



For immediate release: 2 November 2016

Sidney Nolan Centenary 2017: programme announced

- UK-wide celebration of the life and work of artist Sidney Nolan
- Artist's final works – four abstract spray mural paintings - to be reunited
- Nolan's undisturbed studio to open to the public for the first time
- Programme partners include the Australian High Commission, Royal Academy of Arts, Pallant House Gallery, the British Museum and Ikon Gallery

In 2017, the Sidney Nolan Trust will present a nationwide programme of exhibitions, events and publications to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the artist Sir Sidney Nolan OM AC RA. The year-long programme will include contributions from some of the UK's most prestigious cultural institutions, reflecting Nolan's standing as a leading figure of 20th century art.

Sidney Nolan was born in Melbourne, Australia on 22 April 1917. He died in London on 28 November 1992, having moved to the UK in the early 1950s. Nolan produced an extraordinary body of work and during his lifetime was recognised as one of the foremost international modern artists. Although best known for his series of paintings of Australian outlaw Ned Kelly, Nolan's oeuvre is diverse; forward-looking and experimental, he worked in a wide range of materials – from spray paint to household enamel – and was one of the first artists to explore digital technologies. The Sidney Nolan Centenary 2017 is an opportunity to celebrate the artist, his work and his legacy.

Central to the centenary programme will be a focus on Nolan's time living and working in Britain, starting with a major exhibition at Pallant House Gallery. Opening on 19 February, *Transferences: Sidney Nolan in Britain* will bring together work that draws on Nolan's recurring themes of Australian history and literature, mythology and tragic hero/anti-hero. Iconic paintings from the 50s and 60s such as the Ned Kelly and Burke and Wills series will be shown alongside his set designs and costumes from the 1962 Royal Ballet production of *The Rite of Spring*. A *Nolan in Britain Symposium* will take place at the Menzies Centre, King's College London on 3 March to look at Nolan's artistic contribution beyond painting and how his artistic influence continues to this day.

To mark Nolan's 100th birthday on 22 April, an exhibition of works from the Sidney Nolan Trust Collection will open at the Australian High Commission, followed by a day-long symposium at the Royal Academy of Arts exploring key themes relevant to Nolan's life and work including the artist as polymath, materiality and international identity. The focal point of the exhibition will be a series of four large-scale spray-painted abstracts, which Nolan considered his most important works. The rest of the exhibition will give a more personal view of the artist and will feature paintings from the Trust's collection spanning Nolan's entire career, many of which have never been on public display.

In May, Nolan's studio at his home at The Rodd, Herefordshire will be open to the public for the first time. The studio was closed at the time of Nolan's death in 1992 and remains untouched in one of the 17th century barns. Its opening will give a rare insight into Nolan's artistic world and will be an opportunity to understand his use of materials, different techniques and how he created his later works at The Rodd. Sidney Nolan acquired The Rodd in 1982/3 and in 1985 set up a charitable trust, the Sidney Nolan Trust, which today continues to support Nolan's aspirations, thriving as an active arts organisation that hosts/ produces exhibitions, artists' residencies, concerts, workshops, and a learning programme. The Sidney Nolan Trust will use the centenary year to launch an appeal to realise the ambitions of the trustees for an international centre for the arts.

Opening in July will be an exhibition of spray portraits at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. Created by Nolan in the 80s, these portraits place him in a contemporary context.

Towards the end of the centenary year in November, the British Museum will mount an exhibition of Nolan's *Back of Beyond* drawings from the 1950s. In these drawings, Nolan confronts the horrors of the Australian drought, presenting a starkly tragic vision of the Australian outback.

Alongside these exhibitions and events will be an ongoing programme of film screenings, panel discussions and lectures with partners including Hay Festival, Highgate Cemetery and The Red House together with showings of Nolan works held in regional collections.

In February the Sidney Nolan International Residency, a partnership between The Rodd and Bundanon in Australia will be launched with a call for artists; the residency winner will be announced in November.

Full details about the Sidney Nolan Centenary 2017 can be found at www.sidneynolantrust.org

Ends

For more press information please contact Iliana Taliotis on +44 (0)7931 341 112 or mail@ilianataliotis.com