NGA
National Gallery of Australia

Blue poles leaves Australia for the first time in decades

Today the National Gallery of Australia temporarily farewelled its most famous painting—*Blue poles* (1952) by Jackson Pollock—which will soon leave for London to be exhibited in the Royal Academy's major exhibition *Abstract Expressionism*.

Blue poles will return to the NGA in February 2017. The work has not left Australia since 1998 when it was part of the *Jackson Pollock* retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.

'This is an opportunity for Australia to share one of our greatest paintings with the rest of the world,' said Gerard Vaughan NGA Director. 'It was a big decision to lend this hugely popular work but, at the same time, we want to share this globally important masterpiece.'

The purchase of Jackson Pollock's *Blue poles* was one of the most controversial in Australian history. Under the leadership of inaugural NGA Director James Mollison, then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam approved the purchase of the work amidst unprecedented media criticism. *Blue poles* is now the NGA's principal destination picture.

'*Blue poles* will have an important place in this exhibition and we are very grateful to the NGA for the opportunity to share one of Pollock's most well-known works with our visitors,' said Charles Saumarez Smith, Royal Academy Chief Executive.

Abstract Expressionism is at the Royal Academy in London from 24 September until 2 January 2017. In addition to Pollock, the exhibition will feature the works of the most celebrated artists associated with the movement including Franz Kline, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Willem de Kooning, David Smith, Ad Reinhardt and Arshile Gorky.

For information and videos about *Blue poles* and Jackson Pollock visit the Media Centre.