

Simply gourd-geous: monumental Yayoi Kusama *Dancing Pumpkin* sculpture unveiled ahead of exhibition opening 15 December

Yayoi Kusama | NGV International, St Kilda Road | 15 December 2024 to 21 April 2025 | Ticketed



Saturday 9 November 2024: A towering 5-metre-tall bronze pumpkin sculpture by Yayoi Kusama, weighing more than nine tonnes, was unveiled today in NGV International's Federation Court, marking the countdown to the major summer exhibition *Yayoi Kusama*, opening 15 December 2024. The newly acquired *Dancing Pumpkin*, 2020, supported by the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, features eleven 'dancing' yellow-and-black polka-dotted legs.

Kusama first became fascinated with pumpkins as a young girl growing up on her family's seed and plant farm in Matsumoto in regional Japan. The pumpkin motif has become an icon throughout Kusama's vast career, appearing in drawings, paintings, sculptures and immersive mirror rooms created by the artist across her more than eight-decade-long career.

Dancing Pumpkin is one of Kusama's largest and most ambitious imaginings of the pumpkin to date. Taking her iconic motif into new conceptual terrain, the larger-than-life legs appear to twist and hover in the air, suggesting joyous movement. At NGV International, visitors can go underneath the sculpture and experience Kusama's beloved pumpkin from a new perspective.

The *Dancing Pumpkin* makes its Australian debut as part of the world-premiere blockbuster exhibition *Yayoi Kusama*. Only two editions of the work have been shown previously around the world, at the New York Botanical Garden in 2021 and at the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar in 2022–3.

The work is one of many free-to-access artworks also on display at NGV International in celebration of the exhibition, including interactive work *The Obliteration Room*, 2002–present, in the NGV children's gallery; *Narcissus Garden*, 1966/2024, a sprawling installation of 1,400 mirrored spheres in Federation Court; and a brand new pink-and-black polka dot artwork developed especially for the iconic NGV waterwall.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV said: 'We're delighted to unveil Yayoi Kusama's breathtaking *Dancing Pumpkin* sculpture ahead of our major exhibition surveying the artist's groundbreaking career. The newly acquired work, supported through the generosity of the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, will leave a defining impact on the NGV Collection and will be available for all Victorians to enjoy for many years to come.'

Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events said: 'Bringing the *Yayoi Kusama* exhibition to Melbourne is a testament to our city's standing as a global arts destination, as well as being a powerful economic driver - attracting visitors who support our local restaurants, hotels and entertainment venues. This exhibition is part of an unforgettable upcoming line-up of major events – which also includes ALWAYS LIVE, *Beetlejuice The Musical* and the *Frida Kahlo In Her Own Image* exhibition in Bendigo.'

Colin Brooks, Minister for Creative Industries said: 'Bold, bright and coming to Melbourne this summer, the work of iconic Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama is set to delight audiences of all ages. Victorians can now get a taste of what's

to come, with the first artwork – a large public sculpture *Dancing Pumpkin* – now on display at NGV International and free for everyone to enjoy.’

Nina Taylor, Member for Albert Park said: ‘The *Yayoi Kusama* exhibition will be the largest showcase of Kusama’s work ever to be presented in Australia and is set to be a blockbuster summer attraction, drawing visitors from around the country - and beyond - to the creative state.’

Displayed across the entire ground floor of NGV International, *Yayoi Kusama* is one of the most comprehensive retrospective exhibitions of the artist’s work ever presented globally. The exhibition traces her entire career – from her childhood to the present-day – through a rich selection of works drawn from the artist’s personal collection and institutions and private collections across Japan and Australia. Featuring painting, sculpture, collage, fashion, film and installation, the exhibition reveals the astonishing breadth of Kusama’s multidisciplinary practice.

Born in Japan in 1929, Kusama is one of the world’s most important and recognised practitioners working today. She is renowned globally for her singular and idiosyncratic use of pattern, colour and symbols to create immersive, thought-provoking and intensely personal works of art. She has made indelible contributions to key art movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including minimalism, pop art and feminist art.

The *Dancing Pumpkin* sculpture is now on display at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. **FREE** entry.

Yayoi Kusama will be on display from 15 December 2024 to 21 April 2025 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Entry fees apply. Tickets and information are available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au)

@ngvmelbourne #NGV #NGVKusama

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DANCING PUMPKIN IMAGES:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/hjmxeyhxlz6nj8uv75d60/AMvkJYI9y0utaLo6fmrNQcM?rlkey=fmbej0955hxsjxbqbgdqbgc9s&st=hj34raq0&dl=0>

YAYOI KUSAMA EXHIBITION PRESS BANK:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/860vqysp221xbvy5ljxu4/ABO2leJ18ttfcpVe_YdVw_s?rlkey=4iqehaypnsq06nqt6712rdlpf&st=7m4hpg9t&dl=0

IMAGE CAPTION: Yayoi Kusama’s *Dancing Pumpkin* 2020 now on display for the *Yayoi Kusama* exhibition at NGV International, Melbourne until 21 April 2025. © YAYOI KUSAMA. Photo: Sean Fennessy

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