



ManStyle

Opening 11 March, the National Gallery of Victoria will showcase the first exhibition in Australia to focus on men's fashion from the 18th century to the present day.

Drawn largely from the NGV Collection, *ManStyle* will feature over 80 works including outfits and a selection of paintings exploring influential ideas in menswear over the past three centuries.

Charting a course between flamboyant display and absolute restraint, the exhibition begins in the 18th century with the evolution of the modern suit and concludes with contemporary outfits from today's menswear designers.

ManStyle will explore the elegantly honed lines and details of the dandy in the 19th century, a period which heralded the rise of tailoring.

This exhibition will include recent works by contemporary designers such as Hedi Slimane for

Dior Homme, who have drawn upon this legacy of exacting tailoring for a new generation of young men.

Roger Leong, Curator, International Fashion and Textiles, NGV said: "Men's fashion is often seen as bound by tradition when in fact it has undergone a number of profound changes that reflect the shifting attitudes to class, sexuality, work and leisure over the past three centuries.

"From the beginnings of the modern suit in the 18th century to 20th century sportswear, sub-cultural attire and street wear, men's fashion has continued to transform in style and function to the present day," said Mr Leong.

The most dramatic changes to men's fashion occurred during the 1960s when designers such as Pierre Cardin challenged convention by creating streamlined Space-Age style outfits. Likewise, the 'peacock revolution' of this era reintroduced the phenomenon of the decorated man, adorned with colour, pattern and texture.

Katie Somerville, Curator, Australian Fashion and Textiles, NGV said the House of Merivale was Australia's answer to this new, colourful trend.

"Embodying the Carnaby Street look and style of bands like The Beatles, design houses such as Biba and the House of Merivale dressed men in flamboyant, body-hugging suits with wide flared trousers and shirts of contrasting patterns.

"During this period men 'dressed up', preened and flaunted their bodies in a new display of ostentatious masculine style.

By the late 1970s, men's style had fractured into a heady mix of alternatives. *ManStyle* features works by Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren, who defined the punk era with their ripped and distressed clothes plastered with offensive and anarchic slogans and symbols.

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This exhibition also captures the intense mood of the 1980s; which witnessed an outpouring of creativity across the spectrum of art, music and fashion, unleashing ideas from underground club cultures that reconfigured ideas about men's sexuality.

"Today, new and traditional modes of dressing are continually merging to challenge our view of masculinity and contemporary style. *ManStyle*, it seems, offers greater possibilities than ever before," said Ms Somerville.

Gerard Vaughan, NGV Director said: "By defining these periods in men's fashion, visitors will be able to discover the contrasting identities men have experimented with over the past three centuries.

"Visitors will be mesmerised and surprised by the richness of works in this Australia-first exhibition, showcasing the NGV's magnificent Collection of this otherwise under-documented genre."

ManStyle will be on display at the National Gallery of Victoria's two locations. NGV Australia will look at transformations in the history of tailoring, beginning with the notion of the dandy— a gallant man who put a lot of effort into a flawless appearance. The most famous dandy was Beau Brummell (1778-1840) who was always immaculately dressed, seeking to reflect an aristocratic style of life.

The display at NGV International will focus on the peacock male, tracing a history of sartorial decoration and display that has its roots in the Renaissance and Tudor eras, and which was spectacularly revived during the 1960s when plain dark suits were discarded in favour of colour, cravats and frilled collars. Since then, the peacock phenomenon has continued to surface with vivid intensity.

This exhibition will feature works by Vivienne Westwood, Jean Paul Gaultier, Morrissey & Edmiston, Leigh Bowery, Walter Van Beirendonck, Romance Was Born, Bernhard Willhelm, Rick Owens, Pierre Cardin, Biba and many more.

***ManStyle* will be on display at NGV International, St Kilda Rd (11 March to 30 October 2011) and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square (11 March to 27 November 2011).** Admission is free.

An illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition examining men's dress. Interviews with key menswear designers including Luke Sales of Romance Was Born, Walter Van Beirendonck, Rick Owens, Benny Castles of World and Oswald Boateng will feature in the catalogue.

Support Sponsors: Sofitel Melbourne On Collins, Lavazza and Sanpellegrino

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Image caption: Des Kirwan (designer) born Australia 1965 James Lynch (decorator) born United States 1966 Unknown (maker) *Punk outfit* c. 1983–84 (detail) leather, cotton, metal, rubber, plastic, paint, fur, found badges, wool, blood (a) 64.0 cm (centre back), 58.0 cm (sleeve length) (jacket) (b) 104.0cm (outer leg), 36.5 cm (waist, flat) (trousers)(m) 64.0 cm (centre back) (t-shirt) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1984