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(NOTE: Advance photographs to be published in connection with this preliminary release may be obtained from the Museum of Modern Art. Photographs to accompany the reviews of the exhibition may be obtained from the exhibiting galleries and museums.)

LARGE EXHIBITION OF AUSTRALIAN ART TO BE SHOWN
IN THE UNITED STATES

Under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the first comprehensive exhibition of Australian art ever to be shown in the United States has been sent here by the Commonwealth of Australia to be circulated by the Museum of Modern Art to museums and galleries throughout the country. The exhibition will have its premiere showing at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, where it will open Wednesday, October 1. Its New York showing will be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from November 17th to December 31st.

The exhibition, consisting of approximately seventy-five items, ranges from the bark paintings of the Australian aborigines prior to the arrival of the white man in Australia 150 years ago to the work of present-day artists. The entire continent, which is about the size of the United States of America, is represented in the oils, watercolors and drawings, eleven bark drawings and one piece of sculpture which have been lent by the National Galleries of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, supplemented by loans from artists and collectors. The material was selected by a committee which included the directors of the three large galleries in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

The Right Honorable R. G. Casey, Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia at Washington, D. C., has written an introduction to the catalog for the exhibition, which will be published by the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Casey writes in part as follows:

"For one hundred years Australia went through stages of hardship, lawlessness and heroism similar to those that characterized the same period in American history. There were no warlike tribes like the North American Indians to contend with; but the taming of a vast continent where heat and drought, fire and flood, succeeded each other in a way calculated to test the strongest spirit, called for endurance and courage equal to that of the bravest pioneers of history.

"Against the background of the bark paintings left by the world's most primitive aborigines, the art in the present exhibition records the progress of European, and, particularly, British people in this struggle.

"A tenacious conservatism has until recently dominated the artistic scene in Australia. This is largely due to the relatively short time that the white man has lived there, and to his natural nostalgia for the remembered old world. It has taken Australia a long time to absorb and digest her own unique surroundings, to put new overseas movements in painting into a proper perspective, and to weld the two into an artistic idiom of her own.

"The material is there in plenty: the strange and rather grim beauty of her landscape and the very individual life of her people, in whom the love of independence and of fearless experiment persists. Throughout this exhibition one can detect the pungent flavour of the Australian bush, something of the color and vitality that distinguishes the Australian in other fields.

"If the art of a nation is to flourish, her painters must have protection and encouragement. This the United States has for some time appreciated and has now laid the basis for a proud national art. It is hoped that Australia may some day contrive to do the same for her young painters so that the already strong foundations of her painting may be worthily built upon. This will doubtless happen when she emerges from the shadow that now lies upon most of the countries of the world, and when her feet are once more set upon the way of peace."

Professor Theodore Sizer, Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, visited Australia under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and, at the invitation of the Australian and New Zealand Museums and Art Galleries Association, was invited to participate as American adviser. Professor Sizer comments on the exhibition and the Australian culture which it represents, as follows:

"Parallelism with the development of the American tradition is striking: an artistically conservative Anglo-Saxon people influenced in varying degrees by a new and similar pioneer environment.

"The precise and informative watercolor drawings of the early navigators and explorers have English flavor. The untrained painter in small struggling communities, cut off by space and time from home influences, produced a 'folk-art' of similar character to America. The imported artist produced romantic and idealized scenes reminiscent of the 'Hudson River School.' In the Australian Gold Rush days artistic commentators were as raucously realistic as were the prints of Currier and Ives. The pungent and popular work of Tom Roberts, the painter of frontier life, falls somewhere between that of George Caleb Bingham and Frederick Remington.

"In Australia as in America many of the best men left their country for the training that only the European academies could give, losing thereby, with all their technical accomplishment, something of the salty flavor of the land. Various European movements from Impressionism on have left their mark. Even the rediscovery of the art of the natives has had its counterpart in this country."