



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

MEDIA CONTACTS: MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, NGV

MARION JOSEPH | 03 8620 2346 | 0427 147 999 | MARION.JOSEPH@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

ELISABETH ALEXANDER | 03 8620 2347 | ELISABETH.ALEXANDER@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

NGV Festival of Photography

William Eggleston Portraits

NGV International | 17 March – 18 June 2017 | Free entry



Direct from the National Portrait Gallery in London, the National Gallery of Victoria will present the Australian premiere of *William Eggleston Portraits*, the first major exhibition devoted to the portraits of the ground-breaking American photographer, who is regarded as a pioneer of colour photography.

The exhibition brings together more than 100 works by Eggleston, who is renowned for his vivid, poetic and enigmatic images of people in diners, petrol stations, phone booths and supermarkets.

Highlights include Eggleston's hypnotic portraits of locals taken in towns across the American South, a previously unseen image of The Clash frontman Joe Strummer and a never-before-exhibited portrait of the actor and photographer Dennis Hopper. The exhibition also comprises a selection of never-before-seen vintage black and white photographs from the 1960s taken in and around the artist's home in Memphis, Tennessee.

Eggleston is celebrated for his use of colour photography, which he began experimenting with in the late 1960s. Eggleston's 1976 exhibition *Colour Photographs*, held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, is considered a pivotal moment in the development of

colour photography as a contemporary art form and widely credited with increasing recognition of the medium.

Since first picking up a camera in 1957, Eggleston has photographed his family, friends and the people that he encountered in his everyday life, particularly in his native Memphis. Eggleston is said to find the beauty in the everyday and his work has inspired many present day photographers, artists and filmmakers, including Martin Parr, Sofia Coppola, David Lynch and Juergen Teller.

'The work of William Eggleston has made an indelible impact of the medium of photography through his groundbreaking and striking use of colour. Eggleston's images reveal the hidden beauty in our day to day lives and have an powerful, vibrant aesthetic that has influenced many subsequent generations,' said Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV.

William Eggleston Portraits features friends, musicians, actors and rarely seen images of Eggleston's own family. It provides a unique window on the artist's home life, allowing visitors to see how public and private portraiture came together in Eggleston's work. It also reveals, for the first time, the identities of many sitters who have until now remained anonymous.

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Between 1960 and 1965, Eggleston worked exclusively in black and white. People were his primary subject, caught unawares while going about ordinary tasks. In the 1970s, Eggleston increasingly frequented the Memphis night club scene, developing friendships and getting to know musicians and artists. His fascination with club culture resulted in the experimental video *Stranded in Canton*, a selection of which is on view at the exhibition. *Stranded in Canton* chronicles visits to bars in Memphis, Mississippi and New Orleans.

Eggleston is renowned for his experimentation with dye-transfer printing, a commercial printing technique that produces highly saturated colour images. The use of this technique resulted in some of Eggleston's most arresting and vibrant photographs, including the *Untitled* photograph showing Frank Zition sitting alone on a motel room bed.

Also on display will be a monumental, one and a half metre wide print of the artist's uncle, Adyn Schuyler Senior, with his assistant Jasper Staples in Cassidy Bayou, Mississippi and Devoe Money in Jackson, Mississippi from the landmark book *Eggleston's Guide* (1976).

William Eggleston Portraits will be on display at NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, Australia from 17 March to 18 June 2017 as part of the inaugural *NGV Festival of Photography*. Entry is free.

William Eggleston Portraits organised by the National Portrait Gallery, London, with support from the artist and the Eggleston Artistic Trust and presented by the National Gallery of Victoria.

NGV FESTIVAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARCH 2017

The inaugural *NGV Festival of Photography* in 2017 will be the largest display of photography in the NGV's history. Presented across multiple galleries at both NGV International and NGV Australia, the festival will feature solo exhibitions by **William Eggleston, Bill Henson, Patrick Pound, Zoë Croggon** and **Ross Coulter**, alongside dedicated displays, events and programs.

The *NGV Festival of Photography* will highlight new acquisitions of international and Australian photographers' works, which have been actively collected by the NGV in recent years, including the work of **Elad Lassry, Sophie Calle, Polly Borland, Pieter Hugo** and **Thomas Demand** amongst others. The festival will provide audiences an opportunity to be truly immersed in new works encompassing digitally produced prints as well as film based projects by both established and emerging artists.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Marion Joseph, Head of Media and Public Affairs, NGV

03 8620 2346 | 0427 147 999 | marion.joseph@ngv.vic.gov.au

Tim Jones, Publicist, Media and Public Affairs, NGV

03 8620 2497 | 0412 620 003 | tim.jones@ngv.vic.gov.au

Image Caption:

Untitled (Memphis, Tennessee), c.1969-71

Dye-transfer print, 55.5 x 36.8cm

Wilson Centre for Photography

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