



## MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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# Bowery Ball at NGV: A celebration of queer performance art, fashion and Leigh Bowery's legacy as a global queer icon

NGV International | 22 March 2024 | Ticketed

**23 November 2023:** A show-stopping, late-night queer party featuring drag, burlesque, voguing, music and performance art, the **Bowery Ball** will be held at NGV International on Friday 22 March 2024.

Named in honour of Melbourne-born iconoclast Leigh Bowery – famed twentieth-century performance artist, fashion designer and nightclub impresario – the Bowery Ball celebrates the vibrant creativity and buoyant self-expression of Victoria's LGBTIQ+ community.

The Bowery Ball features performances from an array of Australia's most talented contemporary artists, musicians and provocateurs, including Logie-nominated drag diva **Art Simone**, award-winning burlesque "supervillain" **Ruby Slippers**, jazz pianist virtuoso **Rosie Rai**, and the drag king alter-egos of Danni Ray and Keely Windred, **Dazza and Keif**.



The Ball transforms the entire ground floor of NGV International into a utopia of queer art, music and performance. The Great Hall forms the beating heart of the event, with mainstage performances late into the evening from nightclub host and costumier **Bettie Rosé**, multi-award-winning sideshow artist **Elle Diablo** and more.

The NGV Garden Restaurant will become a swanky piano bar, with low tables and chairs creating a space for more intimate performances and storytelling. The Garden Restaurant will host performances by NAIDOC Pride Award-winner **2Joocee**, **Krayola** and more throughout the evening.

Coinciding with the NGV Triennial, a large-scale exhibition of contemporary art, design and architecture from around the world, the Bowery Ball will also feature tongue-in-cheek tours of the exhibition by some of the night's performers, including **Granny Bingo** stalwarts Edith Vale (Thomas Jaspers), Maureen McGillicuddy (Kyle Minall) and Caroline Springs (Scott Brennan), as well as drag superstars **Lazy Susan**, **Zelda Moon** and Art Simone.

The dress code will encourage guests to draw on Bowery's iconic personal style and boundary pushing repertoire of ensembles to create their own looks honouring the legendary designer. Guests can show off their looks on the Waterwall's pink carpet and media wall.

Throughout the entire evening, guests may indulge in **Pommery Champagne** and further all-inclusive food and beverages.

**Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV said:** 'A legacy of the landmark 2022 exhibition, *QUEER: Stories from the NGV Collection*, the Bowery Ball recognises the important contribution of the LGBTIQ+ community to Melbourne's local art history, as well as their indelible impact on global arts and culture. We hope the Bowery Ball will be a safe space for the community to express themselves with pride.'

American Express Card Members can access pre-sale tickets to the Bowery Ball on **4 December**. Visit: [www.amex.com.au/experiences](http://www.amex.com.au/experiences)

General sale tickets on sale **7 December via the NGV website:** [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/bowery-ball/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/bowery-ball/)  
**Ticket price: \$175**

The Bowery Ball will take place on Friday 22 March 2024 from 8.00PM at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

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**IMAGES:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/tyom5em6l61sb2j4w597q/h?rlkey=21m8dj8mmtu8z8tzb3mdkhlq&dl=0>

**ABOUT LEIGH BOWERY**

Born in Sunshine in Melbourne's western suburbs, Bowery moved to London in 1980 at the age of 19 and quickly gained renown in the underground club scene with his performances that rejected conventions of identity, gender and sexuality. In 1985, he opened Taboo nightclub in London's Leicester Square. While it was not an exclusively queer venue, Taboo attracted a predominantly queer crowd, largely due to Bowery's interest in experimental fashion and performance.

Simultaneously, his striking and larger-than-life designs attracted critical acclaim in the fashion industry and in international media. In 1990, Bowery art directed and appeared in Boy George's music video Generations of Love. Bowery went on to form two bands, Raw Sewage with Stella Stein and Sheila Tequila, and Minty with Richard Torry, Nicola Bateman and Matthew Glamorre. Shortly after his marriage to Nicola Bateman, in 1994, Bowery died at the age of 33 from AIDS-related complications.

Bowery's legacy lives on today continuing to be sampled in art, fashion and popular culture with designers including John Galliano, Alexander McQueen, and Vivien Westwood referencing his work in their collections while his clubbing influence can be seen in contemporary club kid and drag culture across cities around the world.

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