
NGV NEWS

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12 OCTOBER

Luminous Cities: Photographs of the Built Environment

22 October 2010 – 13 March 2011

NGV International, St Kilda Road

On 22 October the National Gallery of Victoria will open *Luminous Cities*, a fascinating exhibition that examines the various ways photographers have viewed cities as historical sites, bustling modern hubs and architectural utopias since the nineteenth century.

Frances Lindsay, Deputy Director, NGV said: "Through the work of a range of photographers *Luminous Cities* will take viewers on a fascinating journey around the world, into the streets, buildings and former lives of great international cities.



"Drawn from the NGV collection, *Luminous Cities* includes works by renowned photographers Eugene Atget, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Berenice Abbott, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Bill Brandt, Lee Friedlander and Grant Mudford amongst many others.

"The exhibition will also extend into our contemporary gallery space where an outstanding selection of works by celebrated contemporary artists such as Bill Henson, Andreas Gursky and Jon Cattapan will be on display," said Ms Lindsay.

Through examples from the mid 19th century, *Luminous Cities* explores the relationship between photographer, architect and archaeologist with photos of Athens, Rome and Pompeii. This was also a time when great cities such as London and Paris underwent unprecedented renewal and expansion, photography served to document new constructions and also presented heroic, inspirational visions of new cities emerging from old.

Susan van Wyk, Curator, Photography, NGV said: "The works on display in *Luminous Cities* describe the physical attributes of cities, offer insights into the creative imaginations of architects and photographers, and embody the zeitgeist of their times."

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New York, one of the great 20th century cities, was a captivating subject for generations of photographers. Through the work of architects and the images photographers made of the city, New York became synonymous with its skyline. The images of renowned photographers including Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand and Berenice Abbott show the pictorial possibilities of the modern city in photographs that embody the dynamism of the city that never sleeps.

The contemporary art works included in *Luminous Cities* explore the creative ways in which artists imagine and represent the cityscape. Vast glittering panoramas taken from bustling urban communities, sprawling architectural structures and fictitious landscapes all combine to reveal fascinating insights into both physical and psychological geographies.

Ms van Wyk said: “At the end of the 20th century a much cooler, more abstracted strain of photography emerged. Photographs in the exhibition from this period range from the formalism of the 1970s to more recent cinematic visions of the nocturnal city.”

Luminous Cities: Photographs of the Built Environment will be on display from 22 October 2010 – 13 March 2011 at NGV International, St Kilda Road. Open 10am–5pm. Closed Tuesdays. Free Entry.

For further information on exhibition programs visit ngv.vic.gov.au

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Image caption:

Eugene Atget, French 1857–1927, *Coin de la rue Valette et Pantheon, 5e arrondissement, matinee de mars 1925*, printed 1978
gelatin silver photograph 17.8 x 23.7 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1980