

MEDIA RELEASE
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Opens 13 December 2014

CANBERRA ONLY

The National Gallery of Australia today announced that *James Turrell: A Retrospective* is the summer blockbuster for 2014-15. This extraordinary exhibition includes mesmerising installations using light, and demonstrates why James Turrell is one of the most important artists working today. The exhibition opens to the public on 13 December and will be on display only in Canberra.

James Turrell's career spans almost five decades, with 140 solo exhibitions worldwide, and permanent installations in museums and private collections internationally—including one of his most beautiful, *Within without* 2010, the Skyspace at the National Gallery of Australia.

James Turrell said 'I grew up seeing the work of great artists who painted the effects of light, such as Monet and the Hudson River School in America, but I wanted my work to be made of light itself. I am very pleased to bring this survey to Australia. On my first trip to Canberra in 1997, I was impressed with the clarity of light there and the vastness of the southern skies. I think of the Skyspaces all around the world as a continuum, an experience that is continuing at all times, so I am delighted people who come to *Within without* will also see it in context of my other works, early projection pieces, Wedgeworks, Ganzfelds and others.'

This exhibition is Turrell's first in Australia, following three highly successful shows in the USA. After a sold-out season at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the highest attended exhibition ever held at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the National Gallery of Australia's retrospective combines works from LACMA's tour with spectacular new, site-specific installations made just for Canberra.

James Turrell: A Retrospective will show several of the artist's spectacular light works which have made him famous. A classic early projection piece, *Afrum (white)* 1966, makes the viewer perceive a cube of light floating in space. *After green* 1993, part of the Wedgework series, plays with perception, persuading us there is a wall where one does not exist. A Ganzfeld, specially designed for Canberra, is one of Turrell's largest and most marvellous series to date. Inside, surrounded by light, with no edge or corners in the space, we are uncertain about the depth and form of the space—a feeling akin to walking on clouds.

'This exhibition will give all Australians the opportunity to experience contemporary art at its absolute best,' said Ron Radford AM, Director, National Gallery of Australia. 'When you walk into each of these life-changing, immersive works, you are forced to question what you are actually seeing. The great strength and power of light and colour will be experienced by each visitor and is often pushed to its extreme in the work of James Turrell.'

'The ACT Government is pleased to be supporting the National Gallery of Australia in bringing this ambitious major international exhibition to Canberra. Since the Special Event Fund opened in 2011, \$2 million in funding has been allocated to support four blockbuster exhibitions at the National Gallery of Australia. These events have attracted nearly 700,000 attendees and delivered approximately \$180 million in economic return to the ACT,' said ACT Minister for Tourism and Events Andrew Barr MLA.

'ActewAGL is very proud to work with the National Gallery of Australia as Principal Partner of the exhibition. This is the fourth major show since 2008 that we have been involved in, having previously partnered with the Gallery for *Degas: Master of French art*, *Ballets Russes: The art of costume* and *Toulouse-Lautrec: Paris and the Moulin Rouge*.'

'*James Turrell: A Retrospective* will be a fantastic drawcard for Canberra and I believe it is important that we continue to deliver social and economic returns for our customers, local businesses and the community. Partnering with such world-class exhibitions will attract tourists to our beautiful National Capital during summer and boost the local economy,' said Michael Costello, ActewAGL Chief Executive Officer.

Elaborate exhibitions demand a significant investment of financial resources and marketing support. It is with deep appreciation that the National Gallery of Australia acknowledges the contribution of our Presenting Partner, the ACT Government through *VisitCanberra*. Their involvement has enabled us to present and promote this incredible exhibition to the people of Australia and we thank them for their continued advocacy and support. We also acknowledge our Principal Partners ActewAGL, National Australia Bank and the Nine Network for this major show and for their long-term support and generosity to the National Gallery of Australia.

We extend our thanks to our Major Partners Qantas, National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program, Palace Cinema, Molonglo Group, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the National Gallery of Australia's Council Exhibition Fund for the generosity which has greatly enriched the exhibition. We are also grateful for the dedication and support of our accommodation partner Novotel Canberra. Without our corporate partners, projects such as this would not be possible. We honour their commitment to the arts and the National Gallery of Australia.

James Turrell: A Retrospective is organised in association with Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Tickets

James Turrell: A Retrospective is an exhibition with a number of immersive installations that allow viewing with a limited number of visitors. Timed sessions with small groups will be permitted into the exhibition every fifteen minutes. Tickets go on sale in late October 2014 through Ticketek. Advance bookings are essential.

Publicity images can be downloaded at: www.nga.gov.au/mediacentre

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