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## Ballet & Fashion: a world-first exhibition celebrating dance and design

### A joint partnership between The Australian Ballet and the National Gallery of Victoria

Imagine the world's greatest dress-up box opening to the public ... The Australian Ballet and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) are joining forces in 2012 to present **Ballet & Fashion**, an extraordinary exhibition that explores the relationship between these two powerful art forms.

The free exhibition will feature ballet costumes by some of the world's top designers, including Giles Deacon (*Swan Lake* for English National Ballet 2010), Christian Lacroix (*Gâité Parisienne* for American Ballet Theatre 1988), Akira Isogawa (*Romeo & Juliet* for The Australian Ballet 2011) and Collette Dinnigan and Easton Pearson (*Tutu* for The Australian Ballet 2002). The full program of designers featured will be announced in mid-2012.

**Ballet & Fashion** will run from **November 3 2012 until May 2013** at the NGV. The exhibition forms an integral part of The Australian Ballet's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations; the company's official birthday is on November 2.

With a special 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary international gala opening at the Arts Centre Melbourne on October 31, a week of glamorous gatherings will mark this milestone birthday.

The artistic director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister, said the exhibition was the icing on the cake.

"The birthday week is going to be absolutely huge," says McAllister. "From international guest stars at the gala to couture ballet costumes that have never been seen in Australia, it's a non-stop week of celebrations."

"There has never been an exhibition bringing together a collection like this before so we're incredibly excited. Ballet costumes are actually like works of art – the design, craftsmanship and attention to detail all adds to the

characterisation and the story the dancers are telling onstage."

*Ballet & Fashion* will showcase some of the most successful and groundbreaking collaborations of the past three decades. The concept was developed in consultation with Edwina McCann, editor of *Harper's BAZAAR*. Together, the three organisations have created a shortlist of works created by renowned fashion designers from all over the world.

The deputy director of the NGV, Frances Lindsay said: "We're thrilled to be partnering with The Australian Ballet in their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. This exhibition will bring together a spectacular selection of Australian and international ballet costumes never before seen at the NGV and is a wonderful addition to our 2012 program."

The close collaboration between ballet and modern fashion dates back to the 1920s when Ballets Russes impresario Serge Diaghilev commissioned Coco Chanel to create the costumes for *Le Train Bleu*.

The influence of ballet can be seen in both high fashion and street fashion throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the far-reaching influence of Ballets Russes costume designs; the echo of Romantic tutus in Dior's new look and the enduring popularity of the ballet flat.

An exhibition for fashionistas, ballet fans, families and arts lovers alike, this is one wardrobe tour that you shouldn't miss!

#### Exhibition details

*Ballet & Fashion*

National Gallery of Victoria

180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Opening November 3 2012 until May 2013

-ends-

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