

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Margaret Olley donates Degas drawing to National Gallery of Australia**

The National Gallery of Australia today announced that Margaret Olley has given an important Degas drawing, *Dancer in fourth position (Danseuse en quatrième devant)* c 1885, to the national collection of art. The drawing will be exhibited publicly for the first time as part of the major exhibition *Degas: master of French art* which opens at the Gallery next week and will be seen only in Canberra.

Ms Olley said, "I was inspired to give this Degas drawing to the National Gallery of Australia as part of this milestone occasion, the first ever Degas exhibition in Australia, and to be on display for visitors to the National Gallery in the future".

National Gallery of Australia director Ron Radford said, "We are grateful to Margaret Olley for her generous gift of this significant Degas drawing. Her support for the National Gallery over many years has enabled us to acquire major works that would otherwise have been out of reach".

*Dancer in fourth position* depicts Degas' fascination with illustrating movement. The artist's method is clearly visible through his use of a series of charcoal lines surrounding the arms and legs to decide the most effective position for the dancer's body. The ballerina's pose is a variant of the pose in an earlier iconic Degas painting, *The dance class (École de danse)* c1873, which the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC has generously lent to the exhibition.

*Dancer in fourth position* is an important addition to the eight Degas works on paper contained in the national art collection, all of which will be exhibited in *Degas: master of French art*.

*Degas: master of French art*, curated by the National Gallery of Australia, draws from 45 collections around the world and highlights the artist's key role in the development of modern art.

***Degas: master of French art* – 12 December 2008 to 22 March 2009**

National Gallery of Australia, [www.nga.gov.au/degas](http://www.nga.gov.au/degas)

To download a high resolution image of the *Dancer in fourth position* please visit [www.nga.gov.au/aboutus/mediacentre/olley](http://www.nga.gov.au/aboutus/mediacentre/olley)

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