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MEDIA RELEASE

13 July 2015

State Library Victoria to host first major retrospective of colonial artist ST Gill

***Australian Sketchbook: Colonial life and the art of ST Gill*, the first major retrospective of Australia's most popular mid-19th century artist, opens at State Library Victoria 17 July 2015.**

This free exhibition is a collaborative project of State Library Victoria and the National Library of Australia. It draws on the substantial colonial collections of each institution to present the most comprehensive exhibition of ST Gill's work ever staged.

From 1839 to 1880, ST Gill created some of the most memorable images of urban and rural life in colonial Australia. Gill captured Australian life, particularly in 'Marvellous Melbourne' on the goldfields and in rural Australia, more completely and with more social insight than any other artist of the period. There is scarcely a textbook on Australian history published which does not reproduce at least some of his work.

Gill's art celebrated the emerging quintessential Australian character ahead of later artists and writers including Phil May, Henry Lawson, 'Banjo' Patterson and Russel Drysdale.

The exhibition will contain more than 200 works drawn from the collections of the State Library Victoria and National Library of Australia along with loans from the Art Gallery of South Australia and the State Library of NSW – broadly reflecting the places Gill worked in his lifetime.

A series of satellite exhibitions will be held in Gill heartland areas of regional Victoria including Bendigo, Ballarat, Castlemaine and Geelong from July to October.

Australian Sketchbook: Colonial life and the art of ST Gill will tour to National Library of Australia in 2016.

Australian Sketchbook: Colonial life and the art of ST Gill is curated by Emeritus Professor Sasha Grishin AM, FAHA, from the Australian National University. Professor Grishin has also authored a major publication, ***ST Gill and his audiences***, to accompany the exhibition, which is being published by the National Library of Australia.

Australian Sketchbook: Colonial life and the art of ST Gill

State Library Victoria 17 July - 25 October 2015

National Library of Australia June - November 2016

This exhibition is supported by the National Collecting Institutions Touring outreach program, and Australian Government program aiming to improve access to national collections for all Australians.

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