

22 NOVEMBER 2010

## ***The Naked Face: Self-portraits***

**3 December 2010 – 27 February 2011**

**The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia**

This December, the National Gallery of Victoria will open *The Naked Face: Self-portraits*, a compelling exhibition which takes an in-depth look at how self-portraits have shaped our perceptions of the artist and human identity.

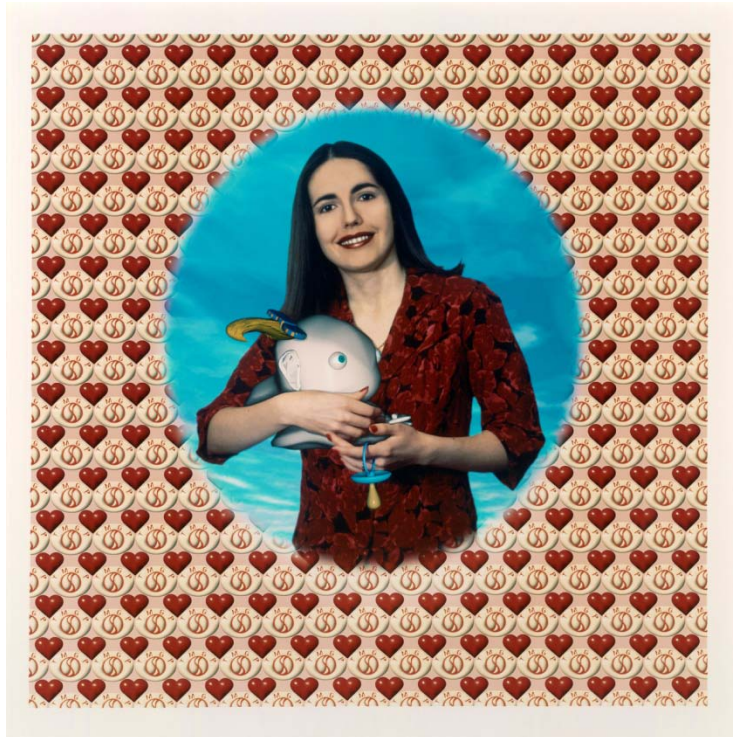
Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director, NGV said: “*The Naked Face* will showcase superb and fascinating examples of self-portraiture seen in both our international and Australian art collections.

“This strong group of self-portraits highlights the breadth of the NGV Collection and also offers visitors a chance to explore the history of western art and society over the last 500 years through the artist’s perception of self,” said Dr Vaughan.

With 150 works, this exhibition will reveal how artists have used self-portraiture to embellish their social status, illustrate their artistic talent, portray and influence popular culture and document their lifestyle.

Dr Vivien Gaston, the exhibition’s Guest Curator, said: “This exhibition will have broad appeal to viewers. From infancy humans are instinctively driven to recognise and relate to the human face. With boundless curiosity, we search for the naked face that will tell us the naked truth.”

Drawn entirely from the NGV Collection, this exhibition will display many works by celebrated Australian artists such as Hugh Ramsay, Mike Parr, John Brack and Peter Booth, as well as spectacular self-portraits by international artists such as Rembrandt, Edward Steichen, Cindy Sherman and Coco Chanel. Contemporary works are presented alongside masterpieces in memorable and provocative visual comparisons.



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# NGV NEWS

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“Self-portraits not only illuminate the artists but evoke their connections with others and the world around them. The works show how artists depict themselves with family or loved ones, or as immersed in nature in a way that enhances their sense of self,” said Dr Gaston.

*The Naked Face* investigates self-portraiture through symbolic, psychological and aesthetic themes including: identity in the studio, performance, myth and psyche, scrutiny, empathy, and touch and trace.

A rich diversity of paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and fashion, illustrates dramatic historical changes in self-imaging.

Dr Gaston said that the exhibition concludes with a radical view of how self-portraits embody the artist, not only by revealing the direct trace of the artist’s hand but also the personal imprint of their body.

Dr Vaughan said: “This outstanding exhibition showcases many of the great treasures in the NGV Collection, some of which have not been on display in recent times, and is not to be missed.”

To accompany this exhibition, the NGV is publishing a richly illustrated and thought-provoking book *The Naked Face: Self-portraits* by Dr Vivien Gaston, with contributions by other curators. RRP \$49.95.

*The Naked Face: Self-portraits* will be on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia from 3 December 2010 to 27 February 2011. Open 10am – 5pm. Closed Mondays. Free entry.

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#### IMAGE CAPTIONS:

**Patricia Piccinini** born Sierra Leone 1965, lived in Italy 1968–72, arrived Australia 1972 *First satisfied customer from The mutant genome project, 1994–* (1995) type C photograph 79.6 x 80.0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by Michaels Camera and Video on the occasion of the inaugural Still Photography? conference, 1995  
© Patricia Piccinini

**Joseph Wright of Derby** England 1734–97, lived in Italy 1773–75. *Self-portrait* (c. 1770) oil on canvas 71.1 x 60.9 cm Gift of Alina Cade in memory of her husband Joseph Wright Cade, 2009