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## Felton Bequest gifts 'most ambitious commission yet' to NGV for Triennial

"Ambitious, brave and courageous" are the words used to describe the Ron Mueck work, *Mass 2017*, commissioned and gifted to the NGV and premiering at the [NGV Triennial](#), which opened to the public on Friday 15 December.

The commission is a key piece in the exhibition, and was made possible by the [Alfred Felton Bequest](#), one of Victoria's largest and oldest philanthropic trusts. The Felton Bequest was established in 1904 with £380,000, providing the NGV with access to funds greater than those of London's National and Tate Galleries combined.

"The Felton Bequest is a great example of the strength of philanthropic trusts," said Jodi Kennedy, General Manager, Charitable Trusts and Philanthropy, Equity Trustees, the trustee company charged with managing the Felton Bequest in perpetuity.

"They are designed to grow over time and keep giving to the causes and institutions the founder has cared about during their lifetime. More than a century has passed, and Alfred Felton's bequest remains the most valuable bequest ever made to the arts in Australia and has set the scene for arts in Victoria to prosper. The current value of its gifts now exceeds \$2b."

The Trust is now valued at more than \$45m and divides income equally between the NGV and charitable causes that support women and children.

Chairman of the Felton Bequest Committee, Sir Andrew Grimwade CBE, said: "This acquisition for the NGV's Triennial, bringing together world class contemporary artists, is a most valuable, brave and courageous work by Ron Mueck. It is the NGV's 'Blue Poles' moment as it is sure to confound, confront and exhilarate visitors in equal measure."

"I am confident Alfred Felton, who was an avid art collector in his own time, would have been impressed by this extraordinary work. It is the Felton Bequest's most ambitious commission to date. It is indeed an honour to support the thought-provoking work of an artist who grew up in this most creative of cities, Melbourne, and to know that visitors to the NGV can experience it for themselves at this wonderful Triennial."

*Mass 2017* is Ron Mueck's largest work to date and is an immersive, overwhelming experience for the viewer. It is comprised of 100 large scale sculptures of the human skull. When piled up, the skulls recall the Paris catacombs as well as the mass graves resulting from human atrocities; it demands consideration of human mortality and meaning.

Melbourne-born (now UK based) [Ron Mueck](#) is one of the leading exponents of hyperrealism internationally, renowned for his contemporary, mesmerizing and often unsettling sculptures. The Triennial is free and exclusive to Melbourne, featuring major works by more than 100 international artists and designers from 32 countries.

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# Media Release



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