

A STUDY GUIDE BY FIONA HALL



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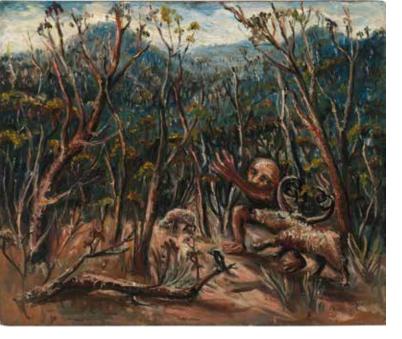
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Arthur Boyd, The Hunter I, 1944 (detail)

Synopsis

We all have a sense of who we are – of what makes an Australian, of what makes Australia. A musician explains it with sound, a writer with words. Artists with paint and pigment, clay and canvas, camera and film. Art invites us to see things not as they are, but as they appear – full of meaning and emotion – to artists. Australian landscape art invites us to see our land through the eyes of artists. Indigenous, colonial, contemporary artists, all have created a rich reaction to the drama, the beauty, the harshness of Australia's landscape; their art is ours to share. Hanging Australia is an invitation to enter their world and explore their Australia.

Those who have drawn inspiration from the shapes, colours, light and shade of our landscape are the subject of this program, their work is our story. The selection of more than two hundred works, for exhibition at London's Royal Academy in an exhibition simply called *Australia*, was as we learn not without controversy. But it is this selection that gives us the representation of Australia which forms the structure of the program.

As we follow the chronology of packing, shipping, unpacking, hanging and responding to the reaction to the largest exhibition of Australian art ever sent overseas, we also investigate particular works, and their artists, to see how key subjects that sum up Australia have been understood through our history.

As the exhibition takes to the road – to travel from the National Gallery in Canberra to the airport in Sydney for dispatch to Britain – so we consider 'the road' as a motif in Australian art. And not just the road through the bush or through a suburb a century ago, but a video installation which will greet visitors to the London exhibition and express Australian art in the twenty-first century.

When we examine paintings from the exhibition that

express artists' understanding of the city – to which, in the end, all roads lead – we meet some of the best-known names in Australian art of the modern era – Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin and pioneer photographer Harold Cazneaux.

The journey of our collection reaches London. Our journey through the best of Australian landscape art reaches the barren interior of the driest inhabited continent – and we meet the work of Russell Drysdale and his possibly even better-known contemporary Sidney Nolan, whose iconic Ned Kelly adorns the posters for the exhibition plastered on the walls of the London Underground stations.

John Olsen's hugely dramatic (and, as it turns out, by one influential London critic hugely misunderstood) painting of the sun is hung over the heads of visitors to the Royal Academy. The centrality of the sun in our experience leads us to look at visions of the beach and Australia's beach culture before, by contrast, we turn inland for visions and versions of pastoral Australia.

We have heard from artists and from curators as the artworks have made their journey – from the gallery walls of Australia to the gallery walls of London. And as the exhibition opens we hear from those confronted by *Australia*; the casual visitor, the critic, the member of London's notoriously critical art establishment.

But what they make of *Australia* is less important than what the art makes of our country and invites us to make of ourselves.























Above:

Royal Academy, Photograph by Mike Craven Todd (detail)

Right top:

Adam Worrall, Assistant Director — Exhibitions and Collection Services, National Gallery of Australia (photograph by Paul Simpson)

Curriculum Links

The curriculum areas that *Hanging Australia* can be linked to include:

- 1. The learning area of The Arts
- 2. The learning area of English

Specific links to the Australian Curriculum:

» 1. THE LEARNING AREA OF THE ARTS

At Level 10, students use evaluation and reflection on their arts experiences to improve the making and presenting of their arts works. They maintain a record of their exploration, development and refining of ideas, use of elements and principles and/or conventions and application of techniques and processes when making and presenting their arts works.

When exploring and responding, students focus on the development of knowledge and understanding of key concepts, techniques, processes and practices associated with particular arts forms. They develop aesthetic and critical awareness through observation, research, discussion and analysis of arts works from different social, historical and cultural contexts. They compare arts works to consider similarities and differences in the styles, themes,

Right middle:

Franchesca Cubillo, Senior Advisor – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, National Gallery of Australia (photograph by Paul Simpson)

Right bottom:

Dr Ron Radford AM, (former) Director, National Gallery of Australia (photograph by Paul Simpson)

intentions and aesthetic qualities of works by particular artists and arts works made at a particular time within specific cultural contexts. They develop skills in presenting and justifying personal interpretations of, and opinions about, arts works using appropriate arts language. They investigate and discuss the contribution of the arts to society and other disciplines, such as Mathematics and History, focusing on ways contemporary, and traditional arts disciplines, forms and works reinforce and challenge social, cultural, personal and artistic practices and values.

The above concepts can be explored in close relation to the ideas and art works presented in *Hanging Australia*.

» 2. THE LEARNING AREA OF ENGLISH

Hanging Australia can be used as a supplementary text when studying themes of identity and belonging, as well as landscape, in English from Years 10 – 12.

Level 10 English Content Descriptions particularly applicable to 'Hanging Australia':

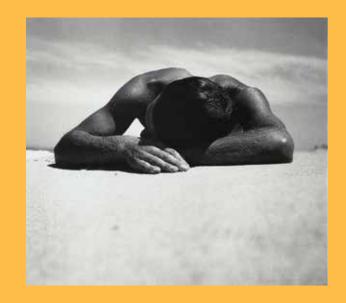
Reading & Viewing (Literature):

- Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639)
- Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812)

Pre-viewing Activities

Before viewing *Hanging Australia*, students should be directed to take notes on the following 7 themes which formed the basis for selecting and organising the exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. Students will refer back to these notes when completing the Post-Viewing Activities:

- 1. The Road
- 2. The City
- 3. The Desert
- 4. The Bush
- 5. The Sun
- 6. The Beach
- 7. Pastoral Australia



Above:

Max Dupain, *Sunbaker*, 1937 (printed 1975) (detail)

Below top:

Charles Conder, *Bronte Beach*, 1888 (detail)

Below middle:

Charles Conder, *Herrick's Blossoms*, c.1888 (detail)

Below bottom:

Arthur Streeton, *Golden Summer, Eaglemont*, 1889 (detail)



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Post-Viewing Activities

Break students in small groups and present the following overall discussion questions to each group. Whole class discussion can then be had in response to the ideas generated in small groups:

- The 'Australia' exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London was the most comprehensive exhibition of Australian art ever to leave our shores. How difficult do you sense it was to select the 200 or so pieces which represented '200 years of Art in modern Australia'?
- Although the exhibition was curated by the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, more than half the works came from state and regional galleries throughout Australia. What concerns do you think these galleries may have had when permitting their works to be part of 'Australia'?
- Dr Ron Radford AM, then Director of the National Gallery of Australia said: "The British tend to believe Australians don't have any art." What values and assumptions underlie this statement and how does it make you feel?
- How did some of the critics respond? Why might this be? Read the following two articles reviewing the exhibition and discuss the criticisms levelled at the exhibition. What are your feelings about these responses? http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/cascade-of-diarrhoea-uk-critic-savages-australian-art-exhibition-20130923-2u8g4.html http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/australias-london-art-spectacular-is-a-clumsy-embarrassment-20130918-2tztt.html?rand=1379900113113



Left:

Nicholas Chevalier, Mount Arapiles and the Mitre Rock, 1863 (detail)

Below left:

Sidney Nolan, Glenrowan, 1946 (detail)

Below right:

George W. Lambert, The Squatter's Daughter, 1923–1924 (detail)





- Dr Anna Gray, Head of Australian Art and Senior Curator of Australian Painting and Sculpture Before 1920 at the National Gallery of Australia states that she hoped the exhibition would help the British "...get a better sense of our landscape and the diversity of our landscape. It's not just beach, it's not just outback, we have cities as well." Do you think the pieces selected for the exhibition would have achieved this?
- Dr Gray refers to 'the sense of humility (Australians)
 have in relationship with our land. We know it is bigger
 than us'. What do you think this statement means and
 do you share this feeling?

» THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE AND ART

The story of Australian art is inextricably linked to its landscape: an ancient land of dramatic beauty, at times loaded with mystery and danger. For Australian artists, this deep connection with the landscape has provided a rich source of inspiration for centuries. In 1948, the Australian artist, Sidney Nolan said of his iconic Ned Kelly series that it was 'a story arising out of the bush and ending in the bush'. He believed strongly that an understanding of landscape was central to his work, giving meaning to place, and commented that he found 'the desire to paint the landscape involves a wish to hear more of the stories that take place in the landscape'.

ACTIVITIES

- Students are to select and respond to one of the following prompts. Students can write in an expository or creative style and must refer to directly to at least one of the art works contained in the Australia exhibition in their response:
- The landscape of the imagination draws on the physical landscape.
- The place in which we live has an impact on our understanding of the world.
- Landscapes challenge our sense of belonging.
- Our memories of a landscape have the power to transform
- The meaning of a landscape changes over time.







- The way we view the landscape we live in reflects our hopes and fears.
- Landscapes are not static, neutral places. We are able to transform them in our minds.
- Our vision of the landscape reflects our vision of ourselves.
- Our lives can be explained in terms of literal and metaphorical landscapes.
- We spend our lives digging for meaning, grappling physically, mentally and emotionally with our daily environments.
- With reference to the seven themes of the 'Australia' exhibition, students are to select three pieces for each of the themes and complete the following activities in relation to the Australian landscape (see Table 1 on page 8). Students are to present their work to each other in small groups.

» THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ART

A national identity or image is a picture we have in our minds of what particular nationalities are like. Art has helped define and reflect our national identity as Australians. In the nineteenth century an exploration of

Above left:

Conrad Martens, *View of Sydney from Neutral Bay*, c.1857 (detail)

Above right:

Eugene Von Guérard, *North-east* View from the Northern Top of Mount Kosciusko, 1863 (detail)

national identity allowed artists a freedom to define themselves, away from the rules of the European tradition. That focus on the unique Australian landscape and its complex, deep-rooted connections to national identity, has continued in the work of Australian artists to the present day.

ACTIVITIES

- Students are to select and respond to one of the following prompts in relation to the concept of 'Identity and Belonging'. Students can write (suggest word limit?) in an expository or creative style and must refer to directly to at least one of the art works contained in the Australia exhibition in their response:
 - It is only when we understand our own identity that we can have a sense of belonging.
 - Through understanding differences we understand ourselves.
 - Our sense of belonging is bound up in our cultural identity
 - We will only find belonging in the place between sameness and difference.

AN AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY -STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS TASK

- Under the title 'Australia and Australians' write a 'stream of consciousness' piece that includes your thoughts, feelings and attitudes about these two terms. This should be done individually, in silence, for 5 minutes.
- With reference to your
- 'stream of consciousness' piece, select three words you would choose to represent your understanding of Australia and Australians to someone from beyond our shores and to those who live in this country. Are they the same or different? Why do you think this is the case?
- Write each word on an A4 sheet, selecting a font and colour that reflects the word's connotations if possible. You must also select and include an image of one of the pieces included in the 'Australia' exhibition that you feel best represents this word.
- Display the sheets around the room, taking it in turns to explain to the rest of the class the reasons for your choices. Note and discuss any similarities/differences in the words and art works selected by students.

Theme	Selected Art from 'Australia' (include image and brief explanation of the piece and the artist)	Ways it reflects and represents the Australian landscape	Reasons why you selected this piece
The Road	Of the piece and i		
2 The City			
3 The Desert			
The Bush			
5 The Sun			
6 The Beach			
7 Pastoral Australia			





- As our sense of self shifts so does our place of belonging.
- A change of environment affects our identity.
- Our environment shape our identity.
- With reference to the seven themes of the 'Australia' exhibition, students are to select three pieces for each of the themes and complete the following activities in relation to the Australian Identity (see Table 2 on page 10). Students are to present their work to each other in small groups.

» EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- While the 'Australia' exhibition was presented along seven thematic lines, we can also view the pieces in the exhibition according to chronology and their place in the history of Australian Art. Divide students into five small groups, and allocate each group with one of the specific eras from the exhibition:
 - 1. Aboriginal Art
 - 2. The Colonial Encounter (1800 80)
 - 3. Australian Landscape (1880 1920)
 - 4. Pathways into the Modern World (1920 1950)
 - 5. Elizabethan Post-Colonial (1950 2013)

Each group must prepare a 5 minute presentation on their allocated era, including:

- A brief overview of the period in Australian history and the events that were influencing art at the time.
- The prominent artists and schools of art in Australia.
- A selection of at least 3 pieces from this era that were included in the 'Australia' exhibition and a

Left:

Arthur Streeton, *The Selector's Hut* (Whelan on the Log), 1890 (detail)

Below top:

Tommy McRae, Victorian Blacks – Melbourne Tribe Holding Corroboree after Seeing Ships for the First Time, 1890s (detail)

Below bottom:

Russell Drysdale, *Emus in a Landscape*, 1950 (detail)

brief overview of their importance and impact on Australian art and culture.

- Groups are to present their research to the class in order of chronology.
- Obviously it was a difficult task to select only 200 or so pieces of art to represent over 200 years of modern art in Australia. Working in pairs or small groups, students are to curate their own 'Australia' exhibition. Students must:
 - Select a maximum of two pieces for each of the seven themes:

1. The Road

5. The Sun

2. The City

6. The Beach

3. The Desert

7. Pastoral Australia

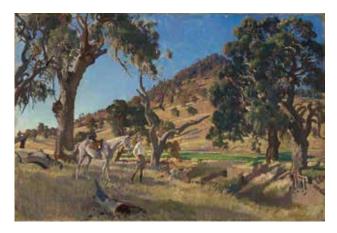
4. The Bush





Theme	Selected Art from 'Australia' (include image and brief explanation of the piece and the artist)	Ways it reflects and represents the Australian landscape	Reasons why you selected this piece
1 The Road			
2 The City			
3 The Desert			
4 The Bush			
5 The Sun			
f The Beach			
7 Pastoral Australia			





Left top:

George W. Lambert, The Squatter's Daughter, 1923–1924 (detail)

Left bottom:

Sidney Nolan, Ned Kelly, 1946 (detail)

Below:

Christian Thompson, Dead as a Door Nail, 2008 (detail)



- You may select works by artists included in the original 'Australia' exhibition, but the pieces you select must not have been in the original exhibition.
 You can include more than one piece by an artist.
- You are to prepare a 'Vision Statement' explaining the reasons for each of your selected works.
- Students are encouraged to present their exhibition to the class in the form of a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.
- Students are encouraged to select works from a range of artists, both living and dead.
- Do you agree with the selection of Sidney Nolan's piece 'Ned Kelly' as the cover piece for the 'Australia' exhibition? Explain your response. If you had to select another work, which piece would it be and why?
- Select your favourite artist from the 'Australia' exhibition and complete a one page biography of them. Include images of their work. Students are encouraged to pair up with a student who selected a different artist and to share their findings, discussing the differences and similarities they found between their selected artist.
- We see artist Shaun Gladwell refer to the following quote from Arthur Boyd: 'If I was whisked away ... I think I could

put up with anything, except not seeing the Australian landscape. It would be a torture to have it cut off.' Explain what you think Boyd meant by this and does he represent this feeling in his art? Can you relate to this sentiment? Why/why not?

Flipped Learning: The following task requires students to undertake the learning activity at home; that is, they must listen to a podcast before coming to their next lesson.

As part of the *Australia* exhibition, author Tim Winton delivered his thoughts on the Australian landscape at the Royal Academy on 14 November 2013, reading his essay *The Island Seen and Felt: Some Thoughts about Landscape*.

Students are to listen to this podcast here: https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/tim-winton-the-island-seen-and-felt.

Students are to note down salient points made by Winton when listening to the podcast and use these as a basis for discussion of the essay in the next lesson. Students are to also select two pieces of art from the *Australia* exhibition that they feel best encapsulate some of the ideas Winton is exploring, and explain why.





Above:

Sidney Nolan, Quilting the Armour, 1947 (detail)

National Gallery Australia additional links

There are a range of resources available related to the artists included in the *Australia* exhibition and profiled in the documentary about the making of the show *Hanging Australia*. To discover more visit the National Gallery of Australia's website – specifically these sections, where there are learning resources and collection information:

Australian art learning resources: http://www.nga.gov.au/ Education/australian.cfm

Indigenous art learning resources: http://www.nga.gov.au/ Education/indigenous.cfm

Australian art collection: http://www.nga.gov.au/ COLLECTIONS/AUSTRALIA/

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection: http://www.nga.gov.au/COLLECTIONS/ATSI/

Ocean to Outback: Australian Landscape Painting 1850-1950 exhibition: http://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/ OceantoOutback/

A range of videos about these and other Australian artists are available on the National Gallery of Australia's YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/user/NationalGalleryAus.

Look for the following playlists that are most relevant:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art 19th Century Australian Art 20th Century Australian Art

References

http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au

http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/cascade-of-diarrhoea-uk-critic-savages-australian-art-exhibition-20130923-2u8g4.html

http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/australias-london-art-spectacular-is-a-clumsy-embarrassment-20130918-2tztt.

html?rand=1379900113113

http://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/OCEANtoOUTBACK/pdf/O2OEDUKIT.pdf

http://nga.gov.au/AboutUs/press/pdf/RA-Australia_MR.pdf https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/tim-winton-the -island-seen-and-felt









FULL IMAGE DETAILS

COVER – Background image: William Westall, *View in Sir E. Pellew's Group, Gulph of Carpentaria, Discovered by Captain Flinders, 1802*, c.1812, oil on canvas, 61 x 88.5cm, Ministry of Defence Art Collection, London; Overlaying image: Sidney Nolan, *Ned Kelly,* 1946, enamel paint on composition board, 90.8 x 121.5cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Sunday Reed, 1977); Middle images (from left): Declan Apuatimi, *Pamijini*, c.1982, natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark, 48 x 93.3cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1992); Frederick McCubbin, *The Pioneer*, 1904, oil on three canvases, 225 x 295.7cm (overall), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (purchased through the Felton Bequest, 1906); Charles Meere, *Australian Beach Pattern*, 1940, oil on canvas, 91.5 x 122cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (purchased 1965); Russell Drysdale, *Emus in a Landscape*, 1950, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 127cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1970).

p.2 – From left: Elizabeth Mahoney, Portrait of Tom Roberts, c. 1925, photograph, bromide, 20.4 x 15.3cm on mount 50.8 x 49cm, National Library of Australia, Canberra; Royal Academy, Photograph by Mike Craven Todd (2013; Charles Conder, Bronte Beach, 1888, oil on paper on cardboard, 22.6 x 33cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased from Gallery admission charges, 1982); Sidney Nolan, Glenrowan, 1946, enamel paint on composition board, 90.9 x 121.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Sunday Reed, 1977); Christian Thompson, Dead as a Door Nail, 2008, c-type colour photograph, 100 x 100cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased from Gallery admission charges, 1982); Sidney Nolan, Quilting the Armour, 1947, enamel paint on composition board, 90.4 x 121.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Sunday Reed, 1977).

p.3 – Top right: Arthur Boyd, *The Hunter I*, 1944, oil on cotton gauze on cardboard, 63.6 x 75.8cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (the Arthur Boyd Gift, 1975); Tiles clockwise from top left: *Harold Cazneaux leaning on a camera looking to one side*, 1930s?, negative, glass, b&w, 16.5 x 12cm, National Library of Australia, Canberra (part of Cazneaux family photograph collection, 1870–1943); Frederick McCubbin, *Self-portrait*, c.1908, oil on canvas, not signed, not dated, 48.5 x 41cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1977); Artist Sidney Nolan at Australian National University, Australian National University Archives University Records, ANUA 225, item 917a, photographs of Sidney Nolan; Elizabeth Mahoney, *Portrait of Tom Roberts*, c. 1925, photograph, bromide, 20.4 x 15.3cm on mount 50.8 x 49cm, National Library of Australia, Canberra; Geoff Hawkshaw, *Portrait of John Brack*, 1965, photograph, gelatin silver, 24.9 x 20.3cm, National Library of Australia, Canberra (part of 'Portraits of Australian Artists 1964–1966', 1964–1966); Artist John Olsen in front of his *Sydney Sun* work at the National Gallery of Australia, September 2009.

p.4 – From left: Royal Academy, Photograph by Mike Craven Todd (2013); Adam Worrall, Assistant Director – Exhibitions and Collection Services, National Gallery







of Australia (photograph by Paul Simpson); Franchesca Cubillo, Senior Advisor — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, National Gallery of Australia (photograph by Paul Simpson); Dr Ron Radford AM, (former) Director, National Gallery of Australia (photograph by Paul Simpson).

p.5 – From top: Max Dupain, Sunbaker, 1937 (printed 1975), gelatin-silver photograph, 38.6 x 43.4cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1976); Charles Conder, Bronte Beach, 1888, oil on paper on cardboard, 22.6 x 33cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased from Gallery admission charges, 1982); Charles Conder, Herrick's Blossoms, c.1888, oil on cardboard, 13.1 x 24cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1969); Arthur Streeton, Golden Summer, Eaglemont, 1889, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 152.6cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1995).

p.6 – Clockwise from top: Nicholas Chevalier, *Mount Arapiles and the Mitre Rock*, 1863, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 120.6cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Dr Joseph Brown AO, OBE, 1979); George W. Lambert, *The Squatter's Daughter*, 1923–1924, oil on canvas, 61.4 x 90.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased with the generous assistance of James Fairfax AO and Philip Bacom AM and the people of Australia, 1991); Sidney Nolan, *Glenrowan*, 1946, enamel paint on composition board, 90.9 x 121.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Sunday Reed, 1977).

p.7 – From left: Conrad Martens, View of Sydney from Neutral Bay, c.1857, watercolour, gouache, black pencil, varnish, 45.1 x 65cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1975); Eugene Von Guérard, North-east View from the Northern Top of Mount Kosciusko, 1863, oil on canvas, 66.5 x 116.8cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1973).

p.9 – From top: Arthur Streeton, The Selector's Hut (Whelan on the Log), 1890, oil on canvas, 76.7 x 51.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1961); Tommy McRae, Victorian Blacks – Melbourne Tribe Holding Corroboree after Seeing Ships for the First Time, 1890s, pen and iron-gall ink, 23.8 x 36cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1994); Russell Drysdale, Emus in a Landscape, 1950, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 127cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1970).

p.11 – From top: George W. Lambert, *The Squatter's Daughter*, 1923–1924, oil on canvas, 61.4 x 90.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased with the generous assistance of James Fairfax AO and Philip Bacom AM and the people of Australia, 1991); Sidney Nolan, *Ned Kelly*, 1946, enamel paint on composition board, 90.8 x 121.5cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Sunday Reed, 1977); Christian Thompson, *Dead as a Door Nail*, 2008, c-type colour photograph, 100 x 100cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased from Gallery admission charges, 1982).

p.12 – Sidney Nolan, *Quilting the Armour*, 1947, enamel paint on composition board, 90.4 x 121.2cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (gift of Sunday Reed, 1977).



Above

Eugene Von Guérard, Ferntree Gully in the Dandenong Ranges, 1857



PURCHASE OF DVDS: RONIN FILMS P.O. Box 680 Mitchell, ACT 2911 AUSTRALIA PH: 02 6248 0851 FAX: 02 6249 1640

WEB: http://www.roninfilms.com.au EMAIL: orders@roninfilms.com.au

The Australia exhibition was organised by the Royal Academy of Art, London, with the National Gallery of Australia.











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