



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

MEDIA CONTACTS: MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, NGV
PENNY FRANCE | 0439 543 833 | PENNY.FRANCE@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
BONNIE HORNE | 0448 369 260 | BONNIE.HORNE@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
BRIANA TOMASINO | 0408 333 399 | BRIANA.TOMASINO@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
MAE CUMING | 0499 565 528 | MAE.CUMING@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
ALICE RAYMOND | 0499 690 472 | ALICE.RAYMOND@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

Melbourne Now: Community Hall presents 350+ FREE performances, films, talks, events, workshops and more

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Fed Square | 24 March - 20 August 2023 | Free entry



22 March 2023: The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) will deliver one of its largest and most ambitious public program series ever presented as part of the large-scale, gallery-wide exhibition, *Melbourne Now*. **Community Hall** is a FREE public program series inspired by the rich history of Australian community halls, and the important role they play in Victoria's metropolitan and regional communities. At the heart of *Melbourne Now* and taking place daily from 24 March to 20 August, the program comprises of **over 350 free talks, film screenings, live performances, events, workshops, drop-in activities and more.**

The *Community Hall* program reflects on the diversity of the second edition of *Melbourne Now* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Bold in scope and scale, the exhibition highlights the extraordinary work of more than 200 Victorian-based artists, designers, studios and firms whose practices are shaping the cultural landscape of Melbourne and Victoria.

For *Community Hall*, the NGV has collaborated with a range of cultural and community organisations including Multicultural Arts Victoria, Play It Forward, Arts Project Australia, Moroccan Soup Bar, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian National Academy of Music, and the Australian Queer Archives. *Community Hall* provides an opportunity for visitors to engage with artists and designers exhibiting in *Melbourne Now*; to learn more about the projects in the exhibition and what inspired them; and experience the vibrant diversity of Melbourne's creative communities.

Highlights include the *Melbourne Now Performance Program*, which presents a suite of newly commissioned performance works by leading Melbourne-based performance artists, choreographers and dancers, including APHIDS, Alicia Frankovich, Jo Lloyd and Joel Bray. Revealing performance as an artform with deep roots and a dynamic future in Melbourne, the works will be presented in *Community Hall* across the duration of the exhibition, commencing with Alicia Frankovich on Saturdays 1, 8, 15 and 22 April.

Co-curated with Olivia Koh from recess – a Melbourne-based online platform showcasing contemporary moving-image works – **NGV x recess: Artist Film Program** comprises daily screenings in *Community Hall*. Created by 21 Melbourne-based filmmakers, the films highlight the city's breadth of talent in art-filmmaking – and the dynamism of this expanding arena of creative practice.

Community Hall will also host *Melbourne Now* artists and designers for extended residencies, enabling visitors to meet and talk with artists and designers, and gain a deeper understanding of their practices. Each month, the **Community Hall Artists in Residence** series invites a different artist or designer to facilitate and curate a range of programs inspired by their practices, including talks, workshops and more. From March, Gracia & Louise, a.k.a. Gracia Haby and Louise Jennison, will lead discussions focused on the care and protection of our local environment,

as well as workshops for visitors of all ages, including making pouches for rescued wildlife. Future residencies include Brud Studia, Rel Pham and Jenna Lee.

To coincide with **Pride Month**, every Sunday in June the NGV and the Australian Queer Archives collaborate on a series of talks, discussions and workshops. Shining a light on subjects ranging from the importance of community archives, to art as an archival practice, these programs invite community members and *Melbourne Now* artists to reflect on the challenging process of documenting, sharing and interpreting marginalised histories and experiences.

The NGV has partnered with community leader and restaurateur Hana Assafiri, founder of the Moroccan Soup Bar, to present a communal dining and conversation salon event. Serving a banquet of food and ideas, **Art and the Theatre of Narratives: Conversation Salon on 29 March** celebrates the role of the arts in progressing societies and features short pop-up performances by Moira Finucane, Samah Sabawi, Zaynab Farah, Mama Alto, Allara and Sista Sai Zanda with a Welcome to Country by Wurundjeri and Yorta-Yorta Elder and knowledge holder Aunty Zeta.

In 2022, artist and composer Mia Salsjö composed the orchestral work **A score for Fed Square** in celebration of the landmark's 20th anniversary. Commissioned by Fed Square and the NGV, the musical composition responds to the unique architecture of the Fed Square precinct. In an exclusive one-off performance on 29 April, musicians from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Cybec Assistant Conductor Carlo Antonioli, perform *A score for Fed Square* inside *Melbourne Now's Community Hall*. Before the performance, Mia Salsjö and Carlo Antonioli will discuss the project and the process of composing and performing the work, in a conversation hosted by NGV Curator Katharina Prugger.

Celebrating the opening weekend of *Melbourne Now* on 25 and 26 March, NGV will present two days of more than 25 free talks, tours and conversations led by NGV curators and featuring exhibiting artists and designers, exploring the city's diverse creativity and innovation. Activities in *Community Hall* on the opening day of *Melbourne Now* on 24 March include celebration of the role that international students play in the cultural life of Melbourne, with drawing activities led by NGV Community Ambassadors and a panel discussion featuring current and former international students including artist Scotty So.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'Presented as part of *Melbourne Now*, the extraordinary *Community Hall* program represents one of our most ambitious public program offerings to date with more than 350 free events. *Community Hall* provides a vital place for all members of our community to connect with one another, and to engage more deeply with the art and design on display. We're especially delighted to be partnering with a number of important cultural and community organisations – including many for the very first time – enabling the NGV to welcome as many members from our diverse creative community as possible.'

Melbourne Now will be on display from 24 March to 20 August 2023 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Fed Square, Melbourne. Free entry. For full details of the *Community Hall* program, please visit the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/melbourne-now)

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IMAGES: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/xk4xe5ifqpb6gvlja1hf/h?dl=0&rlkey=7pysdow297y95r8jhe9tkj75q>

Image credits: Joel Bray *Daddy* 2019 (still); Amita Kirpalani, Curator, Contemporary Art, NGV and Nadia Hernandez, artist at *Nadia Hernandez - In Conversation* at NGV Australia. Image: Tobias Titz; Tina Stefanou *There is a Dead Rabbit Under the Greek Family Unit* 2022 (still)

Media Contacts:

Penny France, Media Manager, NGV

0439 543 833 | penny.france@ngv.vic.gov.au

Bonnie Horne, Media and Public Affairs Officer, NGV

0448 369 260 | bonnie.horne@ngv.vic.gov.au

Briana Tomasino, Media and Public Affairs Officer, NGV

0408 333 399 | briana.tomasino@ngv.vic.gov.au

Mae Cuming, Media and Public Affairs Assistant, NGV

0499 565 528 | mae.cuming@ngv.vic.gov.au

Alice Raymond, Media and Public Affairs Assistant, NGV

0499 690 472 | alice.raymond@ngv.vic.gov.au

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