



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG /186

11 December 2008

ART INDEMNITY AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS DEGAS: MASTER OF FRENCH ART

The Australian Government's Art Indemnity Australia program is helping the National Gallery of Australia bring the nation's first-ever dedicated exhibition of works by Edgar Degas to audiences in Australia.

Art Indemnity Australia has enabled almost \$14 billion worth of significant cultural material to be viewed by an audience of nearly 22 million people Australia-wide.

The work of Edgar Degas appeals to a wide audience, and his paintings and subjects—particularly of ballet at the opera—are instantly recognisable. His vivid studies express a fascination with form and movement, colour and light. These and other key, iconic works which will feature in the *Degas: Master of French Art* exhibition have attracted millions of visitors to their home galleries around the world.

The works are on loan from many international collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the J Paul Getty Museum, the Musée d'Orsay, and the British Museum.

"This exhibition is a major coup for the National Gallery of Australia," said Arts Minister Peter Garrett.

"One of Degas' bronze sculptures *Little Dancer, aged fourteen years*, has travelled to the southern hemisphere for the very first time, on loan from the St Louis Art Museum."

"The exhibition also includes significant loans from Australian public and private collections," said Mr Garrett.

"Works from the National Gallery of Victoria, the Queensland Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Australia also feature in the exhibition, showcasing Australia's cultural wealth alongside our international counterparts."

Degas: Master of French Art is made possible by Art Indemnity Australia, an Australian Government program through which the Commonwealth acts as insurer in case of any loss or damage to an indemnified work of art.

Without Art Indemnity Australia, the high cost of insuring significant cultural items would prohibit the works in this major exhibition from travelling to Australia.

Degas will be on show exclusively at the National Gallery of Australia, from 12 December 2008 to 22 March 2009. Further details from www.nga.gov.au