

NGA ACQUIRES ORIGINAL TOM ROBERTS EASEL AND CELEBRATES THE ARTIST'S 160TH BIRTHDAY

The National Gallery of Australia today announced the acquisition of an original easel owned and used by the legendary artist Tom Roberts. The acquisition announcement comes as the NGA celebrates what would have been Tom Roberts' 160th birthday, with thousands of people flocking to see the exhibition in its final weeks.

The historic easel has been acquired from Christine Simons, whose grandfather Eric L. Frazer purchased the easel at an auction in Melbourne in the 1930s. The easel has 'this is Tom Roberts' outdoor painting easel' painted on it, and will be on display at the entrance to the exhibition until it closes.

'The NGA is delighted to have acquired this piece of history for all Australians,' said Gerard Vaughan, NGA Director. 'We are still fascinated by the life and work of this great artist, even 85 years after his death and now visitors to the National Gallery can now see one of the tools he used to create these iconic paintings. Roberts revolutionised Australian art by his adopting of *plein air* (i.e outdoors) painting techniques, and a light and portable easel was essential to assist with getting out in both the bush and in Melbourne's urban-fringe landscapes.'

The Tom Roberts exhibition has been a major success with many visitors travelling from all over Australia to see the show in Canberra. The exhibition closes on Easter Monday and tickets can be purchased at the Gallery or through Ticketek.

'It is unlikely that so many masterpieces by Tom Roberts will be brought together again in one place in our lifetime,' said Dr Vaughan. 'Anyone with an interest in Australian art would be crazy to miss this exhibition.'

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