'the detestable & abominable vice of buggeri committed with mankind or beest' to be a felony punishable by death and – importantly – ordered that the property of convicted offenders be forfeited to the Crown. The statute was re-enacted in 1536, 1539 and 1541. There is no indication that the law was instituted because Henry VIII felt any special repugnance towards sodomy or sodomites – it was simply a political token of Henry's supremacy. The term 'sodomy' commonly meant sex between men at this time.

Jacob Houbraken engraver

Dutch 1698–1780

Hans Holbein the younger (after)

Thomas Cromwell

1739

etching and engraving

Felton Bequest, 1939

690-4

The Buggery Act of 1533 was piloted through Britain's Parliament by Thomas Cromwell in support of Henry VIII's plan for reducing the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts. By defining the crime as a felony without benefit of clergy, even men in holy orders became subject to the civil law. People rebelled against the religious reforms Cromwell had orchestrated for the King, however, who himself became less satisfied with his faithful servant. Henry, ever paranoid, ordered Cromwell's arrest as a traitor in June 1540. Cromwell had been patron to Walter Hungerford, 1st Baron Hungerford of Heytesbury, who became the first person to be executed under the Buggery Act. Ironically, Hungerford and Cromwell were both beheaded on the same day, 28 July 1540.

Italy, Florence

Michelangelo Buonarroti (after)

David

16th century

bronze

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

3983-D3

The enormous surviving correspondence and hundreds of poems by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) clearly document his passionate devotion to several men, including the aristocrat Tommaso dei Cavalieri and one of the artist's own pupils, Cecchino Bracci. 'I cannot make love with anyone but you', Cavalieri wrote to the sculptor in 1533. When Michelangelo's great-nephew Michelangelo the Younger first published his famous relative's love poems in 1623, however, he heterosexualised them, making them seem to be addressed to women. The original homoerotic language of Michelangelo's poetry was only published in 1863, by British advocate for 'homosexual rights' John Addington Symonds, Jr.

Wenceslaus Hollar

Bohemian 1607–77, worked in England 1636–44, 1652–77, Flanders 1644–52

Leonardo da Vinci (after)

Twelve heads after Leonardo da Vinci

17th century

etching, 2nd state

Felton Bequest, 1926

2208-3

In 1476, when the twenty-three-year-old Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) was working in the Florence studio of artist Andrea del Verrocchio, his name was included twice among lists of men accused of ‘certain evil pleasures’ – male same-sex relations and sodomy – posted anonymously in the *tamburo* (a letterbox provided for such denunciations) of that city’s town hall. Leonardo was arrested, although he and the other accused were acquitted of these charges. While scholars have debated the veracity of these accusations, in a dialogue written in 1560 by the art theorist Gian Paolo Lomazzo, Leonardo was declared to be explicitly same-sex attracted.

Gijs Bakker designer

Dutch born 1942

Pauline Barendse manufacturer

Dutch born 1967

Cellini with ball, brooch

1998

from the *Holysport* series 1998

white gold 585, diamond, silver 925, computer

manipulated photo, transparent synthetic polymer resin ed.

3/5

Purchased with funds donated by Peter and Ivanka Canet, 2014

2014.160

This brooch features an image of a marble crucifix (today in the Escorial, Madrid) carved by Italian sculptor and goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini (1500–71) in 1562, while he was sentenced to four years' house arrest in Florence on charges of having had sexual relations with his studio assistant Fernando di Giovanni da Montepulciano, specifically 'keeping him in bed as his wife'. In an autobiography which he also began at this time, Cellini discussed his equal sexual attraction to both sexes. Cellini had previously been convicted of sodomy in Florence in 1523, for which he had paid only a modest fine.

Baccio Bandinelli

Italian 1493–1560

A seated male nude

late 1510s – early 1520s

red chalk

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

564-4

Born in Florence seven years before fellow Florentine sculptor Benvenuto Cellini, Baccio Bandinelli was, according to the contemporaneous art historian Giorgio Vasari, jealous of both Cellini and the renowned sculptor Michelangelo. 'As one sculptor always envies another', Vasari wrote, 'Baccio could not endure the favours bestowed upon Benvenuto ... [and] said many biting things about Benvenuto'. Cellini expanded upon this in his own autobiography, narrating how once, when squabbling with Bandinelli in front of Duke Cosimo I, Bandinelli yelled at him: 'Oh shut up, you big sodomite!' Cellini wittily turned the insult around, declaring that 'so noble an art as you allude to ... here on earth is practised by some of the greatest emperors and kings'.

James Quinn

Australian 1871–1971

Sandro Botticelli (after)

The Virgin and Child with the young St John the Baptist

c. 1897

oil on canvas

Presented by the artist under the terms of the
National Gallery of Victoria Travelling Scholarship, 1897

31-2

In November 1502 the Florentine artist Sandro Botticelli (c. 1445–1510), who was then in his late fifties, was charged with having sexual relations with one of his male assistants. An anonymous accuser denounced Botticelli to the Ufficiali della Notte, the Officers of the Night, a court that was convened in Florence between 1432 and 1502 with the specific brief of prosecuting sex between men, whose extensive archives survive today. This court investigated over 15,000 accusations and recorded more than 2,400 convictions for sodomy during this period. One of those convicted, in 1473, was Betto Piolla, a twenty-eight-year-old painter working in the young Botticelli's studio. The 1502 charge against Botticelli does not seem to have led to a subsequent prosecution.

Saiten Tamura

Japanese 1889–1933

Statue of Joan of Arc reflecting the evening sun

1924

from *Taishō Great Earthquake Folio* 1924

colour woodblock

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Asian Art 2019

2019.1050.28

In 1429, at a time when France was divided between French and English ownership, the French military heroine Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc) was betrayed by pro-English advisers within the court of the French king Charles VII, and captured at Compiègne. She was subjected to a long and humiliating show trial at the English-held town of Rouen. At the end of the trial, after failing to catch her out on any of their trumped-up charges of witchcraft or theological impropriety, the English authorities finally condemned her to death for cross-dressing due to her having worn male armour into battle. On 30 May 1431, at the age of nineteen years, Jeanne d'Arc was burned at the stake.

Pierre Lombart engraver

French 1613–82

Anthony van Dyck (after)

Elizabeth, Countess of Castlehaven

1661–62

from the *Countesses* series

engraving, 2nd of 3 states

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

X371-5

As a young woman Elizabeth Brydges (later the Countess of Castlehaven) was at the centre of a family sexual scandal that saw her father-in-law Mervyn Touchet, 12th Lord Audley and 2nd Earl of Castlehaven, accused of raping her mother and engaging in sodomy with male servants. These charges were brought by her own husband and step-brother James, Touchet's son. Convicted of both crimes, Castlehaven was sentenced to death and was beheaded on London's Tower Hill on 14 May 1631. Two of his sexual partners, both men, were later hanged for their sexuality at Tyburn on 6 July 1631. At the scaffold one of these, a sailor named Giles Broadway, lamented that he had been the cause of Castlehaven's death.

James McArdell mezzotinter

Irish c. 1728–65

Joshua Reynolds (after)

**George Germain, 1st Viscount
Sackville**

1759

mezzotint

Gift of E. Makower, 1925

1395-3

In 1776 a scurrilous satire, *Sodom and Onan*, was published in London, accusing numerous public figures of same-sex relations. The poem described how ‘S[ackville], both Coward, and Catamite, commands / Department hon’rable, — and kisses hands, / With lips that oft’ in blandishment obscene / Have been employ’d’. This was George Germain, 1st Viscount Sackville, who was court-martialled in 1759 for refusing to obey orders for his troops to march into combat at the Battle of Minden, his name becoming a byword for cowardice. Favoured by George III, however, he eventually became the Secretary of State for the American Colonies. He lived in a ménage à trois with his wife and protégé, and was widely lampooned as ‘the pederastical [younger man-loving] American Secretary’.

John Finlayson mezzotinter

English c. 1730 – c. 1776

Johan Joseph Zoffany (after)

Mr Garrick in the character of Sir John Brute

1768

mezzotint

Felton Bequest, 1925

1821–3

Queer scenes and allusions appeared on the stage of Restoration drama, peopled by ‘womanising fops’ and ‘predatory sodomites’ (and their mincing catamites), who are held up for laughter and scorn. The fops in Restoration drama mostly pursue women, but their flamboyance allows plenty of scope for innuendo, suggesting that the theatre-going public recognised queer references. One relevant queer character role from this period, a man comically dressed as a woman, appears in the character of Sir John Brute, who in the 1726 revival of John Vanbrugh’s *The Provok’d Wife* enacted a drunken man’s idea of a fashionable lady. This humorous print depicts the actor David Garrick, brandishing a revealing phallic cane, playing the role in 1763.

Thomas Blackmore mezzotinter

English c. 1740 – c. 1780

Joshua Reynolds (after)

Samuel Foote

1771

mezzotint, 2nd of 3 states

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

572-5

In eighteenth-century London the popular actor and dramatist Samuel Foote was noted for creating female characters to be played by men, which he performed in private theatricals as the first pantomime dame. In 1776 his enemy, the Duchess of Kingston, paid the costs of prosecuting Foote for making sexual advances to his footman. The evidence had some support, and incidents earlier in his life were recalled in court, but he was acquitted as the victim of a conspiracy. His health broken by the strain of the trial, Foote died in October 1777. William Jewell, the treasurer of the Haymarket Theatre, who was perhaps Foote's lover, arranged for Foote to be secretly buried by torchlight in the cloister of Westminster Abbey.

John Richardson Jackson engraver

English 1819–77

Thomas Lawrence (after)

Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh

1843

mezzotint

Felton Bequest, 1939

871-4

The stigma attached to same-sex desire was such that it was not uncommon for men arrested under suspicion of committing sodomy in the UK to kill themselves before their trials. This was the case in 1822 with Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons, who took his own life after informing King George IV that he was being blackmailed on account of his sexuality. Castlereagh had been lured by a soldier, whom he claimed was disguised as a woman, into a brothel, where he was confronted by blackmailers. Though he may have been deliberately entrapped, Castlereagh's wife confessed to the Duke of Wellington that her husband preferred men.

Isaac Robert Cruikshank

English 1789–1856

George Cruikshank

English 1792–1878

Symptoms of the finish of 'some sorts of life' in London: Tom, Jerry and Logic in the Press Yard at Newgate

1821

plate 20 from *Life in London* by Pierce Egan, published by Sherwood, Neely & Jones, London, 1821

hand-coloured etching and aquatint

Purchased, 1956

3345J-4

It is impossible to determine how many men were hanged for sodomy in the UK during the eighteenth century, as official statistics were not required until 1805. From 1806 to 1835, sixty men were hanged for sodomy and hundreds more were exhibited in the pillory, transported or imprisoned. Newspapers regularly published accounts of these events. When sodomites were exhibited in the pillory, the crowd of spectators sometimes exceeded 30,000. The last men executed in England for buggery were James Pratt and John Smith. Pratt, thirty-two, was an unemployed footman and a married man with a family. Smith, thirty-four, a gentleman's servant, was single. They were convicted on 21 September 1835 and hanged outside Newgate Prison on 27 November 1835.

Dalziel Brothers

wood-engraver

English 1839–94

Simeon Solomon draughtsman

English 1840–1905

Abraham and the three angels

1862–63

illustration for *Dalziel's Bible Gallery*, published by George Routledge & Sons, London, 1881

wood-engraving

Bequest of Percival Serle, 1952

2929.127-4

A prominent British artist associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, Simeon Solomon was arrested in February 1873 for having sex with another man in a public toilet. He was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, a punishment that was commuted to police supervision thanks to the influence of a prominent relative. Solomon subsequently travelled to Paris, where in March 1874 he was arrested for a similar offence and sentenced to three months in prison. He continued his career after his return to the UK, but was scorned and shunned by many dealers, collectors and friends. Solomon developed an increasing dependence upon alcohol, and was reduced to poverty, living at times in a workhouse or begging on the street before his death in 1905.

M. Léon & J. Lévy, Paris manufacturer
French 1864–72

**Universal Exposition, Paris. 215 Krupp
canons, Prussian section, stereograph
(Exposition universelle,
Paris. 215. Canons Krupp, section
Prussienne)**

1867

albumen silver photograph

The Dr Robert Wilson Collection. Gift of Dr Robert Wilson, 2014

2014.1085

A married man with two daughters, Friedrich Alfred Krupp (1854–1902) was head of the Krupp arms manufactory and one of the richest men in Germany. From 1898 he began visiting the Italian island of Capri, which was known as a centre for queer life. In late 1902 articles began appearing in Italian and German newspapers, accusing Krupp of using Capri as a base for sexual liaisons, both with local men and other German friends. Under German law, sex between men was punishable by imprisonment and hard labour. The cause of Krupp's sudden death in November 1902 remains unclear. It may have been caused by the stress of this sexual scandal, or he may have taken his own life.

J. S. MacDonald

Australian 1878–1952

Self-portrait

1922

lithograph

Purchased, 1922

1255-3

James Stuart MacDonald, art critic and director of the National Gallery of Victoria from 1936 to 1940, was notoriously hostile to most forms of modern art, which he famously declared to be created by ‘degenerates and perverts’. He frequently railed against modern art in print, pointing a bigoted finger at both women and queer artists as instigators of aesthetic decadence. In 1934 he warned of ‘the emergence of numbers of what the Americans call “pansies” and fine allies they make. These beings can trim a hat or tie a bow with any girl ... They rule the art world today, and, unless real painters speak up for themselves and right art, the women and their near-men abettors will ruin both’.

Thomas Hart Benton

American 1889–1975

Homestead

1938

lithograph

Gift of J. P. Beveridge Jnr., 1951

2370-4

A self-declared 'enemy of modernism' in art, Thomas Hart Benton championed a style of realist painting that *Time* magazine observed 'ferociously strives to record a contemporary history of the U.S.A.' when it placed Benton on its cover in December 1934, making him one of America's most prominent contemporary artists. *Time* also called Benton 'the most virile of U.S. painters of the U.S.'; an unfortunate aspect of Benton's machismo was his aggressive homophobia. In April 1941 *Time* magazine recorded Benton's rant that the average museum was 'a graveyard run by a pretty boy with delicate wrists and a swing in his gait'. His prejudice scandalised many, and Benton subsequently lost his teaching post at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Angus McBean

Welsh 1904–90, worked in England
1926–90

Katharine Hepburn in *The Millionairess*

1952

bromide print

Gift of Margaret Toll, 2005

2005.534

On 14 March 1942 the UK's *Bath Chronicle* reported how a 'Sentence of four years' penal servitude was imposed ... on Angus McBean, the well-known theatrical photographer, who, with five other men, had been committed from Bath on charges of a grave nature'. All six, one of whom subsequently took his own life, were imprisoned for having same-sex relations with one another. McBean's defence counsel, Mr Cyril Williams, told the court that his client's position as the UK's leading stage photographer 'has been ruined for ever, and I don't put it too high when I say that perhaps the whole of his life now lies in ruins'. After his release from prison, McBean was able to re-establish his career.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Labels

1978

collage of coloured plastic tubing and embossing tape on card on brown handmade mulberry paper

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 2017

2016.255

In 1976, attacking the new visibility of gay characters in television productions, the USA's nationally syndicated columnist Nicholas von Hoffman published a vicious article, 'Year of the Fag', reprinted in journals across the country, in which he asked: 'Is a new stereotype being born? Is network television about to kill off the bitchy, old-time outrageous fruit and replace him with a new-type homo?' This article included no less than seven anti-gay epithets: fag, fagolini, faggot, fruit, homo, faggotry and queen. These pejoratives subsequently informed David McDiarmid's *Labels*, in which he retaliated with a proud reclamation of terms previously perceived to be negative: pervert, faggot, kamp, sick, pansy, fairy, homo, lezzo, dyke, deviant, gay, sodomite, poofter, queen and invert.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Method acting

1978

collage of cut gold paper, colour photo-offset lithograph, offset lithograph, fluorescent orange embossing tape and colour adhesive stickers on brown handmade mulberry paper

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 2017

2016.258

On his first trip to the United States in 1977, David McDiarmid toured the homes of movie stars in Los Angeles, which he noted 'all had gardeners who were L. A. queens, with moustaches, suntans & short hair'. He also photographed Rock Hudson's star on Hollywood Boulevard. In this work, created shortly after he returned to Australia, McDiarmid mused upon the irony that many of Hollywood's most famous stars had been forced to hide their queerness to further their careers. These included Montgomery Clift (1920–66) who, along with Rock Hudson, was a closeted gay man idolised by 1950s movie audiences for playing stereotypically heterosexual character parts, 'totally alien to Monty's sensitive personality', as McDiarmid here suggests.

John Spooner

Australian born 1946

Thatcher

1990

published in *The Telegraph*, London, 23 November 1990
pen and brush and ink over pencil

Gift of the artist, 2000

2000.111

Despite homosexuality being decriminalised in 1967 in the UK, in 1988, at the height of the AIDS crisis, the Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher passed a new law known as Clause 28 that was explicitly homophobic and divisive. Under this clause, local authorities were instructed that they 'shall not intentionally promote homosexuality'; nor could they 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. Thatcher herself declared, 'Children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay. All of those children are being cheated of a sound start in life'. Clause 28 was only revoked in 2003.

Eduardo Paolozzi

Scottish 1924–2005, worked in France
1947–49, England 1949–2005

Turing 7

2000

from *The Alan Turing* suite
colour photo-screenprint

Gift of Dr Douglas Kagi through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013

2013.508.6

British Pop artist Eduardo Paolozzi's *Alan Turing* suite of eight colour photo-screenprints uses a network of complex interlocking forms to pay homage to the complex intellect of the celebrated mathematician and pioneer of computer technology and artificial intelligence.

During the Second World War, Alan Turing (1912–54) played an instrumental role in decoding Germany's secret Enigma machine cyphers, enabling the defeat of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany by the Allied forces. In 1952, however, it was discovered that Turing had sexual relations with men (at that time still a criminal offence in the UK), and he was charged with 'gross indecency'. Turing chose to be chemically castrated rather than imprisoned. Seriously depressed, Turing took his own life in June 1954.

Robert Fielding

Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara/Arrernte born 1969

In our hands

2016

inkjet print, ed. 1/5

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2018

2018.32.e

Zaachariaha Fielding is a queer and gender fluid pop star and painter who grew up in both Adelaide and in Mimili, an Aboriginal community in outback South Australia. Zaachariaha's father, Robert, is also an accomplished artist, known primarily for his painting and photography. This work by Robert shows his own open palm cradling *piiny-piiny*, the moth of the witchetty grub, which is a significant totem for Mimili Community. Moths, like butterflies, are symbolic animals for many queer and gender diverse communities, primarily due to their association with the act of transformation. In this tender work, Robert shows the love of a father for his queer child, shattering the misconception that Aboriginal people and remote communities are often homophobic.

Zaachariaha Fielding

Pakistani/Afghan/Western Arrernte/Yankunytjatjara born
1991

Untitled

2020

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2021

2021.170

Brassaï

Hungarian 1899–1984, worked in France 1924–84

Le Monocle, the bar. On the left is Lulu de Montparnasse (Au bar du Monocle, Montparnasse, Paris)

c. 1932, printed c. 1979

from *The Secret Paris of the 30s* series 1931–35

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 1980

PH183-1980

Pictured here is Le Monocle, a queer bar in Paris active during the interwar years. While the bar primarily catered to lesbians, it welcomed a range of queer identities. Brassai gained access to Le Monocle through a regular patron named Claude, whom he befriended and accompanied to the bar one night in 1932. A form of gender expression adopted by many of Le Monocle's patrons is recorded in this photograph: the female masculinity of *la garçonne*. *Garçonnes* were distinguished by their embrace of traditionally masculine dress codes, often wearing a topcoat, a slick, cropped hairstyle and, as the bar's name would suggest, a monocle.

Bessie Davidson

Australian 1879–1965, worked in
France 1904–06, 1910–

Girl in the mirror (Jeune fille au miroir)

1914

oil on canvas

Gift of Andrée Fay Harkness through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.561

Bessie Davidson met Margaret Preston while studying to become an artist in Adelaide. Preston was her private tutor, four years her senior, and the two women soon embarked on an intimate relationship, Preston's first. Between 1904 and 1910, they travelled and studied extensively together in Europe, living mainly on Davidson's allowance. Returning to Australia in 1907, Davidson and Preston rented a studio and continued to paint and exhibit. The relationship ended around 1911, after which Davidson settled permanently in France. She lived for the rest of her life as an artist with her 'patron' and 'beloved companion' Marguerite Le Roy, also known as Dauphine, whom she had met shortly after the war. They were buried in the same grave.

Margaret Preston

Australian 1875–1963, worked in Germany 1904–07,
throughout Europe 1912–19

The fish bowl

1910

oil on canvas on composition board

Purchased with the assistance of the National Gallery Society of Victoria, 1977 A4-1977

Reynella Pottery, South Australia

manufacturer

Australia 1919–22

Gladys Reynell decorator

Australian 1881–1956, worked in England 1914–19

Teapot

1922

earthenware

Gift of W. G. Preston through the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1968

549.a-b-D5

Gladys Reynell and Margaret Preston were pioneering modernists in the first half of the twentieth century in Australia. Reynell established one of the first sole-practitioner pottery studios in the country, where she produced a range of decorated earthenware vessels. Preston was an influential painter and printmaker who became known for her still-life works and depictions of Australian native flora. Preston and Reynell lived, worked, travelled and exhibited together, and shared an intimate relationship from around 1911 until 1919. Both artists married shortly after their return to Australia, Preston in 1919, Reynell in 1922. Preston's marriage provided her with the financial means to travel widely, to experiment artistically, and to establish herself as one of Australia's leading modernists.

Frances Hodgkins

New Zealander 1869–1947,
worked throughout Europe 1906–47, Australia 1912–13,
England 1941–47

Lunch at the Golden Lion Hotel (Déjeuner at the Hôtel du Lion d'Or)

c. 1908–12

watercolour over charcoal

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mrs M. E. Cutten, Founder Benefactor, 1982

A11-1982

Frances Hodgkins here records three women having lunch at the Hôtel du Lion d'Or in Paris. The casual intimacy of the scene reflects the centrality of nurturing relationships in the artist's own life. Spending most of her career in England, Hodgkins surrounded herself with queer literary and artistic figures, including Lady Ottoline Morrell, Christopher Wood and Duncan Grant. In recent years, Hodgkins's presumed heterosexuality has been challenged by queer scholars, including Joanne Drayton: 'According to convention, [Hodgkins] eschewed the wasteland of spinsterhood to become an artist, thereby draining every pulse of passion from her veins. But clearly there is also evidence of another, more complex and unorthodox life. A queer life filled with queer people who loved her and she loved them'.

Gwen John

Welsh 1876–1939, worked in France 1903–39

Interior with figures

c. 1898–99

oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs C. H. Collins-Baker, 1947

1737-4

There is a quiet, sensuous ambiguity to this image – a sense of understatement and of emotional layering that characterises much of Gwen John's work. Throughout her life, John was attracted to women and men within her wide artistic community. Although she declared French artist Auguste Rodin to be her great love, she had a number of same-sex relationships. Her brother Augustus wrote in his autobiography of a passion that she developed for an unnamed woman while a student at the Slade School of Fine Art. Later, while walking to Paris with Augustus's partner Dorelia, she developed a romantic attachment to a young married woman, who followed them to Paris. Rodin, who had a sexual relationship with his assistant Hilda Flodin, made erotic drawings of John and Flodin together.

Adolf de Meyer

German 1868–1946

Coco di Madraggo

c. 1900

platinum photograph

Purchased, 1981

PH61-1981

Famously dubbed by Cecil Beaton ‘the Debussy of photography’, Adolph de Meyer was a highly gifted portrait photographer with successful photography practices in London (1898–1913), New York (1913–21) and Paris (1922–38). In New York he worked notably as fashion photographer for the American magazine *Vogue*, and in Paris for *Harper’s Bazaar*. In 1899, de Meyer, who was gay, married the fashionable British lesbian socialite, Olga Caracciolo. Although a marriage of convenience, their relationship was one of close, loving friendship. Shortly after their marriage, Olga began an affair with the Singer sewing machine heiress Winnaretta Singer, who had herself entered into a *mariage blanc* (unconsummated marriage) in 1893 with the queer composer and impoverished French aristocrat Prince Edmond de Polignac.

Joy Hester

Australian 1920–60

Merging heads

1949

from the *Love* series 1949

charcoal, brush and ink

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria in honour of
Irena Zdanowicz by Mr Terence Lane, Member, 1994

P56-1994

Joy Hester is remembered for her powerful, expressive paintings and drawings, simultaneously surreal and figurative, addressing the themes of love, death and human psychology. From 1938 to 1947, Hester and her husband Albert Tucker were members of the Angry Penguins, a pioneering group of artists based at Heide, the home of publishers and art patrons John and Sunday Reed. Heide was the site of numerous complex relationships which merged artistic collaboration with romantic and sexual connection. Sunday Reed was at the heart of several of these, and her close friendship with Hester was complicated by a number of sexual encounters. In 1947, following a diagnosis of terminal Hodgkins lymphoma, Hester gave over care of her son, Sweeney, to the Reeds.

Chi Peng

Chinese born 1981

Consubstantiality

2004

from the *Consubstantiality* series 2003–04

type C photograph, ed. 2/10

Purchased with the assistance of the NGV Foundation, 2004

2004.771-2

Chi Peng's (迟鹏) series *Consubstantiality* (in Chinese, *tongti* 同体, also translatable as 'shared/same body' or 'conjoined corporeality') are digitally manipulated C-type photographs which challenged attempts to pin down sexual or gender identities. The figures, painted Kabuki-white, engage in a kind of mirror play, pressing their palms against each other's through panes of glass. The figures resist the usual corporeal markers of sex and gender. Even the gaze is queered; instead of looking at each other, the figures' gazes are slightly misaligned; one of them even looks out from the frame, meeting our eye directly in what could be a challenge or an invitation as we gaze back at them, reversing the usual order of viewer and viewed.

Tama Sharman

Aotearoa born 1975, worked in Australia 1999–

Pacific Transformer 1–4

2009, printed 2013

lino print on Tapa (mulberry paper), ed. 1/2

Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2013

2013.723.1-4

Tama Sharman was born in Otepoti, Aotearoa, and is a trained, multi award-winning printmaker. Together, these four linocut prints on tapa cloth explore the notion that male spiritual identities can be expressed through traditional First Nations iconographic tattooing. These stark and powerful works are an autobiographical account of the negotiations required to live between worlds – such as moving between cultures, the integration of self and culture, and being Takatapui or queer/transgender in a culturally Pacific sense.

Zanele Muholi

South African born 1972

Zinathi I

2015

from the *Somnyama Ngonyama* series 2015–16

gelatin silver photograph

Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2017

2017.459

Zanele Muholi describes themselves as a visual activist, recently opting to use the pronoun 'they', referring to themselves gender neutrally to challenge the historical limitations of seeing gender in solely binary terms. Muholi began making work to great international acclaim with images of gender-queer figures in Johannesburg and Cape Town. *Somnyama Ngonyama* translates to 'Hail the dark lioness' and is the first work by Muholi in which they presented themselves as model. Muholi has manipulated the appearance of their skin to appear as a deep, intense black. Discussing this, they wrote: 'By exaggerating the darkness of my skin tone, I'm reclaiming my blackness'.

Zanele Muholi

South African born 1972

Ntozakhe II (Parktown)

2016

from the *Somnyama Ngonyama* series 2015–16

gelatin silver photograph

Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2017

2017.461

Zanele Muholi describes themselves as a visual activist, recently opting to use the pronoun 'they', referring to themselves gender neutrally to challenge the historical limitations of seeing gender in solely binary terms. Muholi began making work to great international acclaim with images of gender-queer figures in Johannesburg and Cape Town. *Somnyama Ngonyama* translates to 'Hail the dark lioness' and is the first work by Muholi in which they presented themselves as model. Muholi has manipulated the appearance of their skin to appear as a deep, intense black. Discussing this, they wrote: 'By exaggerating the darkness of my skin tone, I'm reclaiming my blackness'.

Madeline Green

English 1884–1947

Glasgow

c. 1930

oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1931

4468–3

When *Glasgow* was first exhibited, Randall Davies, Felton adviser to the NGV, described its subjects as ‘a young lad and a lassie’, an error which (albeit unwittingly) encapsulated much of the painting’s appeal – its sense of artful ambiguity. The models for the painting have since been identified as the artist herself (on the left) and her sister Gladys, who managed affairs and organised exhibitions, allowing Madeline to focus entirely on her work. Gladys also regularly posed for her sister, often in masculine attire of trousers and loose, double-breasted coat. Many of Green’s paintings employ costume to subtly interrogate the iconography of gender and class in modern Britain; this composition was inspired by a trip to Glasgow, where she exhibited regularly.

Dianne Jones

Balardung born 1966

Woman in a black dress

2009

inkjet print, ed. 1/10

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2021

2021.186

Balardung artist Dianne Jones inserts Aboriginal and queer identities into otherwise white and heterosexual art histories. She uses intervention as a strategy to unsettle pre-existing narratives. Throughout her artistic career, she has challenged the absence of queer and Aboriginal faces in museum collections by remaking images so that queer and Aboriginal models replace figures in historical artworks. Here, Jones challenges the history of Victorian and Edwardian portraiture, which is almost entirely white. She describes her work as an inhabitation of the white archives that haunt Aboriginal people. By wearing costume and re-enacting a historical portrait, Jones forces a queer and Indigenous intervention into this white photographic history.

Chai, Melbourne fashion house

Australia 1974–88

Clarence Chai designer

Australian born 1946

Jumpsuit

1978

cotton, shell

Gift of the artist, 2014

2014.454.a-b

In the 1970s and 1980s, Clarence Chai was part of a close-knit group of Australian artists and designers whose lives and practices were, according to curator and academic Sally Gray, 'queerly inflected'. Garments designed by other members of the group, including Linda Jackson, Jenny Kee and David McDiarmid, are on display nearby. This 1978 jumpsuit highlights Chai's interest in comfortable, practical and gender-neutral fashion design. In his own wardrobe, Chai had jumpsuits designed by Kenzo Takada and Kansai Yamamoto, an ex-military boiler suit he wore with glitter socks and plastic sandals, and Hard Yakka overalls he had dyed orange.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Shula

1985

cotton, paint

Gift of Shulamith Chiat, 2012

2012.272

In 1979, David McDiarmid moved to New York, accompanied by his friend, former lover and artistic collaborator Peter Tully. The two became immersed in the city's prolific nightlife, frequenting queer nightclubs and other nocturnal haunts, including Paradise Garage. While it was not an exclusively queer venue, the popular discotheque welcomed people from all walks of life, regardless of race, sexuality, class or other identifying factors. Inspired by the club's fusion of dance, drugs and sound (mixed by the club's resident DJ Larry Levan), McDiarmid and Tully began to create jewellery and hand-paint dance-floor outfits, including this 1985 shirt, formerly owned by Shulamith Chiat.

Flamingo Park, Sydney fashion house

Australia 1973–95

Linda Jackson designer

Australian born 1950

David McDiarmid painter

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Black and white calligraphy

1978

silk (taffeta), paint

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2010

2010.303.a-d

Between 1975 and 1979, Linda Jackson worked with David McDiarmid to create bespoke garments for Flamingo Park, the fashion house she founded with her long-time collaborator Jenny Kee. Using a bold, calligraphic line, McDiarmid hand-painted fabrics for Jackson, including those used to craft this 1978 ensemble. Embracing traditionally masculine tailoring traditions, Jackson constructed a genderless garment consisting of a high-collared long-sleeved shirt, waistcoat and reversible coat, and a pair of loose-fitting, tapering trousers. She also drew on design conventions associated with Chinese samfu and Mao jackets, which are distinguished by the minimal cutting and darting involved in their production.

Flamingo Park, Sydney fashion house

Australia 1973–95

Jenny Kee designer

Australian born 1947

Jan Ayres knitter

English born 1947

Snake goddess

1980

cotton

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2010

2010.307

In 1974, Jenny Kee and her long-time collaborator Linda Jackson began to host the Flamingo Follies fashion parade. The annual event, presented in various locations throughout Sydney, featured their experimental designs alongside those of the close-knit group of creatives of which they were a part, many of whom openly identified as queer. *Snake goddess* was debuted at the 1980 iteration of the fashion parade, which presented designs by Kee and Jackson referencing their recent travels. The bare-breasted female form on the surface of the *Snake goddess* print was influenced by figurines Kee had seen on display at the Palace of Knossos in Crete, Greece.

Harmon Knitwear, Brooklyn

manufacturer

United States est. c. 1930

Rudi Gernreich designer

Austrian 1922–85, emigrated to United States 1938

Topless swimsuit

1964

wool, cotton, rubber

Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of
Ms Kerry Gardner, Member, 2001

2001.173

Queer American fashion designer Rudi Gernreich conceived the design for what he termed the 'monokini' in 1964. Consisting of only a brief extending to the waist, and two thin straps forming a halter around the neck, Gernreich's design was the first topless swimsuit for women. The bold design immediately attracted media attention. However, this did not translate to commercial success, with only 3,000 copies of the suit sold. Despite its limited production, the 'monokini' remains one of Gernreich's most renowned designs. The swimsuit embodies his subversive approach to fashion design, through which he sought to move beyond the gender norms embedded in conventional modes of dress.

Pacific Sisters, New Zealand collective

New Zealand est. c. 1992

Rosanna Raymond

New Zealander, Sāmoan/Tuvaluan/Pākehā, born 1967

H'nard K'nore G'nang G'Near

1995–97

denim, tapa, cotton, coconut shell, jute, shells,
wooden beads, metal

Purchased, 1997

1997.143.a-d

Sāmoan, Tuvaluan and Pākehā maker Rosanna Raymond works across performance art, fashion, poetry, contemporary ceremony and social practice. This ensemble holds memories of Raymond's queer club performances. Designed by Raymond, the garment was crafted with the support of a collective called the Pacific Sisters, founded in 1992 by Suzanne Tamaki, Selina Forsyth and Nephi Tupaea. Sāmoan fa'afafine poet and artist Dan Taulapapa McMullin wrote that Raymond's work inhabits personas 'that are part absurdist tiki kitsch, part institutional critique and part goddess as a way of connecting to Ancestors, and as a form of postmodern Indigenous futurism'.

Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche, Paris

fashion house

France 1966–2002

Yves Saint Laurent designer

Algerian 1936–2008, worked in France 1954–2008

Smoking suit

c. 1972

wool, silk, plastic

Purchased, 2005

2005.569.a-b

Renowned queer fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent debuted his smoking tuxedo for women in 1966. The garment's title was born from its intended purpose: to be worn while in a smoking room to protect the wearer's clothing from cigar fumes. Rather than producing an exact copy of his men's tuxedo, Saint Laurent adapted masculine tailoring traditions to suit a woman's body. Upon its release, the women's smoking tuxedo proved to be ahead of its time, with only one sold. Eventually, the label's younger clientele embraced the gender-nonconforming garment, leading Saint Laurent to include variations on his original design, including this 1972 *Smoking suit*, in each of his collections until 2002.

Robert Rauschenberg

American 1925–2008

Pledge

1968

lithograph, printer's proof, edition of 35

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Henry and Dinah Krongold, Founder Benefactors, 1984

P159-198

In the 1950s and 1960s Robert Rauschenberg and his partner Jasper Johns contributed to a cultural change that saw artists shifting their interests from interior emotion, that was the focus of the art movement Abstract Expressionism, to the mass media in Pop Art. Rauschenberg used everyday objects and familiar icons in his work, disrupting hierarchies of “high” and “low” culture. In *Pledge* he appropriated photographs from the popular press and, arranging them in a loose composition, transferred them directly onto the lithographic stone using solvent. Rauschenberg embraced printmaking as a medium that reflected the cheap and bountiful proliferation of images and advertising in post-war America. His use of found images as readymades (everyday objects with minimal alteration) conveys his curiosity about the construction of culture by society, an approach that influenced Pop artists who followed including Andy Warhol.

Jasper Johns

American born 1930

Target

1967

colour lithograph, printer's proof, edition 28

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Henry and Dinah Krongold, Founder Benefactors, 1984

P139-1984

In the 1950s Jasper Johns and his partner Robert Rauschenberg befriended John Cage and his partner, choreographer Merce Cunningham. Together these artists explored conceptual strategies such as chance and the readymade (everyday objects with minimal alteration) as creative devices. Johns often used emblematic motifs such as targets, flags, numbers and letters as found objects in a cool, dispassionate exploration of popular visual languages. It was an approach that shocked audiences at the time since it diverges from the traditional understanding of how art looks. It also explores the question of reality and representation: is this work an image of a target or a target itself? This makes us question how we read the signs around us and how these signs come to carry an agreed meaning.

Claude Cahun

French 1894–1954

Marcel Moore

French 1892–1972

Aveux non Avenus

(Disavowals or Cancelled Confessions)

by Claude Cahun, published by Éditions du Carrefour,
Paris, 1930

illustrated book: photogravure, letterpress text, 237 pages,
10 leaves of plates, paper cover, stitched binding

Shaw Research Library, acquired through the Friends of the Gallery Library
endowment, 2017

Claude Cahun wrote, ‘under this mask, another mask; I will never finish removing all these faces’. She explored the performativity of identity and gender in her work, as she did in her life, dressing variously as a boxer, a doll and a sailor. A celebrated artist of the Surrealist movement, Cahun adopted her gender-neutral name in 1917. *Aveux non Avenus* was created with Cahun’s stepsister, romantic partner and collaborator, the artist Marcel Moore (her chosen name). The book includes a semi-diaristic text written by Cahun, along with collages made in collaboration with Moore. This subversion of the autobiographical genre combines nonsensical and contradictory text and images to disrupt stability of meaning.

Janet Burchill

Australian born 1955

Jennifer McCamley

Australian born 1957

Eat cake (Lavender)

2013

from *The Belief* series 2004–13

synthetic polymer paint on plywood

Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.59

Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley's collaborative practice often engages with the legacies of modernism and traverses a wide range of references including psychoanalysis, film, literature and feminism. Burchill and McCamley's *The Belief* series alludes to resistance in its various meanings and guises, from the French Revolution to contemporary street protests, as well as the aesthetics of modernism, militia and warfare, and relationships between colonisation and museum practices. This work complicates binaries and categorisation since, as theorist Justin Clemens observes, it is 'at once painting and installation, colonial and anti-colonial, modernist and uncannily archaic'.

Juan Davila

Chilean born 1946, worked in Australia 1974–

Pre-modern self portrait

1988

colour screenprint, ed. 4/30

Purchased from Admission Funds, 1988

P110–1988

Juan Davila rejects the application of labels to his practice and therefore the contextualisation of his work in *Queer*.

Robert Indiana

American born 1928

Love

1965

colour screenprint on card

Gift of Daniel Thomas, 2009

2009.153

Born Robert Clark in Indiana, Robert Indiana took his state's name after moving to New York in a gesture that presaged his Pop-inspired fascination with Americana, signage and the power of ordinary words. He made assemblages of scrap materials and found objects, using stencils to introduce words into his art and reflect the prevalence of text in street advertising. He said that the 'original premise was that the word is an appropriated and usable element of art', meaning words are images and visual icons. The word 'love' was connected to Indiana's childhood attending a Christian Science church, where the inscription 'God is Love' decorated the walls. The colours were the influence of artist Ellsworth Kelly, Indiana's lover, who used these exact tones frequently in his colour field paintings.

Agnes Goodsir

Australian 1864–1939, worked in England 1906–18,
France 1918–39

The letter

1926

oil on canvas

Bequest of the artist, 1947

1779-4

Painted in Paris in 1926, this portrait is a document of a revolutionary place and time, and a relic of a relationship as intense as it was enduring. The subject is Rachel Dunn (nicknamed 'Cherry'), Goodsir's partner of more than twenty years, and the inspiration for her greatest work. Having met in London, the two women moved in 1921 to Paris's Latin Quarter, a place of freedom and possibility for queer people. Cherry was a constant presence in Goodsir's work, and Goodsir achieved considerable critical acclaim with her portraits, both in Europe and in Australia. Goodsir died in Paris in 1939, with Cherry the sole beneficiary of her estate. When Cherry died in 1950, she was buried at Agnes's side.

Germaine Krull

German 1897–1985

Daretha (Dorothea) Albu

c. 1925

gelatin silver photograph

Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2020

2020.731

During the interwar years, Berlin was a city known for radical politics, avant-garde culture and an unusually open queer community. Photographer Germaine Krull embraced the life and style of the *Neue Frau* or New Woman: she was independent and adventurous, openly had intimate relationships with women and men, and continuously challenged what was deemed suitable behaviour for a woman. Krull established her Berlin studio in 1922, and among her photographs were nude studies of women. Around 1925 she was introduced to the contemporary dancer Daretha Albu by a mutual friend, costume designer Lotte Pritzel, and later photographed Albu. The result is this intimate and sensual image. Albu's tousled hair, closed eyes and relaxed stance suggest she is completely at ease.

Florence Henri

American 1893–1982

Figure composition (Reclining woman with shell)

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2021

2018.137

In 1929, the Bauhaus-trained Florence Henri left Germany with her partner, Margarete Schall, and established a photography studio in Paris. A year later, Henri made this photograph, which demonstrates how she combined experimental techniques associated with the New Vision movement in photography with her exploration of identity and sexuality.

Using an elevated vantage point and lighting the scene from an oblique angle to produce raking light, Henri has upended perspective and disrupted traditional visual order. The presentation of the woman is unashamedly erotic; however, the image does not conform to conventional modes of softcore pornography, which is usually created for and by men. This woman's gaze excludes the viewer. She instead stares at a conch shell, which, symbolising female fertility, is an eloquent indicator of the artist's object of desire.

Francis Bacon

English 1909–92

Study from the human body

1949

oil on canvas

Purchased, 1953

2992-4

Francis Bacon is a canonical figure, both in the history of British modernism, and in the broader history of queer art. Though accepting of his sexuality from a young age, Bacon often described it in negative terms. Born well before decriminalisation, the artist was cast out of the family home at sixteen when his father caught him trying on his mother's underwear, and his adult interest in sadomasochism has often been linked to his adolescent history of punishment. Drawing upon traditions of classical and religious art, and reinventing these in a radical, abstract figurative manner, Bacon created a uniquely complex and visceral iconography of homoerotic desire.

Duncan Grant

Scottish 1885–1978, worked in England 1910–78

The bathers

c. 1926–33

oil on paper on plywood

Felton Bequest, 1948

1824-4

In early 1928, Duncan Grant wrote to a friend: 'I am going to London tomorrow where I must finish a picture which some say is indecent'. The picture was *The bathers*, a subject that gave the artist great pleasure as a document of past friendships and liaisons. Although the majority of Grant's lovers were men, his most enduring relationship was with Bloomsbury artist Vanessa Bell (who lived in an open marriage with Clive Bell). Throughout their relationship, which resulted in a daughter, and ended only with Bell's death in 1961, Grant continued to have affairs with men. He described himself causing 'havoc' because he fell in and out of love so readily, but he and Bell shared a view of art that transcended Grant's romantic indecisiveness.

Dylan Mooney

Yuwi, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander born 1995

Our moment

2020, printed 2021

from the *Queer, Blak & Here* series 2020–21

digital portrait printed on 320gsm smooth cotton paper

Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2021

Dylan Mooney's digital portraits are queer and blak urban love stories. His work narrates his personal experience as a queer Indigenous man, celebrating his sexuality through images that are both homoerotic and tender. Mooney sees his work as being about representation. His images promote a side of the queer and Indigenous experience that is often underrepresented in the media. He reminds us that despite what people see in the media, Aboriginality and Indigeneity exist within the queer community, in the same way that queerness has always existed for First Nations peoples.

Dylan Mooney

Yuwi, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander born 1995

Stuck on you

2020, printed 2021

from the *Queer, Blak & Here* series 2020–21

digital portrait printed on 320gsm smooth cotton paper

Purchased, Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2021

Dylan Mooney's digital portraits are queer and blak urban love stories. His work narrates his personal experience as a queer Indigenous man, celebrating his sexuality through images that are both homoerotic and tender. Mooney sees his work as being about representation. His images promote a side of the queer and Indigenous experience that is often underrepresented in the media. He reminds us that despite what people see in the media, Aboriginality and Indigeneity exist within the queer community, in the same way that queerness has always existed for First Nations peoples.

Johan Joseph Zoffany

German 1733–1810, worked in England 1760–72, Italy 1772–78, India 1783–89

David with the head of Goliath

1756

oil on canvas

Purchased with the assistance of the Isabella Mary Curnick Bequest and The Art Foundation of Victoria, 1994

IC1-1994

Since the Renaissance, the biblical story of David and Goliath has inspired a plethora of homoerotic images. This version by Neoclassical painter Johan Zoffany sees the nubile, bare-torsoed David effeteely propped upon the head of his opponent, his fingers cradling an unmistakably phallic rock. Such visual innuendos initially escaped the notice of the conservative establishment, and during the 1760s and 1770s, Zoffany enjoyed the patronage of the English Queen Charlotte and King George. The relationship ended abruptly in 1779, however, when the Queen objected to the artist's inclusion of lecherous young men and two notorious 'finger-twirlers' (a pejorative term for gay men) among the figures in Zoffany's grand-scale painting, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* (1772–77). The royal couple never employed Zoffany again.

Edward Burra

English 1905–76, worked in France 1925–30

Soldiers in a lorry

1942–43

watercolour over pencil on two sheets

Felton Bequest, 1949

1984-4

The depiction of men's buttocks was a particular speciality of Edward Burra, perhaps the most pronounced theme in an expansive repertoire of homoerotic motifs that pervade much of the artist's oeuvre. After training at the Chelsea School of Art and Royal College of Art, Burra travelled widely, and many international influences are visible in his work. He came to specialise in large-scale watercolours, vibrantly coloured and theatrically composed. During the Second World War, when travel was impossible, he became involved in designing scenery and costumes for ballet, opera and theatre. *Soldiers in a lorry* dates to this period, and bears the marks of its historical context, of Burra's broad artistic reference points, and of his enduring appreciation of men's bodies.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Toxic Queen

1994

spiral bound book, ed. 11/50

Gift of Mr John McPhee, 1994

P28-1994

Soon after his move to New York in 1979, David McDiarmid discovered the Paradise Garage, a dance club welcoming of diverse patrons, many of whom identified as queer. From 1977, the venue was home to resident DJ Larry Levan, and it remains legendary today as the birthplace of House music. Gay and African-American, Levan began his career DJ'ing at the famous New York gay bathhouse The Continental Baths, where Bette Midler and Barry Manilow also performed. In this work McDiarmid overlays an obituary for Levan, who died in 1992, with a masculinised image of sexual activity between three men drawn by iconic gay illustrator Tom of Finland.

Japan

Shunga scroll (Nikushitsu Enga-kan)

1840–1900

ink and pigments on paper

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Asian Art, 2020

2020.223

Popular during Japan's Edo period (1600–1868), erotic *shunga* (春画; literally 'spring' pictures) served a range of uses, from art and entertainment to self-pleasure aids and educational material for young couples. Occasionally, *shunga* took the form of painted scrolls commissioned to include specific scenes or themes requested by a patron. Both the artist and original owner of this *shunga* scroll are unknown. Hand-painted on paper, it features six erotic scenes involving individuals of various social ranks and roles. In one of these scenes, two women appear to be engaged in a sexual act beneath their voluminous robes.

John Pastoriza Piñol

Australian born 1975

Sobriquet 10 – Jacket

2019

watercolour

Sobriquet 11 – Crotch

2019

watercolour

Sobriquet 13 – Leg

2019

watercolour

Gift of Scott Livesey Galleries and the artist, 2021

In these watercolours, John Pastoriza Piñol reflects upon how, in a homoerotic male context, wearing black leather clothing is a sexual self-expression of heightened masculinity, sexual power and engagement with fetishism. The artist re-presents the gay leather subculture by examining in detail the attractiveness of leather garments. Each body part is like a flower in full bloom but in black. A realist artist who specialises in natural history subjects, Pastoriza Piñol here uses the same colour palette and labour-intensive painting techniques employed for his

...continued overleaf

botanical works. The influences of Robert Mapplethorpe and Tom of Finland are present but there is no separation of flower and man – man is flower in this hyper-representation of the fetish world.

Frieda Toranzo Jaeger

Mexican born 1988

autofelatio

2018

oil on canvas, steel

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Contemporary Art, 2021

2020.791.a-b

Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's *autofelatio* recalls art historical precedents of folding polyptych religious paintings seen in Byzantine and medieval altarpieces. In her work, Jaeger uses the imagery and suggestions of automotive mythology – from conquest and virility, to industry and the fantasy of control – with representations of the body. The imagery of car parts, as well as organic and bodily forms, draws associations between automation, gender, sexuality and identity, while the exaggerated size of the artist's signature parodies painting's traditionally male authorship and reclaims that space, in this instance, for a queer female voice.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Man quilt (Cruising)

1978

leather, vinyl, cotton, metal chain, paper, aluminium poles, rubber stoppers

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 2000

2002.362.a-c

Soon after arriving in San Francisco in 1977, David McDiarmid observed the coded signalling of desire adopted by many gay men in the city's queer Castro district: 'the guys dress uniformly in tight levis, big lumberjack boots, and Airforce flying jackets ... nylon with fur collar; short hair and moustache. Everyone!' McDiarmid subsequently celebrated the embrace of similarly coded identifiers by gay men in Sydney's Oxford Street district with the meticulously crafted *Man quilt (Cruising)*. Red 'fisting' hankies, entry stubs from Darlinghurst sex premises, explicit personal advertisements and homoerotic drawings are stitched together to form a narrative of liberated gay energy and libidinous desire.

Madeleine Vionnet, Paris couture house

France 1912–39

Madeleine Vionnet designer

French 1876–1975

Evening dress

c. 1929

silk, metallic thread lamé, satin ribbon, metal clasps

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of
David Syme & Co. Limited, Fellow, 1979

D23.a-b-1979

In 1973, French couturiere Madeleine Vionnet said during an interview with Bruce Chatwin: ‘They always said I loved women too much!’ Vionnet, who was probably bisexual, drew inspiration from and often tailored her designs to accentuate the curves of a woman’s body. Vionnet’s construction of *Evening dress* takes advantage of the fabric’s shimmer, fall and tendency to softly drape across the body. The emphasis on a fluid line, unobscured by decoration, is heightened by the geometry of the pattern pieces and offset by one of Vionnet’s innovations, the cowl neckline. This effect was inspired by Vionnet’s study of Greek statuary and Classical dress forms.

Gianni Versace, Milan couture house

Italy est. 1978

Gianni Versace designer

Italian 1946–97

Evening gown

1994, spring–summer 1994

viscose, acetate, metal

Purchased with funds donated by the Bertocchi family, 2015

2015.376

This evening gown was first worn by actor Elizabeth Hurley to the premiere of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* in 1994, after which it was widely referred to as ‘*that dress*’. The design remains one of queer Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace’s most renowned. On either side of the dress, there is a cutaway section, held together with oversized gold safety pins. Versace elevated this everyday item to a high-end couture decorative element with a camp twist. The result is a bold design that merges classicism with overt sensuality.

Bernhard Wilhelm, Los Angeles

fashion house

Antwerp est. 1999, Antwerp 1999–2002, Paris 2002–13,
Los Angeles 2013–

Bernhard Wilhelm designer

German born 1972, lived in Belgium 1999–2002,
France 2000–13, United States 2013–

Outfit

2016, spring–summer 2016

polyester, metal, plastic, cotton, rubber, velcro

Gift of the artist, 2017

2017.599.a-b, 2017.603, 2017.604.a-b

Bernhard Wilhelm, Los Angeles

fashion house

Antwerp est. 1999, Antwerp 1999–2002, Paris 2002–13,
Los Angeles 2013–

Bernhard Wilhelm designer

German born 1972, lived in Belgium 1999–2002,
France 2000–13, United States 2013–

Duane Paul

Jamaican born 1969, lived in Jamaica 1969–1980, New
York, United States 1980–

Hat

2016, spring–summer 2016

plywood, plastic, felt, metal, ink

Gift of the artist, 2017

2017.603

Merging eccentricity with activism, German fashion designer Bernhard Willhelm produces garments playfully critical of the heteronormative, racist and gendered nature of mainstream fashion culture. He describes his work as falling somewhere between ‘less is more’ and ‘more is more’, stating: ‘In the end you don’t know anymore where you stand, and eventually you can enjoy both. It’s a little bit like being bisexual.’

This memorable two-piece outfit and hat is from Willhelm’s sixty-nine-piece, 2016 spring–summer collection. Its bold print fabric prominently features symbols embraced by Willhelm for their phallic quality: floating bananas and muscular, unclad male figures.

Helmut Lang, New York fashion house

United States est. 1984

Helmut Lang designer

Austrian born 1956

Astro jacket and leather trousers

1999, autumn–winter 1999

cotton, synthetic fibre, metal, leather

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles, 2017

2017.171.a-b

Helmut Lang's introduction of a hard-edged and stark palette into fashion is evident in this ensemble, which exemplifies his pioneering and influential industrial aesthetic. The pair of leather pants with quilted knees and jacket with a standing collar evoke the action-wear of a paratrooper or race car driver. This reworking of masculine archetypes features material and formal reference to bondage, leather and queer club-wear aesthetics.

Tragedy Design, Melbourne fashion house

Australia est. 1993

Steven Bruton designer

Australian born 1971

Lacetex vest and trousers

1995

latex, polypropylene, metal

Purchased, 1994

CT444.a-b-1994

In 1993, Steven Bruton established his label Tragedy and a studio and shop on Brunswick Street in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Bruton's designs for Tragedy evoke a queer and fetish aesthetic through tight-fitting forms and the use of unconventional and industrial materials.

Bruton designed with the nightclub and dance floor in mind, and his garments appealed to those attending queer and underground dance events in Australian cities during the 1990s. Bruton's *Lacetex vest and trousers* reveals and accentuates the torso through peepholes of black body-hugging latex while constraining the lower body by binding it in restraint webbing.

E. G. Adamson

Australian 1895–1974

No title (The Queen Mother and Lord Mayor at Melbourne Town Hall)

c. 1953

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Mr E. V. C. Adamson, 1982

PH391-1982

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (1900–2002) had a wide circle of queer friends, including Noël Coward, Cecil Beaton, Benjamin Britten and Stephen Tennant. For more than fifty years her closest servants at Clarence House were the openly gay royal pages William Tallon and his partner Reginald Wilcox. Tallon and Wilcox were famously the target of one of the Queen Mother's witticisms.

Overhearing the couple arguing downstairs, she is said to have shouted down to them: 'When you two old queens have finished, this old queen would like a gin'.

The British royal family's staff has traditionally included numerous gay servants. 'If we didn't have them as staff', the Queen Mother is also reported as saying, 'we'd have to go self-service'.

John Chapman

English active 1792–1823

William Rufus

1798

stipple engraving and etching

Felton Bequest, 1939

919.14-4

King William II of England (r. 1087–1100), who was known as William Rufus because of his red beard, ruled over a court that was criticised by contemporary commentators for its licentiousness and gender slippage. While the king's own sexuality is not known, the chronicler William of Malmesbury (c. 1095 – c. 1143) recounted how at William's court, 'All military discipline being relaxed ... then there was flowing hair and extravagant dress ... then the model for young men was to rival women in delicacy of person, to mince their gait, to walk with loose gesture and half naked'. The Benedictine monk Orderic Vitalis (1075 – c. 1142) lamented the presence in William's entourage of 'foul catamites' who 'shamelessly gave themselves up to the filth of sodomy'.

Jacob Houbraken engraver

Dutch 1698–1780

Hubert-François Gravelot draughtsman and engraver

French 1699–1773, worked in England 1732– 46

Cornelius Johnson (after)

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham

1738–42

engraving

Felton Bequest, 1923

1278.239-3

The English politician Sir John Oglander noted in his commonplace book shortly after James I's death in 1625 that the King 'loved young men, his favourites, better than women, loving them beyond the love of men to women'. King James did his royal duty by marrying the fourteen-year-old Anne of Denmark in 1589. But he had numerous male favourites at court, to whom he displayed more attention, and certainly more public affection, than the Queen herself. Chief among these was George Villiers, who was made Earl of Buckingham in 1617 and Duke of Buckingham in 1623, and who James frequently kissed and fondled in public and addressed in passionate letters as 'sweet heart' and 'my sweet child and wife'.

François de Poilly I engraver

French 1622–93

Jean Nocret I (after)

Philippe I, Duke of Orléans

1650–60

etching and engraving

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

527-5

Performing his royal duty to sire progeny in two heterosexual marriages, despite his heart yearning for the love of men instead, Philippe Duc d'Orléans, known as Monsieur, produced potential male heirs to the French throne. This became politically significant when his elder brother Louis XIV, in spite of having sired countless illegitimate children, ultimately died childless in 1715, and Philippe's son from his second marriage to the Princess Palatine Elizabeth Charlotte became regent to Louis's five-year-old great-grandson. Throughout his life Monsieur was kept firmly in place by both the seniority and the jealousy of Louis XIV, who disapproved of Philippe's inherent and unashamed preference for men.

Germany

King Charles XII of Sweden, beaker

1713

glass (enamel)

Presented through the NGV Foundation by
Elizabeth J. Morgan, Founder Benefactor, 2003

2003.418

Historians disagree about the personal life of King Charles XII of Sweden (r. 1697–1718), who never married, nor is known to have had any mistresses. Some scholars believe him to have been same-sex attracted, while one of his biographers, R. M. Hatton, argues that: ‘The evidence that we have of Charles XII’s sexual make-up points to a normal interest in the opposite sex never consummated’. A third possibility is that Charles XII’s sexual abstinence, which incited comment during his reign, stemmed from his being asexual. He was a strong military commander, and his ideal army would have comprised only unmarried men, for whom sex was no distraction.

William Humphreys

English 1794–1865, worked in United States 1810s–22, 1843–45 and Europe 1845–65

John Masey Wright

English 1777–1866

Blondel and Richard Cœur de Lion

published 1826

illustration for *Tales of the Crusaders* by Sir Walter Scott
etching and engraving on chine collé

Felton Bequest, 1926

2682B-3

An accomplished poet and musician, King Richard I of England (r. 1189–1199) earned the nickname Richard the Lionheart due to his military prowess. Speculation about Richard's sexuality relates to a twelfth-century chronicle that described his relationship in 1187 with Philippe II, King of France: 'Philippe ... held [Richard] in such high honour and for such a long time that they ate from the same dish and at night no bed kept them apart'. Scholars remain divided as to whether this indicates a sexual relationship, or simply reflects social practices current in medieval times. This print depicts a legend whereby Richard, who had been imprisoned in Austria in 1192, was supposedly discovered by a minstrel performing beneath the walls of his prison.

John Jones mezzotinter

English c. 1745–97

George Romney (after)

William Pitt

1789

mezzotint, 2nd of 2 states

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

585-5

The youngest man ever to become prime minister of Great Britain, attaining that office at the age of twenty-four in 1783, William Pitt found his private life the subject of intense public speculation. In addition to his youth being lampooned in verse as ‘A Kingdom trusted to a schoolboy’s care’, Pitt’s almost total indifference to the company of women, and his preference for socialising with a small group of young men, provided fuel for his detractors. In 1784–85 the *Morning Herald* began serialising the ‘Rolliad’, satirical poems containing scurrilous lines such as ‘Slander’s self dares not accuse him / Of stiffness to a woman’ and ‘Master Bill / Has never discovered his parts’, suggesting either same-sex preference or asexuality on Pitt’s part.

Emil Larsson

Swedish born 1977

Corset worn by Madonna on the Blond Ambition tour

2013

type C photograph

Gift of the artist, 2015

2015.429

The corset depicted in this photograph, designed by renowned gay fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier, with its infamous conical bra, was worn by queer icon Madonna on her Blond Ambition tour in 1990, which Pope John Paul II described as 'one of the most satanic shows in the history of humanity'. The tour captured the pop singer during her first imperial phase, at her most playful, dramatic and subversive. Striking a pose alongside dancers from New York's queer ballroom scene, Madonna disrupted and reinvented binary notions of the masculine and the feminine, the sacred and the profane, and the mainstream and the marginal, while fiercely championing self-expression, self-possession and sexual autonomy.

Gary Lee

Larrakia born 1952

Billiamook as icon

2020

pencil, pen and pastel on paper

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2020

This work is based on a photograph of a young Larrakia man named Billiamook Gapal. The original image was taken by police inspector and notorious mass murderer Paul Heinrich Matthias Foelsche, in 1879. In Foelsche's original photograph, Billiamook has been rendered an anthropological subject. His agency is reduced, and he is made anonymous. Lee is intensely aware of the power dynamic that existed between Billiamook and Foelsche. He reclaims the original portrait as something tender and homoerotic, using his pen, pastel and paper to caress the subject's physicality, literally and symbolically, highlighting his beauty.

Bernard Lens II

English 1659–1725

William III, King of England

1682–1725

mezzotint

Gift of E. Makower, 1925

1406-3

Invited by Protestant dissidents to depose the Catholic King of England, James II, which he did by invading Britain in 1688, the Dutch stadtholder [national leader] William Prince of Orange faced a campaign of resistance from supporters of James II, known as Jacobites, who circulated rumours of his sexual relations with men from the earliest years of his reign. After William's wife, Mary, died in 1694, new attention was focused upon his private life, as William never remarried and remained childless. An easy dismissal of this innuendo about William's sexuality is complicated by the fact that Elizabeth Charlotte – wife of Philippe, the openly queer brother of Louis XIV of France – who had known William in childhood, agreed with it.

Giuseppe Longhi

Italian 1766–1831

Alphonse Legros (after)

**Napoleon at the Battle of Arcole
(Bonaparte à la Bataille d'Arcole)**

1798

engraving

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1961

1051-5

In 1791, in line with the French Revolution's opposition to the former power of the Catholic clergy, references to sodomy and sex between men were removed from the penal code, effectively decriminalising them.

The French penal code was redrafted in 1810, during Napoléon Bonaparte's reign as Emperor of France (1804–14), ratifying this decriminalisation, which subsequently spread to other countries affected by French law.

Napoléon himself declared in 1805 that: 'We are not in a country where the law should concern itself with these offenses'. Napoléon liked to make affectionate jokes about the private life of his Arch-Chancellor Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, whose relationships with men were well known in French political circles.

Thierry Mugler, Paris fashion house

France est. 1974

Thierry Mugler designer

French 1948–2022

Jacket

1990, autumn–winter 1990–91

wool, metal, plastic

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2007

2007.114

This jacket by gay fashion designer Thierry Mugler was worn by Liza Minnelli. The daughter of queer icon Judy Garland, American actress and singer Liza Minnelli developed a queer following herself in the wake of her films *Tell Me That You Love Me*, *Junie Moon* (1970) and *Cabaret* (1972), which featured gay and bisexual characters. Her 1989 album *Results*, produced in collaboration with the Pet Shop Boys, made Minnelli a new diva for queer dance party culture worldwide. She publicly supported the queer community during the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s and has been a lifelong advocate for LGBTQ+ rights.

Robert Nanteuil

French 1623–78

Sébastien Bourdon (after)

Christina, Queen of Sweden

1654

engraving, 3rd state

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

509-5

It is intriguing to speculate about what personal identity Queen Christina of Sweden (r. 1644–54) would have chosen for herself if she were alive today. She frequently adopted men's clothing, had a self-confessed 'aversion to everything that women do and say' and declared that she 'despised everything belonging to [her] sex' when it came to her own behaviour and dress. In addition, her attraction to other beautiful women was the subject of gossip during her reign. Save for one brief scene, Rouben Mamoulian's 1933 Hollywood film *Queen Christina* thoroughly heterosexualised the Queen, despite the bisexuality of its star, Swedish-born American actress Greta Garbo.

Philip Treacy, London millinery house

England est. 1994

Philip Treacy designer

Irish born 1967, worked in England 1988–

Garbo

2013

3D printed metallic silver finish, Swarovski crystals, metal, cotton (velvet)

Purchased with funds donated by Norma and Stuart Leslie, 2015

2015.494

William Rogers

English c. 1586 – after 1604

Henri III, King of France

c. 1602

illustration for *Honour, Military and Civill, contained in Foure Bookes* by Sir William Segar, R. Barker, London, 1602 engraving, 1st of 2 states

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

538-5

Henri III inherited the French throne at a time of deep and bloody religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants, and his reign (1575–89) was undermined by a whispered campaign of unprecedented malevolence. He was unfit to rule, it was gossiped, because of his pacifism, his gender bending dress and manners, and above all because of his sexual preference for men. Henri married Louise de Lorraine the day after his coronation in 1575 but the marriage was childless. His contemporaries defined the story of his reign primarily by his promotion as close court advisers of more than a dozen handsome young men, the *mignons*, who were from secondary noble families and were suspected of being selected for Henri's sexual gratification.

Athol Shmith

Australian 1914–90

Elizabeth Taylor and Mike Todd

1957

gelatin silver photograph

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria
by the Shmith Family, Fellow, 1993

PH42-1993

Towards the beginning of the HIV/AIDS health crisis, celebrated Hollywood actress Elizabeth Taylor recalled thinking to herself: 'I kept seeing all these news reports on this new disease and kept asking myself why no one was doing anything. And then I realised that I was just like them. I wasn't doing anything to help'. In 1984 one of Taylor's close friends, gay movie star Rock Hudson, became ill with AIDS-related complications, and this galvanised her into taking action. Working with scientists and researchers who were battling the disease, Taylor became Founding National Chairman of amfAR, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, in 1985.

Athol Shmith

Australian 1914–90

Judy Garland

1964

gelatin silver photograph

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria
by the Shmith Family, Fellow, 1993

PH74-1993

Hollywood actress, singer and theatrical star Judy Garland (1922–69) has been a queer icon ever since the switch from black-and-white to colour in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) mirrored queer people's aspirations for a life of bigotry-free possibilities. Her role as Dorothy in that film, swept out of a dreary monochrome Kansas by a tornado and deposited in the magical and colourful Land of Oz, spoke to the thousands of queer people around the world who had left the prejudiced insularity of rural towns and moved to major urban centres in search of new freedoms. 'Friend of Dorothy' became a coded slang term by which gay men in particular referred to one another for decades.

Yinka Shonibare

English born 1962

A masked ball (Un ballo in maschera)

2004, dated 2008

colour high definition digital video, sound, 32 min
(looped), ed. 3/6

Purchased with funds donated by Joan and Peter Clemenger AM, 2008

2008.25

The nephew of Fredrick the Great of Prussia, King Gustav III of Sweden (r. 1771–92) was assassinated, by opponents of his absolute monarchy, at a masked ball held at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm on 16 March 1792. Yinka Shonibare's *A masked ball* re-creates this event, re-gendering both the King and his assassin as women. Despite his marriage to Princess Sophia of Denmark (a politically arranged and unhappy union), rumours about Gustav III's sexuality proliferated throughout his reign, his own sister-in-law Princess Hedwig Elizabeth Charlotte of Holstein-Gottorp noting that 'his own exalted example' sanctioned 'this vice of men sleeping with men'.

Matthew Sleeth

Australian born 1972

Untitled #15

1999–2000

from the *Tour of Duty* series 1999–2000

type C photograph

Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for Contemporary
Australian Photography, 2002

2002.338

Australian pop music superstar Kylie Minogue recalls that her legions of gay fans 'have been with me through thick and thin', having 'adopted me in my most uncool period ... I was never marketed towards that audience, it was very organic'. This relationship was cemented by Minogue's performances at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parties of 1993, 1998 and 2012. Matthew Sleeth's photograph documents Minogue performing at Dili Stadium on 21 December 1999, for soldiers who had been sent to East Timor by the United Nations as a peacekeeping force during that country's independence referendum.

Pieter Soutman engraver

Dutch (1593–1601)–1657, worked in Flanders 1616–24,
Poland 1624–28

Jacob Louys engraver

Flemish 1595–(after 1644)

Pieter Soutman intermediary

draughtsman and etcher

Dutch (1593–1601)–1657, worked in Flanders 1616–24,
Poland 1624–28

Peter Paul Rubens (after)

Louis XIII, King of France

c. 1637

etching and engraving, 1st of 2 states

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

484-5

From birth until his mid twenties Louis XIII of France (r. 1610–43) had every aspect of his daily life diarised by his personal physician with almost shocking intimacy. His marriage at age fourteen to Anne of Austria was not consummated for some years, and it was to be twenty-three years before they had their first child, the future Louis XIV. From childhood, Louis XIII formed strong attachments with a number of men who worked in the royal household. As he grew into adulthood, rumour ascribed a physical side to these attachments. A contemporaneous chronicler,

...continued overleaf

Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux, wrote that Louis was, for example, 'wildly enamoured' of his equerry, François de Baradas, with whom he was 'accused of committing countless indecencies'.

Edward Steichen

American 1879–1973, worked in France 1906–23

La Duchesse de Gramont

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Presented by Maxwell PhotoOptics Pty Ltd, 1973

PH178-1973

Antoinette Corisande Élisabeth, Duchesse de Gramont (later Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre) was a French writer of the early twentieth century, whose literary efforts have been largely eclipsed by her romantic life. Aristocratically born and known among friends and family as 'Lily', she met American writer Natalie Clifford Barney in the spring of 1909. They became lovers on 1 May 1910, a date that they subsequently celebrated as their anniversary. Although Barney took other lovers, including the painter Romaine Brooks, they remained committed to each other throughout their lives, formalising their bond in an unofficial marriage contract.

Edward Steichen

American 1879–1973, worked in France 1906–23

Greta Garbo

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Presented by Maxwell Photo-Optics Pty Ltd, 1973

PH179-1973

Swedish-born American actress Greta Garbo (1905–90) was a global superstar in the 1920s and 1930s. She controversially retired from the film industry at the height of her career, aged only thirty-five, inspiring the iconic phrase ‘I want to be alone’, which was, ironically, a line she delivered in several of her films. Garbo lived to be eighty-five, mostly as a recluse in Manhattan – although she was stalked by the press her whole life. She never married, had no children, and lived alone throughout her life, but she had many relationships, with both men and women.

Unknown

Daniel Chodowiecki (after)

**Frederick II, King of Prussia
(Frédéric II, Roi de Prusse)**

1778

etching and engraving

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1961

988-5

When the future King Frederick II of Prussia (r. 1740–86) was thirteen his father, Frederick William I, passed an edict that decreed ‘sodomites would be burned alive’. At age sixteen, he was made to watch one of the first men he fell in love with be beheaded on his father’s orders. Forced into an arranged marriage by his father, Frederick II later separated from his wife and led an exclusively male court at Potsdam. A curious document written after Frederick’s death by his personal physician argued that the King had merely pretended to a lifelong ‘fondness for young men’, even while admitting that ‘almost all the friends and enemies of Frederick ... were of the opinion that he had loved [men]’.

Unknown

Giambattista Tiepolo (after)

The Banquet of Cleopatra

late 18th century – early 19th century

pen and ink and grey washes heightened with white over traces of pencil; laid down

Felton Bequest, 1934

161-4

Count Francesco Algarotti (1712–64), returned to his birthplace, Venice, in the winter of 1743–44 to purchase contemporary art on behalf of Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony. He then famously acquired the NGV's great painting, *The Banquet of Cleopatra*, 1743–44 (of which this drawing is a variant copy), directly from Giambattista Tiepolo. In 1736 Algarotti had been romantically involved in London with both the politician Lord John Hervey and Hervey's friend Lady Mary Montagu, who became rivals for the Italian count's affection. In 1740–42 Algarotti was living in Prussia, where he became the lover of King Frederick II (Frederick the Great), whose portrait is displayed adjacent here.

Gianni Versace, Milan couture house

Italy est. 1978

Gianni Versace designer

Italian 1946–97

Evening dress

1996, autumn–winter 1996–97

silk, glass (beads)

Presented through the NGV Foundation by the Versace Archives,
Milan, Governor, 2001

2001.127

Diana, Princess of Wales (1961–97), wore a version of this elegant gown by gay designer Gianni Versace shortly before her death. Princess Diana became a queer icon in 1987 when, while opening an HIV/AIDS ward in the UK, she shook hands with all nine patients and another HIV-positive nurse there without wearing gloves. At a time when homophobia was fuelled by ignorance about how the HIV virus was transmitted, she challenged bigotry with her powerful statement that ‘HIV does not make people dangerous to know, so you can shake their hands and give them a hug – heaven knows, they need it’.

Queen Christina (excerpts)

1933

Rouben Mamoulian director

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production
company

35 mm, B. & w., mono, 99 minutes, USA, English

Worcester Royal Porcelain Co., Worcester manufacturer

England est. 1862

Aesthetic teapot

1882

porcelain

The Dr Robert Wilson Collection. Presented through the NGV Foundation
by Dr Robert Wilson, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2002

2002.397.a-b

In this teapot, two genders share one porcelain body, one side depicting a flamboyant dandy, the other an elegant woman. Inscribed on the base is the warning: 'Fearful consequences through the laws of Natural Selection and Evolution of Living up to one's Teapot'. At Oxford in the 1870s, Oscar Wilde's passion for interior decoration resulted in one of his best-remembered aphorisms, 'I find it harder and harder every day to live up to my blue china'. The teapot's inscription alludes to this comment, and also to controversy surrounding Charles Darwin's theories on evolution, which were widely misappropriated by conservative commentators to fuel fears around gender fluidity.

George Cruikshank etcher

English 1792–1878

John S. Sheringham draughtsman

English active 1819–25

Humming birds or A dandy trio

1819, published 1835

from the *Cruikshankiana* series, published by Thomas McLean, London, 1835 etching

Gift of Mr B. Moore, 1899

4203.13-3

Isaac Robert Cruikshank

English 1789–1856

A dandy fainting or An exquisite in fits

1818, published 1835

from the *Cruikshankiana* series, published by Thomas McLean, London, 1835 etching, 2nd of 2 states

Gift of Mr B. Moore, 1899

4203.19-3

The figure of the dandy has a long, shifting and complex history of association with queerness. A man of taste, fashion, culture and sociability, the dandy was sensitive, impeccably groomed and took pride in his decorating his home. Within the gendered frameworks of the nineteenth century, these traits led to an association with femininity; but importantly, for much of that period, the dandy was romantically linked to women. The diverse appeal of the more artfully constructed man called into question the nature and the delineations of attraction between men and women, and the broader notion of gendered identity.

William Dobell

Australian 1899–1970

My lady waits

1937

oil on composition board

Felton Bequest, 1962

1091-5

Although William Dobell is not known to have had a long-term partner, his sexuality was widely known among his friends, including author Patrick White, who observed ‘flashes of homosexual brilliance and insight’ in the artist’s work. Dobell came under fire in 1944, when a court case mounted by fellow artists (including former NGV director J. S. MacDonald) claimed that his winning Archibald Prize entry, *Joshua Smith*, was a caricature and not a portrait. Aspects of the surrounding media coverage hinted at Dobell’s sexuality, and though the case was eventually dismissed, Dobell’s victory came at great cost to his health and happiness.

George Scharf the elder

German 1788–1860

Dame Quickly

1841

watercolour and pencil

Felton Bequest, 1923

1278.974-3

Drawing upon centuries of theatrical tradition of men playing women, the pantomime dame is a central character in British pantomime – usually an older woman played by a man in drag. A comic role, famous dames include mothers and grandmothers, nannies and nurses, with exaggerated features, hairstyles and costumes and matronly bearing. While the majority are sympathetic, often maternal characters, there are villainous exceptions which play upon notions of the grotesque, including the witch in *Snow White*, and the ‘Ugly Stepsisters’ in *Cinderella*. Dame Quickly was based upon Mistress Nell Quickly, a character from several of Shakespeare’s plays, whose attempts at respectability are hampered by speech inadvertently peppered with malapropisms and innuendo.

Athol Shmith

Australian 1914–90

Ivan Menzies as the Duke of Plaza Toro

1930s

gelatin silver photograph

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by the
Shmith Family, Fellow, 1993

PH51-1993

The theatrical partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan created many of the most loved spectacles on the Victorian stage. Together, librettist W. S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan imagined a series of ‘topsy-turvy’ worlds, where absurd premises are taken to their logical conclusions – magical creatures socialise with the British aristocracy, pirates are revealed as lost noblemen, and (as depicted here) gondoliers become kings. Their best-known works include *The Mikado*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *H.M.S Pinafore*. In 1881, *Patience* satirised the Aesthetic Movement, with its dandified cast of poets and artists combining elements of Oscar Wilde, J. A. M. Whistler, Algernon Charles Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The wide-reaching satire targeted not only the notion of male vanity, but also the chauvinism of the military.

Katsukawa Shunei

Japanese 1762–1819

Actor Iwai Hanshiro IV

1785–95

colour woodblock

Purchased, 1941

1089-4

Cross-dressing has long been part of Japanese religion, folk law and society, predating even kabuki theatre. The Tokugawa Shogunate's early seventeenth-century prohibition of female kabuki actors was the catalyst for the development of one of the most celebrated forms of female impersonation in the world, the *onnagata* (literally, 'female form'). *Onnagata* did not try to impersonate a specific woman; instead, they established an idealised version of one. Their detailed study of female dress and mannerisms resulted in such evocative stage performances that it was believed *onnagata* were more proficient at playing female roles than women.

Katsukawa Shunkō

Japanese 1743–1812

Actor Segawa Kikunojō III as Tomoe Gozen

c. 1788

colour woodblock

Felton Bequest, 1909

399-2

The origins of the Japanese art of kabuki theatre can be traced back to the opening decades of the seventeenth century, when the female performer Izumo no Okuni formed an all-woman troupe of actors to perform male and female roles on an outdoor stage in central Kyoto. It quickly gained great popularity, but its suggestive themes, subversive messages and associations with Kyoto's pleasure districts led authorities to deem it socially immoral, and women were prohibited from performing kabuki in 1629. This government-enforced gender partition formalised kabuki theatre into an all-male world where male actors became highly accomplished at acting in female roles.

Katsukawa Shunsho

Japanese 1726–93

Actor (possibly Onoe Tamizo I as Kureha)

c. 1775

colour woodblock

Felton Bequest, 1909

397-2

The origins of the Japanese art of kabuki theatre can be traced back to the opening decades of the seventeenth century, when the female performer Izumo no Okuni formed an all-woman troupe of actors to perform male and female roles on an outdoor stage in central Kyoto. It quickly gained great popularity, but its suggestive themes, subversive messages and associations with Kyoto's pleasure districts led authorities to deem it socially immoral, and women were prohibited from performing kabuki in 1629. This government-enforced gender partition formalised kabuki theatre into an all-male world where male actors became highly accomplished at acting female roles.

Tsuruya Kōkei

Japanese born 1946

**Actor Nakamura Utaemon VI as
Tonase, wife of Honzo in
Yamashina Kankyo**

1984

colour woodblock, ed. 39/45

Purchased with funds donated by Adam and Yoko Ryan, 2017

2017.54

Tsuruya Kōkei

Japanese born 1946

**Actor Nakamura Tokizō V as Kagaribi,
wife of Takatsuna in Moritsuna Jinya**

1986

colour woodblock, ed. 25/54

Purchased with funds donated by Adam and Yoko Ryan, 2017

2017.53

Utagawa Kunisada

Japanese 1786–1865

Actor Iwai Hanshiro VI as Ohatsu

1820–32

colour woodblock

Gift of Dr Lilian Alexander, 1934

208H-4

Cross-dressing has long been part of Japanese religion, folklore and society, predating even kabuki theatre. The Tokugawa Shogunate's early seventeenth-century prohibition of female kabuki actors was the catalyst for the development of one of the most celebrated forms of female impersonation in the world, the *onnagata* (literally, 'female form'). *Onnagata* did not try to impersonate a specific woman; instead, they established an idealised version of one. Their detailed study of female dress and mannerisms resulted in such evocative stage performances that it was believed *onnagata* were more proficient at playing female roles than women.

Oliver Messel

English 1905–78

Costume design for a female character

1952

for the play *Letter from Paris*, by Dodie Smith, 1952

brush and ink, watercolour and black chalk over pencil
on green paper

Gift of Peter Corrigan, 1992

P216-1992

Oliver Messel

English 1905–78

Costume design for the actress

Delia Dosson

1952

for the play *Letter from Paris*, by Dodie Smith, 1952

brush and ink, watercolour and black chalk over pencil
on green paper

Gift of Peter Corrigan, 1992

P211-1992

Oliver Messel was born into a wealthy and privileged family, and his artistic interests were mentored in his youth by the queer artist Glyn Philpot, a friend of his parents and whose work is displayed in an adjacent gallery. After studying at London's Slade School of Fine Art, Messel became one of Britain's most talented theatrical set and costume designers during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1959 Messel received two Oscar nominations for scenery and costume, for his work on Joseph L. Mankiewicz's film of Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*, which was controversial for its open discussion of 'queerness'. Messel's life partner was a Danish man, Vagn Riis-Hansen.

Loudon Sainthill

Australian 1918–69, worked in England 1949–69

Costume

1947

gouache over traces of pencil on board

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2017

2017.101

Loudon Sainthill

Australian 1918–69, worked in England 1949–69

The actress

1947

watercolour, pen and ink and coloured inks over pencil

Purchased, 1947

1770-4

At the time of Loudon Sainthill's early death from a heart attack at age fifty in 1969, he had achieved international acclaim as a stage and costume designer, bringing to life memorable productions of the works of Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Tennessee Williams for prestigious venues such as London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Old Vic. His work has been aptly described as having 'an odd awareness of death and mortality', as well as 'a charged and elegiac sense of life'. Sainthill's life partner was Australian bookseller, journalist and art critic Harry Tatlock Miller, who published the artistic and literary journal *Manuscripts*.

Hartnell, London fashion house

England est. 1923

Norman Hartnell designer

English 1901–79

Costume design for the actress

Iris Lockwood

1941

for the revue *Get a Load of This*, directed by Robert Nesbitt, performed at the Hippodrome, London, 1941
pencil, watercolour and brush and ink

Gift of Peter Corrigan, 1992

P217-1992

Norman Hartnell's passion for fashion design reportedly began in his youth, watching musical productions in London's West End. In 1922, while studying at Cambridge University, he designed such spectacular stage costumes for the Footlights Dramatic Club that a journalist for London's *Evening Standard* newspaper kickstarted his professional career by writing: 'Is the dress genius of the future now at Cambridge? [His] frocks ... set me thinking as to whether Mr N B Hartnell wasn't contemplating conquering feminine London with original gowns'. In private, Hartnell dressed in his own designs for women's gowns, and had a longstanding relationship with his business manager George Mitchison.

Hartnell, London fashion house

England est. 1923

Norman Hartnell designer

English 1901–79

**Design for the bridesmaid dress worn
by Her Royal Highness
the Princess Margaret for the wedding
of Her Royal Highness the
Princess Elizabeth**

1947

pencil and grey and coloured washes, heightened with
white gouache

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mrs P. Reed, Member 1996

1995.819

Renowned British fashion designer Norman Hartnell began creating gowns for the royal family in the mid 1930s, and in 1940 was awarded the Royal Warrant as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's official dressmaker. It naturally fell to Hartnell to create the high-end couture for Princess Elizabeth's wedding in 1947. This design is for the dress worn by her sister, Princess Margaret, on that occasion. Hartnell's design for Princess Elizabeth's 1947 wedding dress is also in the NGV Collection. A spectacular ensemble, it features 10,000 seed pearls,

...continued overleaf

and exemplified his famous statement that 'I despise simplicity; it is the negation of all that is beautiful'. Princess Margaret's youth was spent surrounded by her mother's circle of talented gay friends, including Hartnell.

Patrick Procktor

English 1936–2003

Costume design for the dancer

Peter Cazalet

c. 1965

for the ballet *Mods & Rockers*, performed by Western Theatre Ballet Company and The Cheynes, produced and directed by Kenneth Hume, 1965

gouache, pencil and fibre-tipped pen

Gift of Peter Corrigan, 1992

P221-1992

After graduating from the Slade School of Fine Art, Patrick Procktor became a prominent new voice in British art in the early 1960s, along with his friend from art school days David Hockney. 'We just became friends quickly,' Hockney later recalled. 'We simply had a lot of interests in common – painting, literature, and being gay, then. Because most people were in the closet at that time'. Tall in stature, and a flamboyantly dressed self-styled dandy, Procktor became a fixture in London's bohemian circles in the 1960s and 1970s. An accomplished painter and watercolourist, Procktor also extended his art practice into stage and costume design.

Michael Annals

English 1938–90

Costume design for the actress Leslie Uggins as Cleopatra

1968

for the musical *Her First Roman*, Act I, Scene 5, 1968
watercolour and pencil, metallic paint, fabric swatch,
staple

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Peter Corrigan, Member, 1993

P48-1993

A prominent designer of sets and costumes for British theatre, Michael Annals made these 'swinging sixties' designs for Ervin Drake's musical *Her First Roman*, which opened at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in Manhattan in 1968. Recalling his long friendship with Annals, English actor Ian McKellen stated: 'Both being gay probably helped, at a time when few were open about their homosexuality, even within the non-judgmental confines of the theatre. Michael could be enthusiastic and disparaging by turns on the subject, sometimes scathing about society's injustice, sometimes indifferent – a confusion shared by many of us whose early love-making was punishable by imprisonment'.

Michael Annals

English 1938–90

Costume design for the female chorus

1968

for the musical *Her First Roman*, Act I, Scene 7, 1968

watercolour and pencil, metallic paint, fabric swatches,
staple

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Peter Corrigan, Member, 1993

P52-1993

Freddy Wittop

American 1911–2001

Costume design for Johnny Bimbo

1964

for the play *Bajour*, Act I, Scene 1, 1964

gouache over pencil on grey paper on cardboard

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Peter Corrigan, Member, 1993

P45-1993

Freddy Wittop

American 1911–2001

Costume design for the actor Maximilian Schell as Redl

1969

for the musical *A Patriot for Me*, 1969

watercolour over pencil on grey paper on cardboard

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by
Mr Peter Corrigan, Member, 1993

P47-1993

English playwright John Osborne's play *A Patriot for Me* was based on the life and downfall of Colonel Alfred Redl (1864–1913), head of military counterintelligence for the Austro-Hungarian Army. Redl's secret sexual relationships with men led to his being blackmailed into working as a spy for Russia. After a sell-out eight-week run in London in 1965, Osborne's play was performed in the United States in 1969, in a lavish new production featuring spectacular costumes by Freddy Wittop, a Dutch-born gay designer and dancer who had won a Tony Award for his work on the smash-hit musical *Hello, Dolly!* in 1964.

Barry Kay

Australian 1932–85, worked in France and England

Costume design for Fandango

1970

from the ballet *Don Quixote*, Australian Ballet, 1970

brush and ink, watercolour, metallic ink and grey wash

Purchased, 1970

P87-1970

Born in Melbourne, where he studied theatre design, Barry Kay moved to London in 1956 and over the next four decades established an international reputation as one of the world's premier designers for theatre, opera and ballet. This design is for the fandango dance sequence in Rudolf Nureyev's 1970 production of *Don Quixote* for the Australian Ballet. In 1974–75 Kay undertook a photographic study of what he then termed 'the steady emergence of male transvestism in Sydney and also the establishment of its large transsexual community'. His groundbreaking collection of photographs of members of these communities, *The Other Women*, was published in 1976.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Sydney quilt

1978

coloured plastic laminate, lenticular and holographic postcards, plastic coated curtain rods, plastic coated stainless steel cable and plastic coated wire

Gift of Frank Watters through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2014

2014.244

David McDiarmid's first visit to the United States in 1977, while expanding his horizons in innumerable ways, also enabled him to achieve a critical distance from his own culture. Upon his return to Sydney, he took a new interest in rediscovering Australiana, a passion he had long shared with Peter Tully (his partner from 1973–75, then lifelong friend). He noted at the time that: 'My work is the intersection between folk art, women's work (needlepoint, patchwork quilts) and contemporary materials. I use loud, cheap and vulgar plastics to make "pretty" pictures – pieces of wall decoration. Good taste can be a prison'.

Adam Nathaniel Furman

designer

English born 1982

Camp Design Gallery manufacturer

Italy est. 2015

Gioioso

2019

seat from the *Three Characters in the Second Act: The Royal Family* collection 2019

steel, MDF, birch ply, high pressure digital laminate, powder coating, paint

Purchased with funds donated by Gordon Moffatt AM, 2021

Adam Nathaniel Furman expresses his creativity and love for queer aesthetics across many disciplines. Playing on heteronormative notions of the nuclear family, good taste and domesticity, Nathaniel Furman's *Gioioso* is one of three objects in a collection titled *Three Characters in the Second Act: The Royal Family*. Nathaniel Furman's throne is both the furniture embodiment of 'the spoiled child' of the Royal Family, and a fabulously empowering throne that bestows a sense of joyous flamboyance upon the sitter, setting a scene for celebratory, camp self-portraits within the domestic setting.

Troy Emery

Australian born 1981

Blue banded bobcat

2017

rayon, polyurethane, plastic, pins, adhesive

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2017

2017.1007

Troy Emery's work encourages us to embrace the outrageous. He wants his audience to imagine what aspects of our society would look like if queer and camp aesthetics reigned supreme. *Blue banded bobcat* is made from looped polyester fringe, the sort of material one might see on a dance costume, a curtain or a decorative cushion. The synthetic materials are woven over animal forms to create creatures with artificial, technicolour pelts. Emery works with intentionally cheap, mass-produced and machine-made decorative craft materials such as pompoms, polyester fringing, tinsel and cotton rope – all materials that he sees as antithetical to traditional figurative sculpture.

Fecal Matter, Montreal fashion house

Canada est. 2016

Steven Raj Bhaskaran designer

Canadian born 1993

Hannah Dalton designer

New Zealander born 1995

Skin heel boots

2020

silicone, transparent synthetic polymer resin

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles, 2020

2020.232.a-b

Skin heel boots reflects Fecal Matter's interest in non-surgical forms of body modification to imagine a post-human identity. The boots comprise a hyper-realistic silicone 'skin' grafted onto an elevated Perspex platform – only here realism is counterbalanced by physical mutation. *Skin heel boots* can be understood as a means of translating the freedom of the digital realm, where the self can be manipulated and edited easily and endlessly, into the offline. Key to Fecal Matter's practice is the rejection of restrictive beauty standards and gender binaries. They use fashion to challenge normative social and gender roles and speculate on what it means to be human.

Peter Tully

Australia 1947–92

Brooch

1976

opaque synthetic polymer resin, metal

Purchased, 1994

CT1.c-1994

Delauney delight, waistcoat

1977

polyvinyl chloride, transparent synthetic polymer resin,
plastic tubing, metal (eyelets)

Presented by Sally Gray, 1995

1995.313

Love me tender, necklace

1977

plastic, paste, opaque synthetic polymer resin, mirror,
enamel paint on colour offset lithograph

Purchased, 1978

D23-1978

Minties necklace

1977

plastic, metal and colour offset lithograph on wood

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2011

2011.436

Australia brooch with Tasmania pendant

1982

transparent synthetic polymer resin, diamanté, steel

Presented through the NGV Foundation by John McPhee, Fellow, 2005

2005.291

Pink Australia, brooch

1982

painted transparent synthetic polymer resin,
diamanté, steel

Presented through the NGV Foundation by John McPhee, Fellow, 2005

2005.293

Peter Tully was one of Australia's most inventive and experimental creatives, whose practice spanned art, fashion, jewellery, object design and art direction. Along with fellow artist David McDiarmid (Tully's partner from 1973–75, then lifelong friend) and fashion designers Jenny Kee, Linda Jackson and Clarence Chai, whom

...continued overleaf

he often referred to as his family, Tully became a driving force in the contemporary Australian craft and jewellery scenes. Many of Tully's jewellery and costume designs materialise his signature camp wit. The brooches, necklaces and other body adornments on display here are no exception. Crafted from plastics and other non-traditional materials, these designs highlight Tully's love of Australiana and kitsch.

Peter Tully

Australia 1947–92

Bench seat

1985

painted wood, plastic, metal, synthetic fur, anodised aluminium, vinyl, mirror, transparent synthetic polymer resin, metallic holographic film, (other materials)

Gift of Murray Kelly through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2018

2018.1142

Bench seat is a rare example of one of Peter Tully's furniture designs. Its bold aesthetic recalls his 1980 *Urban Tribalwear* exhibition at the Crafts Council of Australia Gallery in Sydney. The exhibition featured fashion adornments and sculptural assemblages, crafted from found materials, that were heavily influenced by the diverse queer scene into which Tully immersed himself during a 1979–80 residency in New York. Expanding his ready-made, kitsch aesthetic to larger scale objects was a logical extension of Tully's creative practice. At once decorative, futuristic and otherworldly, *Bench seat* is designed in the style of a 'love seat' for two.

WORLD, Auckland fashion house

New Zealand est. 1989

Denise L'Estrange-Corbet designer

New Zealander born 1960

Francis Hooper designer

New Zealander born 1964

Sanderson suit

1997

World International collection, spring–summer 1997–98
cotton, acetate, plastic, metal

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2009

2009.56.a-d

WORLD was established by Denise L'Estrange-Corbet and Francis Hooper in 1989. Beginning as an idea hatched at a bus stop, WORLD has grown to be one of New Zealand's leading fashion houses, and its witty, irreverent and subversive designs have attracted acclaim across the globe. *Sanderson suit* was part of the duo's spring–summer 1997–98 *World International* collection. The suit is made from a 1980s chintz furnishing fabric called 'Rose and Peony', created by British company Sanderson. L'Estrange-Corbet and Hooper intentionally juxtaposed traditional tailoring techniques with brightly coloured floral fabric to break down 'assumed relations of fabrics and crafts ... to subjugate the familiar while changing people's expectations'.

World's End, London fashion house

England 1979–84

Malcolm McLaren designer

English 1946–2010

Vivienne Westwood designer

English born 1941

Outfit

1984

Hypnos collection 1984,

spring–summer 1984

nylon (jersey), polyester, cotton, plastic

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of
Just Jeans Pty Ltd, Member, 1999

1999.373.a-b

Throughout her career, Vivienne Westwood has challenged the gendered conventions that have long structured the fashion world. Her earliest designs with Malcolm McLaren established the counter-cultural aesthetic of London's Punk movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Their subversive approach to fashion design is exemplified in *Outfit*, from their 1984 *Hypnos* collection. At first glance, the blue and white ensemble reads as a sporting club outfit. Upon further inspection, the presence of a crotch insertion seems to suggest a more dissident subtext with a lineage going back to the duo's earlier bondage outfits.

Lizzy Gardiner designer

Australian born 1966

The American Express® Gold Card dress

1995–98

plastic, metal, silk

Purchased, 1999

1999.56.1

Lizzy Gardiner wore this dress, made from 254 expired American Express Gold credit cards, the night she won the Oscar for Best Costume Design at the 67th Academy Awards for her work on *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Gardiner's debut of the gown, which was originally intended to appear in the celebrated queer film, instantly became a notorious red-carpet moment. The floor-length columnar gown combines an ordinary object – the credit card – with a classic silhouette in the history of fashion. Merging the everyday with the luxurious, Gardiner crafted a design that embodies a camp sensibility.

W. & L. T., Antwerp fashion house

Antwerp est. 1994

Walter Van Beirendonck designer

Belgian born 1957

Jacket, jumper, overall, t-shirt, bag

1995

polyamide nylon, PVC plastic, cotton, wool, acrylic

Purchased, 1996

1996.201.a-e

Belgian fashion designer Walter Van Beirendonck has attracted wide acclaim for disrupting conventions of masculinity and formality often associated with menswear. According to fashion theorist Nicola Brajato, Beirendonck queers tailoring traditions through “design” that structures and shapes the body, “styling” with the addition of accessories, and “surface” in the use of particular “colours, fabrics and patterns”. Beirendonck designed this outfit for his label, Wild & Lethal Trash, in 1995. Consisting of a black bomber-style jacket, red jumper, orange overalls and a translucent messenger bag, the eccentric garment is distinguished by its utility.

Moschino, Milan fashion house

Italy est. 1983

Franco Moschino designer

Italian 1950–94

Survival jacket and trousers

1991, spring–summer 1991

cotton, ink, metal, acetate and rayon, plastic and metal zippers, synthetic felt, plastic, metal, cardboard, vinyl, mirror, bristle, perfume, eyeliner pencil, (and other materials)

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2008

2008.336.a-v

Queer Italian fashion designer Franco Moschino's *Survival jacket and trousers* was a highlight of his 1991 spring–summer collection show. The utilitarian garment comprises tan trousers and a jacket littered with pockets that hold the fashion 'essentials'. Adapting the classic khaki safari jacket for the urban jungle, Moschino has filled the jacket's many compartments with an assortment of shiny, gilded beauty aids, including a mirror, lipstick, mascara, nail polish, powder compact and an assortment of brushes. Filled with tongue-in-cheek jabs about the world of high fashion within which Moschino was firmly embedded, the garment reflects the humorous and provocative nature of his design language.

Rude Boy, Melbourne fashion house

Australia 1996–2004

Glen Rollason designer

Australian born 1969

Outfit

1998

polyester, cotton, elastane, nylon, Velcro, metal, plastic

Purchased, 1998

1998.37.a-g

Glen Rollason's Rude Boy label was inspired by his nickname, 'Rude boy Glen', which he gained due to his frank and direct nature. Founded in 1996, Rude Boy started as a full collection, including printed cotton-lycra t-shirts that Rollason said tapped into the market of gay men 'out there that are really working on their bodies' and who 'want a really good t-shirt' that 'fits nicely'. Rollason described this 1998 outfit as 'active sportswear to do nothing in'. The outfit's jeans reference utilitarian 'tradie' trousers with loops for holding tools, and the wrist cuffs double as 'tinnie holders', an ironic reference to working-class Australian masculinity.

Tony Albert

Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji born 1981

Nguma (Daddy) 2020

glass

dimensions variable

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists 2020

Tony Albert's lamp *Nguma (Daddy)* is recast from a porcelain statue drawn from the artist's vast collection of 'Aboriginalia'. In naming the lamp *Nguma*, which means 'father' in Girramay, one of Albert's ancestral languages, the artist interrogates contemporary legacies of colonialism, racism and homophobia in Australia. Originally called *Nguma (Father)*, the work has been retitled *Nguma (Daddy)* for this exhibition, a coded and tongue-in-cheek reference to queer taxonomy and Albert's sexuality. Albert explores the notion of 'camp' as an aesthetic quality, and the way that artists and designers manifest this within the decorative arts.

Judy Blame, London fashion house

England est. 1980s

Judy Blame designer

English 1960–2018

Beret and belt

c. 1985

wool, metal (chains, buckles, wire, ring-pulls, buttons, studs, keyrings, safety pins, keys), leather

David Richards Bequest, 2021

Judy Blame was a self-taught artist, stylist, art director, accessories designer and fashion icon, and spent much of his career in London. Blame was openly gay and had an instinctive knack for queering style. He playfully dissected gender through an idiosyncratic marriage of street style and high fashion with DIY bricolage, combined with a keen eye for the beautifully absurd. During the 1980s, Blame assembled much of the jewellery he wore to queer nightclubs and created for others from found objects. Using keys, bottle caps, safety pins and other everyday items, Blame crafted unique body adornments, including this beret and belt.

Leigh Bowery

Australian 1961–94, worked in
England 1981–94

The Metropolitan

c. 1988

cotton, rayon, leather, sequins, metal, paint

Purchased, 1999

1999.180.a-j

Leigh Bowery wore *The Metropolitan* on multiple occasions, most notably to the opening of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1993 retrospective dedicated to paintings by the British artist Lucian Freud, for whom Bowery was a model. Bowery fashioned the long-sleeved, 1950s-inspired ball gown using red and blue floral sateen, which his wife and collaborator, Nicola Bateman Bowery, embellished with blue sequins. In his typically irreverent and provocative style, Bowery accessorised the gown with a German army helmet, khaki camouflage-print gloves, a black leather belt and 'dog collar', and pink platform heels that raised him above his already impressive 6 feet 3 inches (192 centimetres).

Leigh Bowery

Australian 1961–94, worked in
England 1981–94

Pregnant tutu head

1992

cotton, rayon, polyester, nylon, foam, leather

Gift of Nicola Bateman Bowery, 1999

1999.228.a-g

In 1985, Australian fashion designer and performance artist Leigh Bowery opened Taboo nightclub in London's Leicester Square. While it was not an exclusively queer venue, Taboo attracted a predominantly queer crowd, largely due to Bowery's interest in experimental fashion and performance. Bowery once described the dress code as follows: 'Dress as though your life depends on it, or don't bother'. This mantra is embodied in *Pregnant tutu head*, which distorts and rejects conventions of identity, gender and sexuality. Beyond a protruding belly, Bowery 'impregnated' his head with a pompom headpiece made from layers of orange tulle, and his feet with giant, bulbous shoes.

Tourmaline

American born 1983

Atlantic is a sea of bones

2017

video with sound, 7 min 28 sec

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Contemporary Art and NGV Foundation, 2020

This work was inspired by Egyptt LaBeija, a member of the House of LaBeija in the New York ballroom scene. It begins with LaBeija's experiences and moves into a dreamlike sequence in which she and a ghost figure collaborate in a process of self-actualisation. Part of the work is filmed in the recently built Whitney Museum of American Art beside the Hudson River, New York. LaBeija reflects on the gentrification of the Meatpacking District and the piers, where marginalised people, and specifically HIV-positive, Black and trans people, previously lived. Simultaneously Tourmaline uses the Hudson and the Atlantic to evoke the passage of enslaved African people brought to the Americas between 1500 and 1900, weaving together the intersecting impacts of slavery, HIV/AIDS and racism on transgender people of colour.

Gilbert & George

George Passmore, English born 1942

Gilbert Proesch, Italian born 1943

Forward

2008

from the *Jack Freak Pictures* series

pigment prints on archival paper

Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest, 2022

Gilbert & George have been partners and collaborators since 1967 and are celebrated for their use of daily minutiae to address existential questions and social change. The title of the series *Jack Freak Pictures* is a play on the name of the Union Jack and is a meditation on symbolism, in particular the Union Jack's impact on nationalism and identity. The Union Jack, an internationally familiar, geometric pattern and a socially and politically charged symbol, is paired with images of heraldry and crests gleaned from the artists' own neighbourhood, London's East End. With mock seriousness and distorted faces the artists are both subject and creator of the works. They use appropriation as a method to deconstruct the role of these symbols of nationalism, authority, religion and class.

Rainer Fetting

German born 1949

Another murder at the Anvil II

1979

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of an anonymous donor, 1984

IC2.a-b-1984

The Anvil was an after-hours sex club in New York City's Meatpacking District in the 1970s and 1980s that catered exclusively to gay men. A central attraction was provided by its male dancers, who routinely danced on the bar wearing knee-high boots and not much else. One such performance has been captured in this monumental painting by Rainer Fetting, who visited the Anvil multiple times. Beneath the line of dancing men, Fetting has imagined a brutal scene of someone being stabbed. While there was no recorded murder at the Anvil, Fetting may have been influenced by the violence and homophobia encountered by queer people who frequented the Anvil and the other queer nightclubs in the area at the time.

Janet Cumberae Stewart

Australian 1883–1960, worked throughout Europe 1922–39

Studio fairy

1920s

pastel

Felton Bequest, 1930

4387-3

As a place where nude bodies could be observed legitimately, the artist's studio has a long history as a site of eroticism. Janet Cumberae Stewart's *Studio fairy* is a comparatively innocent subject, though in its tactile treatment of softly lit flesh, it retains some of the sensuality that characterises her nude studies of women. The softness of Cumberae Stewart's artistic touch drew praise from critics of the time, several of whom linked this to her gender. Whether they also saw her same-sex attraction is unclear. Cumberae Stewart met her partner, Miss Argemore Ffarington 'Bill' Bellairs, during the seventeen years that she spent living and working in Europe, and the couple would ultimately return to Australia together, where they lived for the rest of Cumberae Stewart's life.

Roy de Maistre

Australian 1894–1968

Reclining figure

1933

oil on cardboard

The Joseph Brown Collection. Presented through the NGV Foundation by Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004

2004.164

A key figure in Australian modernism, Roy de Maistre is best known for the early collaborative experiments in colour and abstract form that he created with Roland Wakelin. In 1923, de Maistre was awarded the New South Wales Travelling Art Scholarship, which took him to London, Paris and Saint-Jean-de-Luz. Subsequently failing to find success within the conservative Australian art establishment, he settled in London in 1930, and it was there that he met a young Francis Bacon, who was influenced by de Maistre's brand of academic cubism and his approach to colour. The precise nature of their relationship remains a subject of speculation; Bacon was more open about his sexuality than de Maistre, whose same-sex attraction was expressed with 'extreme discretion'.

David Hockney

English born 1937, worked in United States
1964–68, 1975–

Fourteen poems by C.P. Cavafy

1966

illustrated book: 35 folios with 12 etchings, letterpress
text, ed. B, 410/500

Gift of Mr Terence Lane, 1983

(P13-1983)

Constantine Peter Cavafy (1863–1933) was a Greek poet, journalist and civil servant from Alexandria. Many of Cavafy's poems are inspired by the Hellenistic era, and he is one of the earliest modern authors to write openly about sex between men. The young David Hockney discovered Cavafy's poetry in the 1950s and stole a copy of his poems from the local library in Bradford. Several of Hockney's early works are inspired by the poems and these etchings were completed to illustrate a 1966 English translation. Although each print is named after and takes its inspiration from one of Cavafy's poems, most of the illustrations are based on drawings of Hockney's friends in London, mainly pairs of partially clothed men in Hockney's bedroom in Notting Hill.

David Hockney

English born 1937, worked in United States 1964–68,
1975–

Two robes

2010

iPad drawing printed on paper, ed. 7/25

A gift from David Hockney, 2019

2019.162

George Cruikshank

English 1792–1878

The advantages of travel or A little learning is a dangerous thing: Plate 1

1824, published 1835

from the *Cruikshankiana* series, published by Thomas McLean, London, 1835

etching, 2nd of 2 states

Gift of Mr B. Moore, 1899

4203.10-3

London dandies or Monstrosities of 1816

1816, published 1835

from the *Cruikshankiana* series, published by Thomas McLean, London, 1835

etching, 3rd of 3 states

Gift of Mr B. Moore, 1899

4203.6-3

From the late seventeenth century through the early nineteenth century, sex between men was vigorously prosecuted in Britain, providing abundant evidence from trial records and newspaper reports about ordinary queer lives as opposed to the scandalous lives of libertines and

...continued overleaf

the elite. Evidence from prosecutions related to cruising (called 'picking up trade') shows that sex was not casual or incidental, but was deliberately sought by queer men. The cruising grounds, called 'molly markets', were found near public latrines, major public thoroughfares and open fields or parks. Cruickshank's satirical etchings show London dandies out cruising in a park by day, and cruising taking place in the doorway of a French restaurant across the Channel.

Brook Andrew

Australian born 1970

S & D II

1997, printed 2006

computer-generated colour transparency on transparent synthetic polymer resin

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2007

2007.6

‘At the time of making this work, I wanted visibility for this young man and a celebration of our ancestors’ identities, to see how we, as First Nations peoples, are connected to these important photographs and to empower our sovereignty. I was thinking about what’s lost to dominant narratives and histories, who is disappeared in what we remember in Australia, and indeed the world. I wanted to insert back into public memory, images that were deliberately hidden or neglected. The title of the artwork “Sexy and Dangerous” is a serious attempt in 1996 to tackle the derogatory racist terms towards Indigenous peoples, and to insert the importance of the beauty of the Indigenous body.’

– Brook Andrew, 2022

Luke Roberts

Australian born 1952

Exorcism X: Daubed painting / theatre of the self / happy birthday dear Osiris

1990–91

synthetic polymer paint on canvas, fabric and polystyrene, polyvinyl acetate, beads, glass, mirror, metal, glitter, sequins, shells, gold leaf, cotton and metallic thread, fabric, plastic, pigment and glitter on canvasboard, nylon string, plant fibre, found objects, wood, plywood and (other materials)

Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of the Joan Clemenger Endowment, Governor, 2002

DC2.a-d-2002

When Luke Roberts returned to Brisbane in 1989 after living abroad, he began to use personal objects that had been in storage and the concept of the Wunderkammer (cabinet of wonders) to examine hidden histories of queerness. As the title suggests, this work blends the kitsch, the performative and the supernatural. Roberts has suggested that the white shape evokes the White Rabbit from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and suggests a journey of mysterious destination. Roberts often explores Catholicism, in which he was raised and experienced homophobia, particularly in his performances as Pope Alice, a character who recalls both Alice and Pope Joan (the legendary medieval female pope).

Douglas McManus

Australian born 1959

Conservative inconspicuous

1999–2000

rayon, digital print

Fashionable conforming

1999–2000

rayon, digital print

Individual non conforming

1999–2000

rayon, digital print

Hair couture 2000

1999–2000

leather, polyester, cotton, hair

Kaiser Bequest, 2000

2000.103-6

Renowned textile artist Douglas McManus recalled how 'the first job I had when I came to Melbourne was collecting glasses at an infamous gay pub, where I was able to meet some amazing men who became the catalyst for many early textile art pieces including *Hair couture 2000*'. McManus's works question the

...continued overleaf

stereotypical look of queer masculinity, which has traditionally imaged gay men as youthful, muscular and depilated. Here, he references what is known in the gay world as 'bear culture', which celebrates the sensuality of hirsute men with natural huskily built bodies.

Nick Cave

American born 1959

Soundsuit

2015

from the *Soundsuit* series 1992–

fibreglass, cotton, shell, glass, plastic, metal

Purchased with funds donated by the Fox Family Foundation
and the NGV Foundation, 2016

2016.88

Nick Cave began creating his *Soundsuit* series to process his trauma following the brutal beating of African American man Rodney King by LAPD officers on 3 March 1991. By rendering their wearers both highly visible and anonymous, Cave's Soundsuits represent the systemic threats and inequalities faced by BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Colour), queer and other marginalised groups within society, including being disproportionately targeted by law enforcement. Soundsuits also act as a source of protection, obscuring the wearer's race, gender, class and other identifying factors. Each Soundsuit is meticulously crafted using ordinary, often discarded items such as plastic buttons, beads and feathers.

Spain

Saint Sebastian, plaque

1575–1625

gilt-bronze

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

4145–D3

...continued overleaf

William Yang

Australian born 1943

William in scholar's costume

1984/2009

from the *Self Portrait* series

inkjet photograph

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2014

2014.260

William Yang uses his art practice to chronicle both personal and shared queer histories throughout Sydney. Over the years, among other things, his work has explored the experience of HIV/AIDS and the changing nature of queer spaces, as well as his own journey of 'coming out' as gay as a Chinese man. Through his self-portrait *William in scholar's costume*, Yang likens the experience of coming out to that of emancipation from racial suppression.

William Yang

Australian born 1943

Battling time

2010

inkjet print

Gift of the artist through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

2016.1122

Battling time is William Yang's reflection on his own mortality. The open palm of a hand holding a number of pills, including medical treatments, vitamin supplements and Viagra, evokes the physical experience of ageing and the sense of one's body changing over time. Throughout his practice Yang has employed photography to reflect on his experiences as a gay man in Australia, using the medium to capture quotidian moments and often sharing intimate details of his life and community.

Destiny Deacon

Kuku/Erub/Mer born 1957

Where's Mickey?

2002, printed 2016

lightjet photograph, artist's proof

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

2016.618

Where's Mickey? shows Luke Captain, an out-and-proud gay Torres Strait Islander man, dressed as Minnie Mouse. Deacon is known for using her work to explore the relationship between comedy and tragedy, as well as to challenge sexual and racial stereotypes. Here Deacon plays with the Australian slang phrase 'Mickey Mouse', often used to refer to something substandard, poorly executed or amateurish. In many ways, the Mickey and Minnie Mouse symbols have come to represent white, consumerist American culture. Deacon twists the audience's familiarity with the famous mouse in a challenge to the identity, race and gender stereotypes that Aboriginal people face.

Juan Davila

Chilean born 1946, worked in
Australia 1974–

Untitled

1983

watercolour, white gouache and gold paint

Gift of the Reverend Ian Brown, 2021

86365

Juan Davila explains *Untitled* as ‘a scene of mateship in the bush, [using] two pictorial quotations [Australian modernist Albert Tucker and Finnish-American illustrator Tom of Finland]. I consider both to be fascistic and psychotic images in the sense that they convey a totalitarian meaning. By using them I aim to expose the nationalistic Australian myth of the bush. An economy of erotics is engaged here as a device for the exploration of Australia’s anxious relationship to questions of centre and periphery, as well as the construction of a national identity which silences Indigenous and migrant cultural experiences’.

Juan Davila rejects the application of labels to his practice and therefore the contextualisation of his work in *Queer*.

Eugène Jansson

Swedish 1862–1915

Ring gymnast I

1911

oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1987

IC1-1987

Eugène Jansson lived and worked in Stockholm, where he created images of Sweden's water-bound metropolis that are haunting and melancholic. From 1890 onwards he focused on panoramic nocturnal views of his city, capturing the mysterious, glowing northern light of the Swedish archipelago. After 1905, however, Jansson turned almost exclusively to painting images of men swimming, working out with weights and practising gymnastics in the nude. Aware of the dramatic change in his style that they represented, Jansson at first worked on these nude studies in secret. The public unveiling of some of them in 1907 brought a storm of both praise and condemnation. Between 1907 and 1913 Jansson lived openly with his model and lover Knut Nyman, scandalising Stockholm.

Ross Watson

Australian born 1963

Lily VIII

1993

collage of cut colour photo-offset lithographs

Margaret Stewart Endowment, 1996

DC15-1996

In this photo collage Ross Watson has layered two images of bare-chested men, lying back with their right arms arching languorously. Both figures are muscular, and the images have the seductive aesthetic of advertising or soft pornography. The colour photograph is cut into the shape of a lily flower on a stem with leaves, which lies on top of the black-and-white photograph. Together the shape of the collages and the play of form and shadow in the images create sensuous arabesques. The apparition of one figure entangled in another and the closed eyes of the figures suggest that perhaps the men dream of each other.

Chris Bond

Australian born 1975

Drew Pettifer

Australian born 1980

Untitled

(Nic in his lounge room, cloaked)

2013

digital type C print, oil paint

Purchased with funds donated by the Bowness Family, 2013

2013.941

In this collaborative work by Drew Pettifer and Chris Bond, the nude sitter in Pettifer's photograph has been camouflaged by hair painted by Bond, cloaking the figure. This obfuscation of the body evokes presence and absence, loss and longing. Glimpses of skin are visible around the jagged sections of hair which operate like a draped cloth and, together with the staring eyes, generate a sense of suggestive intrigue.

St George Hare

Irish 1857–1933

The victory of faith

c. 1890–91

oil on canvas

Gift of an anonymous donor, 1905

201-2

There is a Sapphic element to this work which seems almost exploitative to modern eyes, a product of Victorian-era voyeurism that now resonates with a queer new meaning. *The victory of faith* was exhibited at London's Royal Academy in 1891, and was St George Hare's first major treatment of the nude. An Irish artist from Limerick, St George Hare earned his living primarily as a portraitist. This vivid depiction of Christian martyrs sleeping serenely in the dungeon of a Roman arena beneath the hungry gaze of predatory lions also touches upon other subjects that clearly interested the artist – the depiction of non-Western women, and the imaging of women imprisoned and bound in chains, which is also problematic from a modern perspective.

Clockwise

Abraham de Bruyn

Flemish c. 1540–87

Caligula

c. 1565–87

plate 4 from the *Twelve Caesars on Horseback* series
engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

3050.4-3

Nero

c. 1565–87

plate 6 from the *Twelve Caesars on Horseback* series
engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

3050.6-3

Galba

c. 1565–87

plate 7 from the *Twelve Caesars on Horseback* series
engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

3050.7-3

Otho

c. 1565–87

plate 8 from the *Twelve Caesars on Horseback* series
engraving

Felton Bequest, 1926

3050.8-3

Much information about the private lives of ancient Rome's first emperors was recorded in Suetonius's *The Twelve Caesars* (121 CE), and accounts by other ancient Roman authors. Their successes, cruelties and human desires and failings are narrated in a detailed manner that has subsequently become historical 'truth', regardless of their veracity. According to these sources, Caligula (r. 37 – 41 CE) had sexual relations with his brother-in-law (whom he later had killed), and numerous other men. Nero (r. 54 – 68 CE) publicly married two men. Galba (r. 68 – 69 CE), Suetonius recounts, was 'inclined to males, with a decided preference for mature, sturdy men'. Otho (r. January – April 69 CE) and his predecessor Nero, it was widely rumoured, 'enjoyed each other's sexual favours'.

Nicholas Smith

Australian born 1990

Saint Sebastian martyred five times

2018

stoneware, porcelain

Purchased with funds donated by Professor Barbara van Ernst AM, 2019

2019.597

Nicholas Smith's *Saint Sebastian martyred five times*, sees Sebastian fragmented, with portions of his idealised classical form encircling the vessel. The slumped vessel itself evokes the curves of a body, perhaps in pleasure or duress. There is tension in the work as the physical properties of the clay resist Smith's desire to create an idealised vase form. This tension reveals the artist's conflicting desire for the saint and his apprehension for traditions of Western religious imagery in the Australian context. The over stretched clay and lustrous surface reveal excessive handling by the artist as he seeks sensuality and sexuality freed from historical and religious weight.

Chinese

Guanyin

Northern Qi dynasty 550–577 CE

limestone, pigment

Felton Bequest, 1953

1353–D4

In Buddhism, a Bodhisattva is a person who, having achieved enlightenment and forsaken immortality through reincarnation, works towards attaining that spiritual state for others. Guanyin, a Chinese Buddhist Bodhisattva of compassion, first appeared in India as a male deity, Avalokiteśvara, and was transformed into a female Bodhisattva within Chinese culture. Often depicted in early Chinese art as a white-robed woman, Guanyin was also at times shown as a young man or a woman wearing a moustache, in reference to Avalokiteśvara's ability to assume many forms of appearance. This gender fluidity has led to Guanyin being read as a modern trans icon.

Plain Jane, Melbourne fashion house

Australian 1984–87

Gavin Brown designer

Australian born 1964

Boys will be boys

1984

screenprinted cotton

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2009

2009.6

Boys will be boys is one of the first textiles Australian fashion designer Gavin Brown released under his label, Plain Jane. The distinctive design portrays various icons of masculinity, including tattooed, quiff-haired bikers and leathermen, in cartoonish vignettes surrounded by crosses. Brown's designs acknowledge a fluidity in masculine presentations that was popular among the gay community in the years before the design was made. Tom of Finland (whose distinctive iconography is also referenced in David McDiarmid's *Toxic Queen*, on display nearby) had already queered the biker through overt, exaggerated masculine presentation in his drawings.

Peter Travis

Australian 1929–2016

Erotic landscape sphere 1

c. 1973

earthenware

Erotic landscape sphere 2

c. 1973

earthenware

Erotic landscape sphere 3

c. 1973

earthenware

Erotic landscape sphere 4

c. 1973

earthenware

Erotic landscape sphere 5

c. 1973

earthenware

Gift of Professor Graeme Clarke in memory of Peter Travis through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2021

An out gay artist and designer working across media and referencing historical prototypes, Peter Travis was an important figure in the history of queer art and design in Australia. While working as a designer for Speedo swimwear in 1960, Travis created the iconic Speedo swimming brief. He studied sculpture at East Sydney Technical College under Lyndon Dadswell, and ceramics under Peter Rushforth, before going on to study ceramics in the USA and ceramic history in the UK. This group of earthenware vessels is characteristic of his mature style, organic and ambiguous in form, rustic in execution, with strong classical influences.

James Lemon

New Zealander born 1993, worked in Australia 2012–

Slump stool #1

2019

stoneware

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2019

2019.864

James Lemon's *Slump stool #1* is a technicolour explosion of paint and glaze. Lemon created the work using a hand-throwing technique whereby he builds up clay forms that he then shapes gradually using different parts of his body. Once the seat and support of *Slump stool #1* were joined, they were moulded by Lemon using his buttocks and thighs to create an organic and sensual form. Lemon describes the shape of the stool as resembling a butt plug. The work references camp and queer aesthetics, and is inherently tongue-in-cheek, challenging the false distinctions between art, craft and design.

Stephen Benwell

Australian born 1953

Basket

1989

stoneware

Gift of Dr Michael Elliott through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013

2013.258

Vase

1990

stoneware

Purchased from Admission Funds, 1990

D4-1990

Statue

2011

earthenware

Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014,

2014.116

Stephen Benwell's works, in forms evoking ancient Grecian urns and statuary, reference the pastoral, a mode of art and literature which romanticises rural life and a mythical golden age of harmony with nature. The genre has its origins in ancient epic poetry which idealised the agricultural working life and included scenes of eros in bucolic settings. Often such scenes celebrated

...continued overleaf

masculine beauty and depicted same sex love, for instance, in Virgil's 44BC *Eclogues* (or *Bucolics*) poem, 'The shepherd Corydon burned with passion for pretty Alexis'. The figure in Benwell's *Statue* recalls the contrapposto of ancient sculpture but without the smooth idealism of a Grecian Apollo. In its playfulness the work recalls the decorative Rococo flourishes of eighteenth-century porcelain figurines, a period which was also influenced by the pastoral genre.

France, Dieppe

Marie Antoinette, triptych figure

1875–1900

ivory, steel

Felton Bequest, 1918

1877-D3

During the years of political dissatisfaction with the French monarchy that preceded the French Revolution of 1789, numerous anonymous pamphleteers published tracts, designed to destabilise the royal family, accusing Queen Marie-Antoinette (r. 1774–92) of licentiousness and lesbianism. These rumours started early. Marie-Antoinette herself wrote to her mother Empress Maria Theresa of Austria in 1775 about those who ‘accuse me of having a taste for both women and lovers’. Scurrilous and obscene engravings were circulated in the 1780s, depicting the Queen having sex with female servants. Among those accused of being the Queen’s lovers were royal courtiers the Comtesse de Polignac and the Princesse de Lamballe.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Sydney Gay Mardi Gras 1986

1986

poster: colour offset lithograph

Pride Queer New Year 31 December 1992

1992

colour screenprint on gold paper

Gifts from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 1998

2002.373 & 2002.382

These posters designed by David McDiarmid embody a characteristic that unites his broader artistic practice: the intersection of his art and his activism. Throughout his career, McDiarmid harnessed his artistic and graphic design skills to raise consciousness about the systemic inequalities faced by queer people. McDiarmid designed across multiple contexts, including posters for the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and numerous posters for parties such as Pride Queer New Year. His bold and inventive designs were intended to be celebratory in nature, while also making the oppression of queer people hyper-visible.

Maison Martin Margiela, Paris

fashion house

France est. 1988

John Galiano designer

Gibraltarian/English born 1960, emigrated to England 1966; worked in France 1991–

Mules

2014

Defile collection, autumn–winter 2014–15

synthetic fur, leather, glitter

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles, 2016

2016.187.a-b

Comme des Garçons, Tokyo

fashion house

Japan est. 1969

Rei Kawakubo designer

Japanese born 1942

Shoes

2015, *Hommes plus* collection, spring–summer 2015

leather, elastic, cotton

Gift of Mary and John Poulakis, 2016

2015.737.a-b

These shoes subvert convention with unconventional materials and silhouettes. Rei Kawakubo's design for *Shoes*, included in her spring–summer 2015 *Hommes plus* collection for Comme des Garçons, transforms the traditional Chelsea boot by extending its toe out and up to form an extravagant, humorous and impractical curve. A similarly radical, camp twist on a conventional shoe design is demonstrated by John Galliano's *Mules* for the autumn–winter 2014–15 *Defile* collection for Maison Martin Margiela. The mule's conventionally elegant, refined design is complicated through the addition of a layer of thick, mint-green fur.

Egypt

Ibis amulet

Late Period, Dynasty XXVI 664–525 BCE
faience

Ibis amulet

Late Period, Dynasty XXVI 664 – 525 BCE
faience

Felton Bequest, 1939

D136-1982 & D267-1994

According to the Roman author Aelian (c. 175 – c. 235 CE), ‘the Egyptians assert that a knowledge of clysters and intestinal purges is derived from ... the Ibis that taught them this remedy’. Pliny the Elder (23/24 – 79 CE) and Plutarch (46 – after 119 CE) wrote of how the ibis was believed to clean its anus with its beak, associating it with that orifice. Sacred in ancient Egypt, the ibis was an attribute of the ibis-headed deity Thoth, who was also worshipped as a moon god, a role he assumed following the coupling of two other male Egyptian gods, Seth and Horus.

Spencer Shier

Australian 1883–1946

Tamara Toumanova and Serge Lifar

1939

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Michael Kimberley, 2018

2018.249

Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes is widely regarded as the most influential ballet company of the twentieth century, a nexus of revolutionary artistic collaborations among dancers, choreographers, composers and designers. Diaghilev was the company's artistic director, and his life was inextricably entwined with the Ballets Russes. His most famous lover was the company's principal dancer, Vaslav Nijinsky, but the relationship ended in considerable bitterness on the occasion of Nijinsky's marriage. From 1924, he and dancer Serge Lifar became lovers. However, according to Lifar, it was Diaghilev's affair with Léonide Massine, who replaced Nijinsky as principal dancer, that was the most intense, bringing Diaghilev 'so many moments of happiness or anguish'. Diaghilev's other lovers included dancer and choreographer Anton Dolin, and his secretary and librettist Boris Kochno.

England, Liverpool

Tile [Mary Ann Yates]

c. 1755

earthenware

Presented by Mr and Mrs F. Hodgkin, 1939

4656.67-D3

While sex between women was never illegal in Britain, some women were prosecuted for wearing men's clothes, under laws against fraud. A German visitor to London, Johann Wilhelm von Achenholz, wrote in 1787 about the presence in the capital of 'females who avoid all intimate intercourse with the opposite sex, confining themselves to their own sex. These females are called lesbians. They have small societies, known as Anandrinic Societies, of which Mrs Y, formerly a famous London actress was one of the presidents'. Mrs Y has been identified as the bisexual Drury Lane actor Mary Ann Yates (1728–87).

John Robinson

English 1935–2007

Nijinsky

1973

bronze, ed. 1/12

Gift of Kenneth Begg, 1973

A5-1973

Titled 'The God of Dance', Vaslav Nijinsky transformed the role of the male ballet dancer on the twentieth-century stage. As principal of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, he performed his own choreography to Claude Debussy's composition *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (1912). The ballet ended with Nijinsky as the faun in a skin-tight costume, miming masturbation into a wisp of fabric. Celebrated for his androgyny, he was one of the few male dancers of his time to perform *en pointe*. Before Diaghilev, Nijinsky's lovers included Prince Pavel Dimitrievitch Lvov and Count Tishkievitch, but it was his impulsive, unhappy marriage to dancer Romola de Pulszky that ultimately ended his career with the Ballets Russes.

Alastair Cary-Elwes

English 1866–1946, worked in
France 1884–95, Scotland 1896–1946

Rupert Bunny

c. 1887
oil on canvas

Gift of Mr C. C. Chisholm Esq., 1962

1074-5

Rupert Bunny

Australian 1864–1947, worked throughout Europe 1888–
1933

Alastair Cary-Elwes

1887
brush, ink and wash

Presented by the Rupert Bunny Estate, 1948

1924-4

Australian Rupert Bunny and his English companion Alastair Cary-Elwes were among many international artists drawn to the progressive artistic circles of 1880s Paris. Photographs from the period show the couple relaxing among their circle of elegant young men. In one image, Bunny, clad only in a white sheet, extends a

...continued overleaf

hand to Cary-Elwes, kneeling on the steps below him. Letters written by the artists' close friend Zsigmond Justh (himself involved in a relationship with the editor of the *Revue littéraire et artistique*, Jean Berge) attest to the intimacy of their relationship. The reasons for Bunny's eventual marriage to his model Jeanne Morel remain a matter of conjecture; however, it is reasonable to suggest that the marriage served to complicate, rather than eclipse his queer identity.

W. T. Copeland and Sons, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

manufacturer

England 1867–1932

Sardanapalus

1881

porcelain (parian)

The Dr Robert Wilson Collection. Gift of
Dr Robert Wilson and Colin Lane, 2007

2007.705

In his *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἱστορική* or *Historical Library*, written between 60 and 30 BCE, the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus told the story of King Sardanapalus, who supposedly ruled ancient Assyria in the seventh century BCE. Although aspects of Sardanapalus's reign reflect that of the real King Ashurbanipal (r. 669–631 BCE), the character described by Diodorus seems to have been more a fictional construct. According to Diodorus, Sardanapalus 'outdid all his predecessors in luxury ... he lived the life of a woman ... [and] assumed the feminine garb ... to pursue the delights of love with men as well as with women'.

John Cage

American 1912–92

Calvin Sumsion

American active 1969

Not wanting to say anything about Marcel

1969

screenprint on eight synthetic polymer resin panels,
wooden base, artist's proof XII/XVIII

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of
Henry and Dinah Krongold, Founder Benefactors, 1984

P.103.c-k-1984

John Cage was primarily known as a composer, and often collaborated with his partner, choreographer Merce Cunningham. A year after the death of artist Marcel Duchamp, Cage created his first visual artworks. The title of this work records a comment made by artist Jasper Johns when he and Cage were invited to contribute to a magazine tribute to Duchamp. Cage used chance methods – flipping three coins – to isolate, in turn, dictionary pages, specific words and their arrangement, colour and typeface. The layering of words on clear plexiglass creates a poem in three dimensions that is open to subjective interpretations. Cage demonstrates the instability of meaning in words and in all visual signs, reminding us that we all see the world differently.

Tracey Moffatt

Australian born 1960

Heaven

1997

colour video, sound, 28 min

Purchased, 1999

1999.27

As a queer woman, Tracey Moffatt playfully subverts the historically dominant masculine gaze through an irreverent appreciation of the body in a moment of public intimacy. The work is a voyeuristic exposé of Australian surfers and surf culture, which has traditionally been associated with machismo and virility. The camera zooms in on numerous men changing into or out of their swimming costumes, a ritual usually conducted in or by the side of a car. We see the different reactions of the subjects as they notice the attention of Moffatt's camera, ranging from surprise to shyness and pleasure, drawing our attention to the complexity of the desirous gaze.

Andy Warhol

American 1928–87

The star

1981

from the *Myths* portfolio

colour screenprint and diamond dust, artist's proof 9/30

Gift of William Peter Kerr and Inars Uldis Lacis, 2015

2015.427

Greta Garbo is idolised here by Andy Warhol as she appeared in MGM's 1931 biopic of Dutch-born exotic dancer Margaretha MacLeod, who worked under the stage name of Mata Hari before being convicted of spying for Germany and executed in France during the First World War. The film, in which Garbo co-starred with gay actor Ramon Novarro, became one of MGM's highest grossing productions for 1932. *Mata Hari* featured spectacular costumes created for Garbo by queer Hollywood designer Adrian, whose work is displayed elsewhere in this exhibition, and which also inspired the Garbo headpiece seen here, by gay English milliner Philip Treacy.

Dolce & Gabbana, Italy fashion house

Italy est. 1982

Domenico Dolce designer

Italian born 1958

Stefano Gabbana designer

Italian born 1962

Handbag

2018

resin, LEDs, plastic, leather, metal, glass, cotton

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2019

2019.443

Christian Dior, Paris fashion house

France est. 1946

John Galliano designer

Gibraltarian/English born 1960, emigrated to
England 1966; worked in France 1991–

Saddle bag

2000

cotton, leather, metal, Velcro

Purchased, 2002

2002.185

Moschino, Milan fashion house

Italy est. 1983

Franco Moschino designer

Italian 1950–94

Antica Pasticceria Milano, handbag

c. 1990

leather, metal

Purchased with funds donated by the Bertocchi family, 2020

2020.707

During the 1980s and 1990s, expensive designer handbags, known now as ‘it bags’, became the ultimate status symbol for a new demographic of wealthy consumers with disposable incomes. Today, limited edition ‘novelty’ bags are also a staple of the luxury goods industry. Each of the bags displayed in this case playfully satirises the language and conventions of accessory design. By merging the luxurious with the everyday, the otherworldly and the kitsch, John Galliano, Franco Moschino, Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana have produced designs that embody a camp theatricality while also parodying the excesses of high fashion.

Louis Ferdinand

Elle the elder

French c. 1612–89

**Portrait of Henrietta of England called
'Minette' (1644–1670), sister of Charles**

II

c. 1661

oil on canvas

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.89

In 1661 Monsieur, Philippe Duc d'Orléans, King Louis XIV of France's younger brother (whose portrait is displayed nearby), married his first wife, Princess Henrietta of England. Known as 'Minette', Henrietta was Philippe's first cousin, the daughter of Charles I, and had lived in France since the age of two. The couple had three children together before Minette's early death in 1670 at the age of twenty-seven. Minette surely knew of Philippe's sexual preference for men at the time of their marriage, and she is believed to have had affairs with other men herself. Louis XIV himself was rumoured to have fathered the couple's first child.

Chelsea Porcelain Factory, London
manufacturer
England c. 1744–69

The four seasons, candlesticks
c. 1765
porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection. Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

426.1-2-D4

Derby Porcelain, Derby manufacturer

England c. 1748–1848

Mercury

c. 1765–70

porcelain (soft-paste)

The Colin Templeton Collection. Gift of Mrs Colin Templeton, 1942

444-D4

Eighteenth-century porcelain figures were luxury items, depicting fantasies of bucolic leisure for elite consumers. Their vibrant colours, elaborate ornamentation and theatrical compositions reflected the Rococo taste for excess, and these same qualities appeal to the camp sensibilities of many contemporary collectors. Beneath the surface of naive frivolity, erotic undertones were common, often with accompanying notes of ambiguity. Many figures refer to the masquerade tradition, within which theatrical concealment afforded sexual licence. By assuming the attributes of a different class, nationality or gender, privileged participants could explore illicit desires. The luminosity of porcelain also lent a particular sensuality, visible here in Mercury's sinuous limbs and blushing cheeks.

Charles Ricketts

English 1834–96

Illustration to Shelley

c. 1892

pen and brown ink

Felton Bequest, 1908

356-2

Charles Shannon

English 1863–1937

Souvenir of van Dyck – Miss Kate Harwood in a Marmiton dress

1897

oil on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1906

263-2

Artistic and life partners for more than fifty years, Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon designed and illustrated books, established an art journal, *The Dial*, in 1889 and founded the Vale Press in 1894, named after their house in Chelsea. Together, they amassed a huge art collection, and their close friend Oscar Wilde described their home as ‘the one house in London where you will never be bored’. Both artists expressed an

...continued overleaf

unconventional approach to gender and sexuality in their work. Ricketts began his career as a theatre designer, and his later illustrations are replete with androgynous beauties in fantastic settings. Shannon, who was known primarily for his portraiture, here depicts Victorian actor Kate Harwood in costume as a male chef's assistant.

Robert MacBryde

Scottish 1913–66

Woman at a table

1948

colour lithograph

Felton Bequest, 1949

2059-4

Robert Colquhoun

Scottish 1914–62

The trinket seller

1948

colour lithograph

Felton Bequest, 1949

2065-4

In a 1966 obituary, London's *Times* newspaper noted how 'Mr. Robert MacBryde, who died yesterday, was a painter whose name was always linked right from his student days with that of his friend and fellow student Robert Colquhoun'. This was as close as the paper could come to stating at the time that 'the two Roberts', as they became known, had been lovers since they first met at the Glasgow School of Art in 1932. Only a decade later, in 1977, could the *Times* print that 'MacBryde and

...continued overleaf

Colquhoun were a legend in the London bohemia of the Forties and Fifties ... because in the days before gay liberation they were a homosexual couple who openly lived and worked together'.

Anne Alison Greene

Australian 1878–1954, worked throughout Europe
1920s–46

Cherbourg Harbour, France

1930

oil on wood panel

Purchased, 1979

A3-1979

Janet Cumberae Stewart

Australian 1883–1960, worked throughout Europe
1922–39

Mary Cockburn Mercer

c. 1939

pastel

Gift of the Mason and Mercer families, 2018

2018.1393

In 1922, Janet Cumberae Stewart left Melbourne for London and spent the next seventeen years painting and exhibiting in Europe. She devoted the most significant portion of her oeuvre to studies of the female nude in pastel, her compositions marked by sensuousness and intimacy. Her subject here is fellow artist Mary Cockburn Mercer, her sometime lover and lifelong friend, whom she had met in Paris in the 1920s. In 1931, Cumberae Stewart settled in Alassio, Italy, with her partner, publicist and business manager Miss Argemore Ffarington 'Bill' Bellairs. Independently wealthy and renowned for her masculine attire, Billy provided enduring personal and professional support. The couple returned to Australia in 1939 to visit Cumberae Stewart's family, where they remained due to the outbreak of war.

Rupert Bunny

Australian 1864–1947, worked throughout Europe 1888–1933

Mermaids dancing

1896

oil on canvas

The Joseph Brown Collection. Presented through the NGV Foundation by
Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004

2004.155

Hybrid creatures held a particular fascination for many artists around the fin de siècle, symbolising the fluidity of identity and the possibility of transformation. Rupert Bunny here presents his feminine subjects as a decorative, slippery mass of bodies entwined with one another and unnaturally hued in shades of amber and lurid green. Like Charles Conder, Bunny was accused of being excessively decorative in his compositions, too eclectic in his practices, of failing to settle sensibly on a style, or to progress in a logical ‘modern’ manner. Where many of their contemporaries pursued essentials of form and colour, Conder and Bunny luxuriated in ornamental excess, and in this tendency existed a sense of queer dissidence.

Drew Pettifer

Australian born 1980

Untitled (Ruel)

Untitled (Bram)

2020

colour video, no sound, ed. 2/3

In this work Drew Pettifer interrogates the historical archive to draw attention to forgotten queer histories, and to explore gender, sexuality and the politics of desire. *Untitled (Ruel) Untitled (Bram)* tells a story from 1727 of two young men (aged eighteen and twenty-two), who were on board the *Zeewijk*, a Dutch East India Company ship. Historical records describe how the lovers were convicted of sodomy and marooned as punishment on separate islands in the Houtman Abrolhos archipelago, off the coast of Western Australia, where they died alone. This cruel event marked the beginning of Australia's European queer history.

Greg Semu

Samoan born 1971, worked in
Australia 2008–

Fa'afafine

2014–16, printed 2016

from *The Raft of the Tagata Pasifika*
(*People of the Pacific*) series 2014–16
type C photograph

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2016

2016.691.11

This photograph by Greg Semu's has its roots in the classical European chiaroscuro painting technique used to create dramatic visual effects of light and shadow to delineate forms emerging from darkness. Here, Semu queers the iconic painting *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19, by Théodore Géricault, rewriting heteronormative and Western narratives of art history. In the bottom right corner of the composition is a gender-diverse person – a fa'afafine in the Sāmoan language – lying prostrate on the edge of a raft, prompting us to consider pre-colonial gender diversity throughout the Pacific. It is ambiguous whether the moment captured is one of danger or pleasure, whether the individual pictured has been harmed or is relaxing as they trail in the water.

Peter Waples-Crowe

Ngarigo born 1965

Mirrigang days

2019

paper, watercolour, pencil, spray paint, stickers, felt tip markers, synthetic polymer paint, rubber stamps and ink

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Indigenous Art, 2020

Over the years Peter Waples-Crowe has produced numerous paintings, drawings and collages filled with reflections on his sexuality, identity and culture, and his life more broadly. His work often reads like a diary, with text employed to emphasise the relationship between Ngarigo language and English. This work incorporates his chosen totem – Mirrigang, the alpine dingo. Waples-Crowe sees the dingo as an analogy for the queer, ‘the outsider’. The dingo is Australia’s first introduced species, and to many, ‘introduced’ suggests ‘new’, however, as Waples-Crowe observes, dingoes have been part of the Australian ecosystem for millennia.

John Cage

American 1912–92

Calvin Sumsion

American active 1969

Not wanting to say anything about Marcel

1969

screenprint on eight synthetic polymer resin panels, wooden base, artist's proof XII/XVIII

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Henry and Dinah Krongold, Founder Benefactors, 1984

P.103.c-k-1984

John Cage was primarily known as a composer, and often collaborated with his partner, choreographer Merce Cunningham. A year after the death of artist Marcel Duchamp, Cage created his first visual artworks. The title of this work records a comment made by artist Jasper Johns when he and Cage were invited to contribute to a magazine tribute to Duchamp. Cage used chance methods – flipping three coins – to isolate, in turn, dictionary pages, specific words and their arrangement, colour and typeface. The layering of words on clear plexiglass creates a poem in three dimensions that is open to subjective interpretations. Cage demonstrates the instability of meaning in words and in all visual signs, reminding us that we all see the world differently.

Bessie Gibson

Australian 1868–1961, worked in France 1906–39,
England 1939–47

Luxembourg Gardens

early 1910s

oil on wood panel

Gift of Andrée Harkness through the Government's
Cultural Gifts Program, 2019

2019.398

In 1905, aged thirty-two, Bessie Gibson left Australia to further her artistic studies in Paris. Her family were unusually supportive of her aspirations and had promised to finance her education and acc stralian artist, Anne Alison Greene, who became her lover and long-term partner. Both women painted predominantly in an impressionist manner, favouring landscape subjects, and rejecting the more radical aspects of modernism. Greene was forced to return to Brisbane in 1946 due to illness, and Gibson followed shortly after.

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

Germany est. 2007

Moving backwards

2019

colour high-definition digital video, sound, installation, 20 min 35 sec, ed. 4/5 + 2AP + 2EC dimensions variable

Purchased, 2019

Letters by the following contributors to *Moving backwards* can be accessed via the QR code below.

Azar Mahmoudian, Teheran; Judith Butler, Berkeley; Fouza Al-Youssef, Qamishli (Kurdish Women's Movement, Rojava, Northern Syria), Qamishli; Antke Engel, Berlin; Patrisse Cullors (co-founder of Black Lives Matter), Los Angeles; Trajal Harrell, São Paulo; Marwa Arsanios, Berlin; Mirkan Deniz, Zurich; Treva Ellison, Hollywood, Florida; Ahmed Refaat and Andrea Thal, Cairo; Charlotte Laubard, Geneva; Nikita Dhawan, Mumbai; Eve Tuck, Toronto; and Françoise Vergès, Paris.



Gareth Sansom

Australian born 1939

Delicious

1989

watercolour and ink

Gift of Dr Christine Healy OAM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2018

2018.1261

Gareth Sansom spent a period working in New Delhi in 1989 in preparation for his inclusion in the 1991 Indian Triennial. During this time, he made a new watercolour each day. *Delicious* is a work from that series. Sansom recalls that the work was inspired by memories of Melbourne nightclubs in the 1970s and early 1980s and the diverse and performative range of outfits worn by other patrons.

Wolfgang Tillmans

German born 1968

Lars in Tube

1993

type C photograph

Purchased, NGV Foundation, 2021

Wolfgang Tillmans is renowned for his observational and intimate portraits and still-life works. This photograph was taken the year after Tillmans moved to London from Hamburg and was actively documenting his circle of friends in the London club scene. He continues to be a vocal activist for queer communities and sees queer nightlife as not merely hedonistic but as a political achievement. In this arresting portrait the subject, Lars, stares at the photographer with a mix of ambivalence and intensity. His pose and outfit, particularly his bare torso adorned with nipple clamps, is charged with eroticism.

Scotty So

Chinese born 1995, lives in Australia

Wearing a mask during the third bubonic plague, no. 3

2020 inkjet print, ed. 1/6

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2021

2021.151

Scotty So works across several media, using painting, photography, sculpture, site-responsive installation, video and drag performance. His work explores the relationships between comedy and tragedy, and honesty and insincerity. In this self-portrait So is dressed as his alter ego, Scarlett. As So describes, 'Scarlett is the symbol of an Oriental silhouette. She's the drag persona that allows me to become the beauty that I always wanted to see. And when I look at myself in the mirror, I see the woman who I can become'.

Mary Cockburn Mercer

Australian 1882–1963, worked throughout Europe 1920s–37, France 1952–63

Ballet

c. 1939

oil on canvas

Gift of Robin Sharwood in honour of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's 100th birthday through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2009 2009.146

Bisexual Australian artist Mary Cockburn Mercer spent most of her life in Europe. At the age of seventeen, she ran away from school to Paris to experience bohemian life in Montparnasse. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Paris was known for its liberal attitude, and tolerance of diverse political views and lifestyles. Artists like Mercer, who sought new impulses in art and life, were able to develop their careers there, explore non-traditional gender roles and enjoy more sexual freedom. In Paris Mercer met Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Kees van Dongen and others, and their diverse influences are discernible in this playful composition.

1

7

2

3

4

6

5

John Minton

English 1917–57

Thames-side, Rotherhithe

1948

colour lithograph, ed. 16/50

Felton Bequest, 1949

2066-4

As historian of queer London Peter Ackroyd has noted, during the Second World War: ‘A genuine confraternity existed in the streets and public spaces of London ... The added vein of darkness during the blackouts increased the sexual tensions of a world where everything seemed permissible’. This is the ambience captured in John Minton’s *Thames-side, Rotherhithe*, where two men cruise each other by night at the river’s edge at the end of the 1940s. In 1949 Minton, a queer British painter who became a prominent book illustrator in the postwar years, wrote of how: ‘Every living person has certain feelings about the world around him. It is these feelings ... which are the raw materials of the artist’s inspiration’.

Justin O'Brien

Australian 1917–96, worked in Italy 1967–96

Mending the nets

c. 1947

watercolour and pen and ink

Purchased, 1947

1716-4

During the Second World War, Justin O'Brien served in Palestine and Greece before being captured at Ekali and interned in Athens and then Torun, Poland. It was during his captivity that O'Brien first studied the Byzantine art of the countries in which he was held, and this had a profound impact on his subsequent painting. O'Brien was troubled for much of his life by what he perceived as two conflicting aspects of his identity: his same-sex attraction and his Catholicism. Yet, it is arguably exactly these two facets that lend his work such appealing complexity.

Mending the nets demonstrates a clear debt to religious painting, while simultaneously luxuriating in the beauty of the nude men who make up the composition.

David McDiarmid

Australian 1952–95, worked in United States 1979–87

Ken's Karate Klub

1976

metallic paint, pencil, coloured pencil, red fibre-tipped pen, collage on graph paper

Gift from the Estate of David McDiarmid, 1998

2002.358

Ken's Karate Klub was included in David McDiarmid's seminal *Secret Love* exhibition held at Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, in December 1976. The mixed-media collage is dedicated to a venue that was an important part of the social topography of queer Sydney in the 1970s: the popular gay sauna, Ken's Karate Klub. This and other works included in *Secret Love* documented McDiarmid's joy at belonging to an identifiable gay community that increasingly occupied a distinct physical precinct around Taylor Square and the 'Golden Mile' of Oxford Street.

Sidney Nolan

Australian 1917–92, worked in England 1953–92

Bathers

1942

enamel paint on cardboard

Gift of Sir Sidney and Lady Nolan, 1983

A20-1983

Pioneering Australian modernist Sidney Nolan is widely believed to have had relationships with both women and men during the 1930s and 1940s, and often referred to himself as 'ambidextrous' – his word for bisexual. Many of Nolan's most celebrated works address themes of hypermasculinity in Australian culture, from footballers to Ned Kelly. This colourful composition offers a different perspective, depicting a group of nude men at leisure at the St Kilda Sea Baths, their outstretched arms creating a physical network of connection between them. The sex-segregated sea baths, where men swam naked, were a well-known meeting place for queer men around this time.

Keith Haring

American 1958–90

Untitled (Dancing dog)

1984

metallic and enamel paint on composition board

Untitled (Television man)

1984

metallic and enamel paint on composition board

Gift of Jason Yeap OAM and Min Lee Wong through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2015

2015.285, 2015.286

The Hardware Club was a queer venue located at 43 Hardware Lane in Melbourne's CBD throughout the 1980s. During his first and only trip to Melbourne in February 1984, Keith Haring made several trips to the Hardware Club, dancing to disco and funk music into the early hours. During one of his visits, Haring spray-painted the panels on either side of the DJ booth with two of the most iconic figures from his distinctive visual language: a dancing 'television man', and a 'dancing dog'. During one of his visits to the club, Haring met a prominent member of Melbourne's queer cultural scene, David (Pussy) Aboud, and reportedly asked him: 'Where are all the surfer boys and where are the beaches?'

Jeffrey Smart

Australian 1921–2018

Winter carnival, Viareggio

1989

oil on canvas

Gift of Ginny Green, Sandra Bardas OAM family, Vicki Vidor OAM and Bindy Koadlow in memory of their parents Loti Smorgon AO and Victor Smorgon AO through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2014 2014.338

Jeffrey Smart's precisely depicted, intensely coloured urban landscapes evoke a curious world, where human subjects often appear isolated or frozen in time. In an interview late in his life, Smart reflected upon his loneliness as a young queer artist, and the sense of comfort he found in researching queer history: 'I found out ... how many of the artists were poofs. And writers. I thought "This is amazing!"' After many years of travelling between Australia and Europe, Smart found in Italy both artistic inspiration and a sense of sympathetic community, and he settled there permanently in 1963. He died in Arezzo in 2018 aged ninety-one, with his partner of more than thirty years, Ermes De Zan, at his side.

1

2

3

9

7

6

5

4

8

Berenice Abbott

American 1898–1991, worked in France 1921–29

New York at night

1932, printed c. 1975

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of an anonymous donor in memory of Rosa Zerfas (1896–1983), 1985 PH36-1985

This photograph of the illuminated buildings of New York captures the humming city at a time of irreversible transformation. The image was published in Berenice Abbott's 1939 photo book, *Changing New York*. In her funding proposal for the book, Abbott wrote of desiring to capture the 'spirit' of the city, driven by the urgent realisation that 'the tempo of the metropolis is not of eternity, or even time, but of the vanishing instant'. When *Changing New York* was published, Abbott's photographs were printed with accompanying texts written by art critic Elizabeth McCausland. They met, became romantic partners, and lived, for the most part, in shared, adjacent flats in a loft building in Greenwich Village from 1935 until McCausland's death in 1965.

Rennie Ellis

Australian 1940–2003

Carlotta, Kings Cross

1970–71, printed 2000

from the *Kings Cross* series 1971

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 2005

2005.550

Australian social documentary photographer Rennie Ellis captured the many subjects depicted in his *Kings Cross* series over a six-month period during the summer of 1970–71. The series is a study of place, with each image tracing beloved and often overlooked parts of the urban landscape of Kings Cross in Sydney. These include the Empire Hotel, the former site of the renowned cabaret show, *Les Girls*, which ran for thirty years. The show was headlined by a line-up of eleven drag queens, including Carlotta (the stage name of Carol Spencer OAM).

Donning elaborate costumes crafted from sequins, feathers and beads, Carlotta was renowned for her renditions of hits by Eartha Kitt and Shirley Bassey. In Ellis's candid backstage photograph, Carlotta sits in front of a vanity, poised for her performance, beneath a humorous note likely written by another queen: 'Carlotta is a piss pot and the star'.

William Thomas Owen

New Zealander 1898–1979, worked in Australia 1927–79

November, St. James's Park, London

1926

bromoil print

Gift of C. Stuart Tompkins, 1971

PH192-1971

St James's Park in London has a long history of diverse sexual assignations. In his *A Ramble in St. James's Park*, the seventeenth-century master of obscene poetry John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, mused upon how 'Footmen, fine fops do here arrive, / And here promiscuously they swive'. It was not always a safe space, with soldiers recorded as entrapping men seeking sex there in the eighteenth century and subsequently blackmailing them. Other soldiers plied their trade in the park as hustlers, accepting payment for their services. In 1808 the British home secretary, Lord Liverpool, ordered that the park's gates be locked at night to 'prevent those scandalous practices' and keep the general public 'ignorant of the disgrace of them'.

Isaac Robert Cruikshank

English 1789–1856

George Cruikshank

English 1792–1878

The Royal Exchange: Tom pointing out to Jerry a few of the primest features of life in London

1821

plate 21 from *Life in London* by Pierce Egan, published by Sherwood, Neely & Jones, London, 1821

hand-coloured etching and aquatint

Purchased, 1956

3345K-4

London's Royal Exchange was opened in 1571 by Queen Elizabeth I and became almost immediately a queer cruising ground. As gay historian Rictor Norton has noted: 'It was full of traders and hawkers, fruit sellers, chemists, and stalls where one could buy and eat fruit or confectionery and drink coffee ... and strolling up and down were tough types called Water Rats offering themselves for casual work in the dockyards, and homosexuals attracted by rough trade'. In January 1699 *The London Spy* periodical recorded the presence there of 'a parcel of swarthy buggerantoes, preternatural fornicators ... who would ogle a handsome young man with as much lust as a true-bred English whoremaster would gaze upon a beautiful woman'.

Fratelli Alinari, Florence

Italian est. 1852

Rocks and olive tree on Capri

1870–80s

albumen silver photograph

Gift of P. H. A. Curtis-Lyon, 1983

PH39-1983

Fratelli Alinari is one of the world's oldest photographic firms. This photograph taken a few decades after their founding shows a landscape on Capri, an island off the coast of the south-western Campania region of Italy. In the early twentieth century, as well as being a haven for writers and artists, Capri served as a relatively safe place for foreign gay men and lesbians to lead a more open life. Notable queer residents included German steel-magnate Friedrich Alfred Krupp, author Norman Douglas and poet Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, who built the decadent neoclassical Villa Lysis there in 1905. A satirical representation of the island's lesbian community is made in Compton Mackenzie's 1928 novel *Extraordinary Women*, inspired by American painter Romaine Brooks and English author Radclyffe Hall.

Albrecht Dürer

German 1471–1528

The bath house

c. 1496–97

woodcut

Felton Bequest, 1956

3596-4

Visual jokes abound in the homoerotic grouping of Albrecht Dürer's *The bath house*: the background tree resembles a naked figure, the pipe being played by the central figure has a long history of phallic association, and the genitals of the standing figure at the left are positioned behind a cock-topped tap (the German 'Hahn' also carries this double meaning). Two figures in the foreground look fondly at each other, one holding a scraper for his companion's back, the other holding a flower, a symbol of courtship. The man standing against the water pipe is recognisable as the artist himself, while the seated man drinking is Dürer's lifelong companion and possibly intimate partner, Willibald Pirckheimer, a lawyer and humanist author.

Hoda Afshar

Iranian/Australian born 1983

Untitled #4

2015, printed 2017

from the *Behold* series 2015

inkjet print, ed. 2/5

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2018

2018.37

'*Behold* was made unexpectedly and without design. I was travelling in a city [in the Middle East] that I sometimes return to, and I got to know a group of gay men. There, where they live, these men (and many others like them) are mostly left to be but only on the condition that they lead one part of their lives in secret. Rarely do their bodies ever meet in open outside, in public. Only here in this bathhouse, is their desire to be seen and embraced by others – just to be and to be held – played out in the partial openness of these four closed walls. The bathhouse no longer exists. But while it still did, these men invited me to document it and glimpse a little of their lives in it.'

– Hoda Afshar

Viva Gibb

Australian 1945–2017

Drag Queen and star of the show at Trish's Coffee Lounge, Peel Street, North Melbourne

1979

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Sybil Gibb and Rupert Duffy in memory of Viva Gibb through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2019

2019.96

Trish's Coffee Lounge was a queer venue formerly located at 126 Peel Street in North Melbourne, founded in 1975 by Trish (Jon) Barrie. Trish's wasn't a cafe in the conventional sense, and has been variously described as a coffee lounge, cabaret venue and disco that welcomed people from all walks of life.

Like many social documentary photographers active during the 1970s, including Rennie Ellis, whose work is on display nearby, Viva Gibb sought to record Melbourne's diverse urban landscape. During her visit to Trish's, Gibb captured this striking photograph of Maxine Du Barry, a drag queen who often performed at the venue. Cigarette in hand and coffee cup nearby, she looks directly into the camera.

Rennie Ellis

Australian 1940–2003

Drag queens and security guard

1973

from the *Kings Cross* series 1971

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased, 2005

2005.56

1

2

3

4

5

11

10

9

8

7

6

Mary Cockburn Mercer

Australian 1882–1963, worked throughout Europe
1920s – 1937, France 1952–63

Two women

c. 1940

watercolour over pencil on buff paper

Presented through the NGV Foundation by Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE,
Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004

2004.291

Two women is a celebration of freedom, both in style and subject matter. The face and body of the seated figure are barely defined, yet she expresses a state of complete relaxation. Her partner is reclined and asleep, her clothes draped over a chair by the end of the bed. The loosely applied watercolour washes bleed into one another and their luminous colours evoke an atmosphere of warmth. Born into a wealthy Victorian family, Mercer ran away to Paris at the age of seventeen to experience the bohemian life in Montparnasse. Although she lived with the American artist Alexander Robinson in Cassis in the early 1920s, she also had relationships with women, including the Australian artist Janet Cumbrae Stewart.

Arone Raymond Meeks

Kuku/Midigi 1957–2021

Untitled

1984

pastel

Gift of Gabriella Roy through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.718

Arone Meeks grew up in Yarrabah and El Arish (Mission Beach), Queensland. He was known for work that combined customary Aboriginal imagery with themes of sexuality, cultural values and his sense of belonging to Country. As well as an artist, Meeks was a leading advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living with HIV. Meeks and his partner were diagnosed with HIV in 1984, the same year he made this drawing. In the 1980s, little was known about HIV/AIDS and few treatment options were available. Following his diagnosis, and then the death of his partner, Meeks described his work as becoming dark and self-destructive.

Robert Mapplethorpe

American 1946–89

Alistair Butler

1980

gelatin silver photograph, artist's proof 2/3

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2016

2016.435

Robert Mapplethorpe made a number of photographs of Alistair Butler, a dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. This photograph, showing his head thrown back in a pose suggesting either repose or ecstasy, revels in Butler's body and the formal beauty of the lines. Mapplethorpe's most controversial works documented the gay male BDSM subculture of New York City in the 1960s and 1970s. He courted an ambiguity in the categorisation of his work, calling some of his own works pornographic while also celebrating their aesthetic refinement. In addition to portraiture, he is known for equally formally elegant images of flowers that are similarly sensuous. Mapplethorpe died at the age of forty-two due to complications from HIV/AIDS.

Guercino (circle of)

Italian 1591–1666

Study for a male nude reclining

17th century

black chalk

Felton Bequest, 1923

1278.985-3

Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, usually called Guercino, was one of the leading Italian painters of the seventeenth century. Many of Guercino's depictions of religious subjects merged spirituality with a powerful homoerotic sensuality, drawing simultaneously on the formality of the classical tradition and the intimacy of the studio sketch. Although Guercino's professional career is much more thoroughly documented than that of virtually any other seventeenth-century European painter, the absence of evidence around his personal life means that very little can be stated definitively, except for the fact that he never married.

George Hoyningen-Huene

Russian 1900–68, worked in England 1917–21, France 1921–35, United States 1935–68

Horst torso

1931, printed 1980s
gelatin silver photograph

Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2017

2017.38

A leading fashion photographer in the first half of the twentieth century, Russian-born George Hoyningen-Huene worked as chief photographer for *Vogue* in Paris from 1925 to 1934. In 1935 he moved to the USA, working for *Harper's Bazaar* magazine before becoming an acclaimed celebrity photographer in Hollywood. In 1930 Hoyningen-Huene met another upcoming fashion photographer, Horst P. Horst (1906–99), who for several years was his assistant, lover and, as here, model. Horst would later become a principal photographer for *Vogue* himself, before also moving to America. After splitting from Hoyningen-Huene, Horst entered a long-term same-sex relationship in 1938 with the British diplomat Valentine Lawford, which lasted until Lawford's death in 1991.

Grace Crowley

Australian 1890–1979, worked in France 1926–29

Olga 2

1928

pencil on brown paper

Bequest of the artist, 1981 P93-1981

Grace Crowley was instrumental in the development of abstract art in Australia. While studying at the Sydney Art School she met fellow artist Anne Dangar, and the two began living together in 1916. Crowley and Dangar travelled to France in 1926, and together they attended André Lhote's summer school in 1928. It was around this time that Crowley completed *Olga 2* – one of several depictions of the same model, with the final painting held by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Crowley returned to Sydney in 1930, while Dangar continued living in France. Following their separation, they maintained a close friendship, exchanging heartfelt letters in which Dangar fondly refers to Crowley as her 'Darling Smudge'.

William Mulready

Irish 1786–1863

Recumbent nude male figure on rocks

mid 19th century

watercolour

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

625-4

Artists William Mulready and John Linnell met as students at the Royal Academy in London. Between 1809 and 1811, they lived together in the village of Kensington Gravel Pits, and were often seen together, sketching workers in the local landscapes. Recently discovered letters by Mulready's wife, the landscape painter Elizabeth Varley, cast new light on the men's relationship. Varley attributed the breakdown of their marriage to Mulready's sexuality, complaining of his desire for young men and accusing him of taking a 'low boy' to his bed and of having an affair with Linnell. The letters provide the only known evidence to this effect, but the homoerotic character of many of Mulready's male nudes arguably gives further credence to the suggestion that the artist was queer.

William Etty

English 1787–1849

Seated male nude

c. 1816–18

pencil, chalk and wash

Bequest of Howard Spensley, 1939

573-4

While English artist William Etty is best known for his history paintings populated by nude women, recent scholarship has also revealed a possible homoerotic undercurrent in his work. Professor Jason Edwards of the University of York notes that Etty often met men in public bathhouses and invited them to pose nude for his work. Many of the resultant sketches and paintings convey a sensual passivity which transgresses contemporary conventions of depicting the male nude. There is no evidence to suggest that the artist, who was renowned for his extreme shyness, had ongoing romantic relationships. He recorded in his diary in 1830 that 'it is best I have not married because I have not noisy Children and can have nice Books, and Pictures etc.'

Thea Proctor

Australian 1879–1966, worked in England 1914–21

Reclining nude

c. 1941

watercolour over pencil

Gift of A. J. L. McDonnell Esq., 1962

1065-5

For much of her life, Thea Proctor lived between Australia and the UK, leading an active social life wherever she was based and often situating herself within queer artistic circles. Her relationships were of great and fleeting intensity, with abrupt disagreements often leading to their breakdowns. Proctor's art evokes the intimacy with which her relationships were imbued, particularly between women. Relaxed and exposed, the model here is shown lying in a conventionally feminine bedroom setting, removed from the formality of the artist's studio and suggesting a closeness between artist and sitter. On the floor is a single flower, perhaps a subtle allusion to female pleasure, as the flower has long been associated symbolically with the vagina.

John Singer Sargent

American 1856–1925, worked throughout Europe
1877–1925

Nude figure

early 1890s

charcoal and chalk

Gift of the artist, 1906

314-2

Born in Florence, Italy, to American parents, John Singer Sargent was the most successful portrait painter of his era. Like his compatriot and close friend, novelist Henry James, Sargent was extremely private regarding his personal life, and in the absence of documented relationships, much speculation has ensued. His circle included many of the period's most renowned dandies, including Oscar Wilde and Robert de Montesquiou. French painter Jacques-Émile Blanche, who was one of Sargent's early sitters, declared after his death that Sargent's sex life 'was notorious in Paris, and in Venice, positively scandalous. He was a frenzied bugger'. While details of his intimate encounters have never been confirmed, Sargent's many depictions of nude men certainly suggest a complex appreciation of men's bodies and sensuality.

Germaine Krull

German 1897–1985

Daretha (Dorothea) Albu

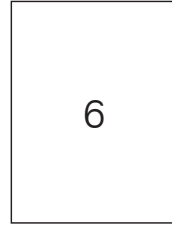
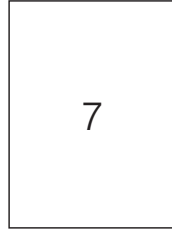
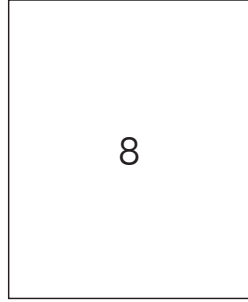
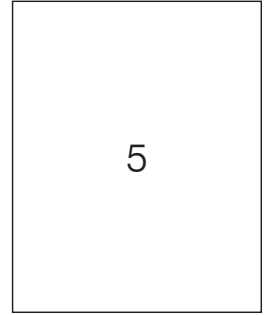
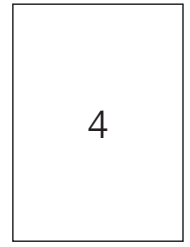
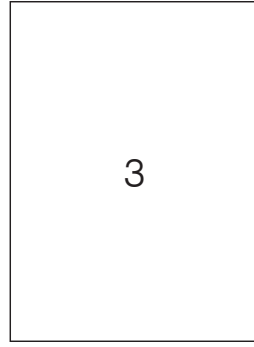
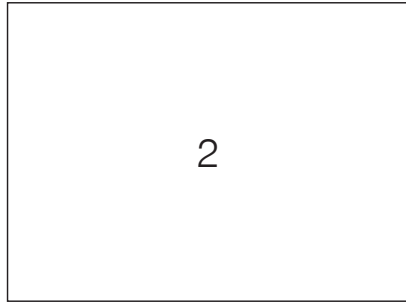
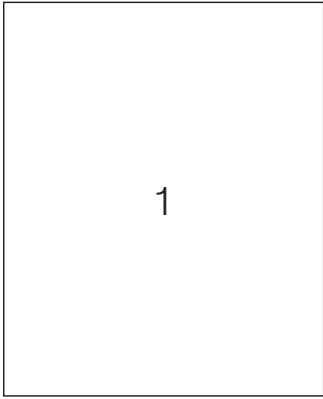
c. 1925

gelatin silver photograph

Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2020

2020.731

During the interwar years, Berlin was a city known for radical politics, avant-garde culture and an unusually open queer community. Photographer Germaine Krull embraced the life and style of the *Neue Frau* or New Woman: she was independent and adventurous, openly had intimate relationships with women and men, and continuously challenged what was deemed suitable behaviour for a woman. Krull established her Berlin studio in 1922, and among her photographs were nude studies of women. Around 1925 she was introduced to the contemporary dancer Daretha Albu by a mutual friend, costume designer Lotte Pritzel, and later photographed Albu. The result is this intimate and sensual image. Albu's tousled hair, closed eyes and relaxed stance suggest she is completely at ease.



Athol Shmith

Australian 1914–90

Sir Robert Helpmann

1952

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of
The Ian Potter Foundation, Governor, 1989

PH45-1989

Born in Mount Gambier, South Australia, ballet dancer Sir Robert Helpmann (1909–86) first trained under the great Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova, before becoming a star performer himself with J. C. Williamson Ltd. In 1932 he left Australia, joining Ninette de Valois's Vic-Wells Ballet company in London. In addition to dancing, Helpmann undertook choreography, directing and dramatic acting. He returned to Australia in 1955, acting in three Shakespeare productions with Hollywood star Katharine Hepburn. Questioned at the time about his relationship with Hepburn, Helpmann told the Australian press that she was 'the one woman I can ever imagine being married to'. In 1938 Helpmann met an aspiring English actor and future theatre director, Michael Benthall, who became his life partner.

R. B. Kitaj

American 1932–2007, worked in England 1963–97

W. H. Auden

1969

from the *First Series: Some Poets* portfolio 1966–69

colour screenprint, collage of

photo-screenprint printed in brown ink, varnish, ed. 17/70

Gift of Dr Douglas Kagi through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013

2013.474.10

Anglo-American poet W. H. Auden is renowned both for the stylistic innovation of his poetry and his pioneering engagement with politics, religion, ethics and emotion. Auden met Christopher Isherwood at boarding school; they fell in love and went on to collaborate on three plays and a book of travel writing. The pair emigrated to New York just before the war and, shortly after, Auden moved to California where he met a young poet, Chester Kallman, who was at first his lover and then a close companion. Auden dedicated both editions of his collected poetry (1945/50 and 1966) to Isherwood and Kallman. Auden's 1937 poem 'Funeral Blues' ('Stop all the clocks') is remembered as one of the greatest paeans to queer love and loss.

Angus McBean

Welsh 1904–90, worked in England 1926–90

Noël Coward

c. 1954

bromide print

Gift of Margaret Toll, 2005

2005.533

The world's highest-paid writer in the 1930s, the multi-talented Noël Coward (1899–1973) was a renowned playwright, actor, singer, composer and director. While Coward never publicly hid his queerness, he preferred not to talk about it to the press. His diaries reveal his conflict. In 1955 he wrote angrily about how 'the lethal remnants of canon law are still malevolently influential ... Emotional, uninformed prejudice can still send men to prison and ruin their lives for a crime that in the eyes of any intelligent human being is not a crime at all ... To regard homosexuality either as a disease or a vice is, we know, archaic and ignorant'. Nonetheless, he continued, 'any sexual activities when over-advertised are tasteless'.

Édouard Manet etcher

French 1832–83

Gaspard-Félix Tournachon Nadar

(after)

Charles Baudelaire, full face

1869

etching, 4th of 4 states

Gift of Ian Brown, 2017

2017.649

Early recognition of lesbian identity was strongly linked to the work of poet Charles Baudelaire, who had included lesbian subjects in his much lauded and much reviled collection, *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857), originally titled *Les Lesbiennes*. For Baudelaire and many of his (predominantly male) contemporaries, lesbianism was a source of fascination. Some explorations fall into the category of simple voyeurism – heterosexual male artists enjoying the spectacle of women's bodies and women's pleasure. Some queer male artists employed Sapphic subjects to obliquely figure their own same-sex attraction. For others the appeal was more complex: a merging of the desire to 'shock the bourgeoisie', and simultaneously to channel the sense of mystery and longing encompassed in the Sapphic poetic tradition.

Yousuf Karsh

Armenian/Canadian 1908–2002

Tennessee Williams

1956

photogravure

Gift of William T. Owen, 1971

PH352-1971

Tennessee Williams was among the most influential playwrights of his generation, exerting a transformative influence upon the representation of sexuality in twentieth-century literature. Williams began exploring his queerness in the 1930s, after some early attempts at relationships with women. His most enduring romantic relationship began in about 1949, with aspiring actor Frank Merlo. The couple lived together in Manhattan and Key West in relative harmony, leading to some of the most productive years of Williams's career. They separated after fourteen years together, but shortly thereafter Merlo was diagnosed with lung cancer, and Williams returned to care for him until his death in 1963. Following Merlo's death, Williams struggled with depression and drug addiction.

Edmond-François Aman-Jean

French 1860–1936

Paul Verlaine

1892, published 1896

lithograph

Felton Bequest, 1927

3526-3

In 1872, French poet Paul Verlaine began his first long-term same-sex relationship, though he had probably had more fleeting experiences before then. Upon receiving a letter from the younger poet Arthur Rimbaud, he replied, 'Come, dear great soul. We await you; we desire you'. Later that year, Verlaine and Rimbaud moved together to London, Verlaine having left his wife, Mathilde. Their life together was marked by excess and ultimately by conflict; both poets were regular users of absinthe and hashish, and Verlaine famously shot his lover in the wrist during an altercation. A period of imprisonment followed, during which Verlaine continued to write poetry, inspired in part by homoerotic desire, in part by Catholicism, to which he had recently converted.

William Mason

English 1724–97

Thomas Gray

1760

etching and pen and ink, retouched proof

Everard Studley Miller Bequest, 1959

486-5

The English poet and scholar Thomas Gray (1716–71) is best known for his poetic musing on death, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). Called ‘Miss Gray’ when he attended Peterhouse College in Cambridge as a young man, Gray developed a number of romantic attachments to men throughout his life. It is not known for certain whether these attachments were sexual, although this cannot be dismissed either. Two of these were friends from his school days: Horace Walpole, son of the prime minister, Robert Walpole; and Henry Tuthill, who, like Gray, became a Fellow of Peterhouse College. Tuthill was dismissed from that post in 1757 as a result of a scandal around his sexual desire for men, and later drowned himself.

Yousuf Karsh

Armenian/Canadian 1908–2002

W. Somerset Maugham

1950

photogravure

Gift of William T. Owen, 1971

PH349-1971

One of the most popular writers of his era, William Somerset Maugham addressed themes of relationships, conflict and struggle in his work, and his own life was similarly beset by difficulty. Having fostered relationships with men and women in his youth, in 1917 he married Syrie Wellcome, following an affair (and the birth of a daughter) that led to Wellcome's divorce from her first husband. However, the marriage was not a happy one, and in its wake, Maugham lived in the French Riviera with his partner Gerald Haxton until Haxton's death in 1944. His final relationship was with Alan Searle, with whom Maugham lived until his death in 1965.