

# New Standards of Excellence in Display

BY KATE GREGORY AND DARYL WEST-MOORE, NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA



The highly innovative, unique glass display cases at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia have expanded the parameters of display case manufacture and set a new standard of excellence in display. They were produced by the Frankfurt company GLASBAU HAHN (which has specialised in glass case manufacture since 1836), after extensive research and complex trans-continental negotiation and design. It involved a creative collaboration between the NGV's Chief Exhibition Designer, Daryl West-Moore, staff of the exhibition design department, curators, conservators, and the architects LAB Architecture Studio in association with Bates Smart.

There are two types of display cases at NGV Australia. Four are built-in wall cases and six are freestanding display cases that are non-rectangular, irregular shapes, designed to be connectable and moveable. Their design is derived from the form of an ancient Chinese tangram puzzle, a square cut into seven pieces to be combined into various figures, a design concept that compliments the architecture of the building.

The six freestanding display cases were designed to hold items from the Australian fashion and textiles collection. The flexible dimension of the cases enables voluminous items to be shown in juxtaposition with smaller items. Cases can be joined together to make a large display case or broken into individual cases forming a variety of configurations. This allows for multiple arrangements of objects and interpretative possibilities.



ics and GLASBAU HAHN has generously sponsored the state-of-the-art fibre optic lighting that is subtly fitted into the ceilings of the cases at points on a grid. Each individual light is adjustable, so that lighting levels can be precisely calibrated according to the conservation needs of items on display and the desired look of the display.



The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square in Melbourne is the spectacular new home of Australian art and has been officially opened in November 2002. Since then over 700,000 visitors have seen the new museum. Photos and Article: National Gallery of Victoria Members magazine "Gallery" and NGV Photographic Services.

The wall cases display objects from the collection of Indigenous Australian art and nineteenth century silver, and are mounted into customised niches within the walls of the building. This required a coordinated approach between GLASBAU HAHN, LAB Architecture Studio + Bates Smart, and the builder, Multiplex. To ensure the cases perfectly aligned with the wall cut outs, Glasbau Hahn established an Australian partnership with STAG Shopfittings, a company based in Victoria, that built templates of the walls so that construction of the display cases would be exact.

The lighting used in the display cases is fundamental to their functionality and aesthet-

GLASBAU HAHN's unique and sophisticated display cases have responded precisely to the needs of NGV Australia, accounting for both the collection, curatorial and exhibition design imperatives, and the architectural design of the building itself.

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