



Knowledgeable Object Symposium

Chau Chak Wing Museum

16 November 2023

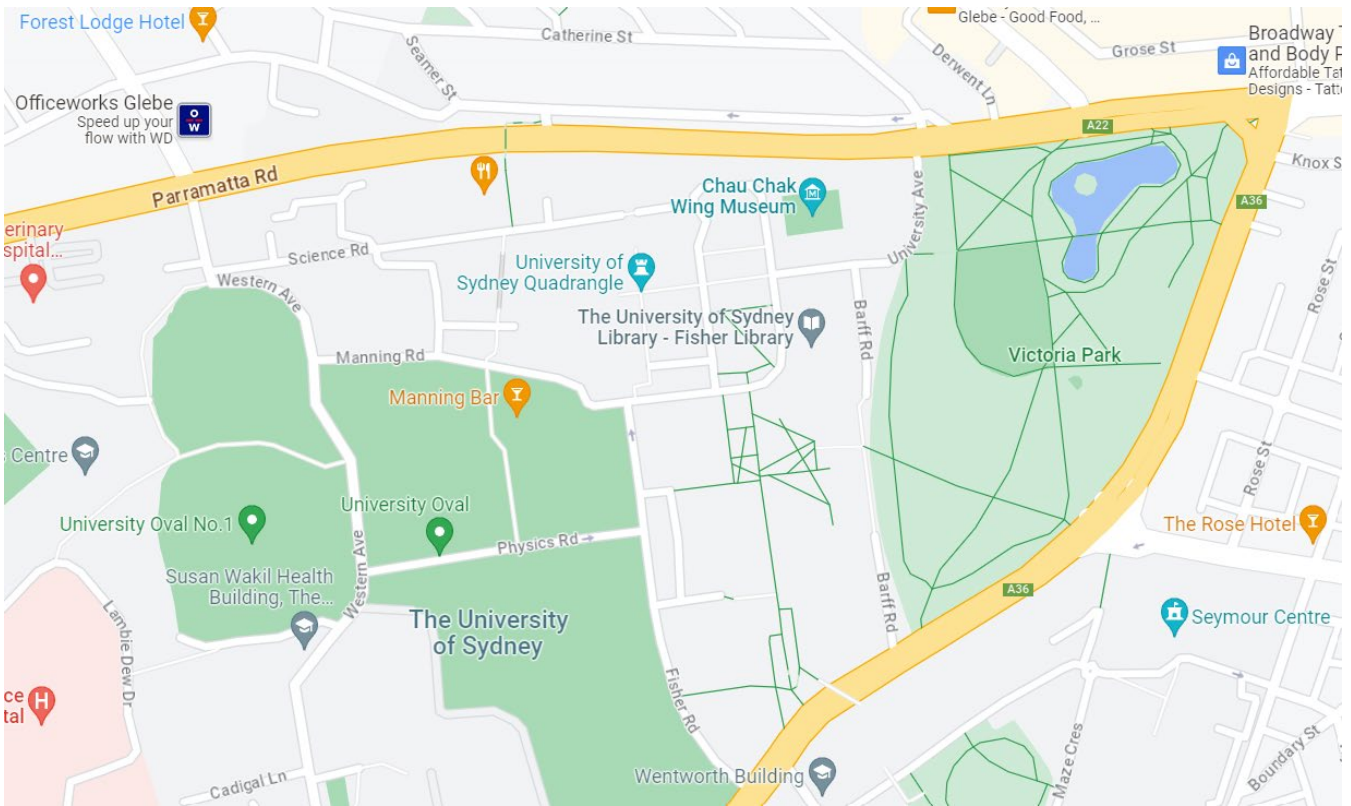


THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

AMaGA
New South Wales

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities - past, present, and emerging - of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.

The Knowledgeable Object Symposium will take place on the lands of the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation.



Map Guide

Chau Chak Wing Museum (CCWM): The museum entrance is located on University Place, directly across from the Great Hall and Quadrangle lawns. The Symposium will take place in the Nelson Meers Auditorium, on level 3 (entry level).

Getting Here

Find information on location, transport and parking here:

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/about-us/getting-here.html>

Accessibility

Accessible Parking two designated spaces and a drop-off bay are available at the entrance of the museum. Further designated accessible parking spaces can be found at the entrance of Fisher Library. Parking on University grounds is free to all patrons displaying a current Mobility Parking Scheme card, previously known as a Disabled Parking Permit.

Hearing Loop is available in the Nelson Meers Auditorium. Please contact us if you would like to access this systems during the symposium.

Further accessibility information <https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/about-us/accessibility.html>

Contact Us

Phone: 9351 2812 (CCWM front desk)

Email: museum.obl@sydney.edu.au

Program

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Speakers and Abstracts

Susan Brawn and Alicia De Audney

State Library NSW

Hands on World War 1: Taking a student-centred approach

Hands on World War I is an object-based learning program offered by the State Library of NSW for students in Year 9 history. This program allows students to interact with a variety of original materials owned by World War I veteran Geoffrey Vaughn Rose. Students are presented with a collection of items and are asked to uncover the identity of their owner and the part they played in World War I. By holding and closely examining the artefacts, students develop their own inquiry questions as they engage in an authentic historical investigation. Students extrapolate information about the owner of these items before considering how his story fits into the broader context of World War I.

In our presentation, we will share some of the objects used in this program, demonstrate how we use a student-centred approach, and unpack the feedback from students and teachers on what makes this program valuable for students of all ability levels.

About the speakers

Susan Brawn is a passionate educator with a background in teaching English and History in secondary schools. She delights in finding innovative ways to connect students with the amazing collections at the Library. Susan spends her days creating digital teaching resources, developing and delivering virtual excursions and onsite activities for students and teachers.

Alicia DeAudney is an Education Officer at the State Library of NSW. Having delivered children's programs in public libraries for over a decade, Alicia takes great delight in surprising young people with how outrageously brilliant libraries are. Alicia is passionate about using technology to pass on the joy of learning and empowering students to express themselves creatively.

Serah Douglas
Flinders University

Enhancing Nursing Education through Object-Based Learning: Challenges, Successes, and Future Improvements

Incorporating OBL into the "Communication for Nursing" curriculum at Flinders University brought forth an array of challenges and successes that warrant discussion in the context of nursing education. This initiative, undertaken with a cohort of approximately 560 first-year students across 20 classes, involved a teaching team of 16 tutors, including permanent and casual staff. Challenges included catering to a very large cohort of students, engaging initially reluctant tutors and students, and addressing copyright and referencing concerns from a healthcare perspective.

Despite these hurdles, the incorporation of OBL into the curriculum led to remarkable successes. Students and staff were introduced to the on-campus art gallery (FUMA), enhancing their well-being and fostering ongoing engagement with the gallery space. Feedback from the teaching team was overwhelmingly positive, with tutors reporting personal and professional satisfaction and students demonstrating exceptional learning during group presentations. To build upon these achievements, future implementations will focus on providing more structured resources for tutors, reducing the number of selected artworks for improved quality control, and offering explicit instructions to guide students through OBL activities. This is a valuable case study for educators seeking to enrich nursing education through OBL, offering insights into the potential challenges and rewards of this innovative pedagogical approach.

About the speaker

Serah Douglas is an Associate Lecturer in Nursing at Flinders University, South Australia. She has a 20-year background in clinical nursing, having specialised in Paediatric Emergency, and working in Oncology/Palliative Care and Remote Area Nursing. Serah enjoys challenging students' professional understanding of care and empathy through art-led learning.

Gareth Dyer
The Scots College

History Detectives

When I hand students an object from our archival collection, I challenge them to consider what information can be gleaned from it and why is it useful in the grand narrative of our institution. I then encourage them to exchange ideas with their peers and apply their own knowledge to see if the story changes.

At The Scots College, object-based learning is used in junior history classes to lead boys to discover their place in the timeline of Scots. It introduces investigative skills useful to wider and more detailed study and uncovers the stories of interesting 'forefathers' along the way.

The story of our school reflects Australian and world history, studying our history through particular objects and pictures creates micro-histories useful for understanding the bigger picture and encourages idea sharing and investigative thinking.

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About the speaker

Gareth Dyer is Manager of the Office of Heritage and Tradition at the Scots College. He is a Mander Jones Award winner, 2021 for Professional Writing (the first award since a poetry prize when he was 16). Gareth lives in Western Sydney with Australia's most beautiful family.

Jeffrey Fletcher
Sydney Jewish Museum

Objects to the fore

This session will explore how OBL can inform varied approaches to museum programs and build connective experiences for participants & visitors, volunteers and staff. We will examine the OBL strategies that underpin new initiatives at Sydney Jewish Museum, including student-active programs, new delivery methodologies for guides, using relationships between objects to build context, working with sensitive material, the role of replicas, establishing a “Handling Collection” and working closely with curators and registrars. Further, we will consider how digital experiences can be paired with physical experiences to help facilitate the stories objects tell. This focus will be on online program delivery and incorporating our new interactive biography technology, where students can interact with Holocaust survivors and ask them about their personal objects on display in the museum and the stories behind them..

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About the speaker

Jeffrey Fletcher taught history and English in high schools then moved to a long career in museum education. His passion is creating pathways for people to engage with history and find relevance for the modern world. He believes the power of objects can fascinate, inform and inspire learners of all ages.

Dr Alina Kozlovski
University of New England

Museum collections and the materiality of digital models

In this presentation I explore how digital models of objects can help us interrogate some of the ways that we interact with museum collections. With the study of material culture so interested in the materiality of historical objects and their place as active agents in human-object relationships in the last few decades, what role can a digital model play when that materiality takes on a distinctly different form? How does the digital affect how we understand the physicality of an object and what modes of viewing does it afford? Using examples from my own teaching using the 3D digital models of the University of New England ancient Mediterranean collection to teach a largely online cohort of undergraduate and postgraduate students, I explore these questions and place digital models into a broader history of interactions with objects for educational purposes.

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About the speaker

Dr Alina Kozlovski is the Lecturer of Digital Innovation (Ancient History and Archaeology) at the University of New England and is currently developing a new undergraduate and postgraduate unit entitled 'Making Museums Digital'. Prior to this role, she worked in museums in the US, UK, and Australia.

Rebecca Lush

Integrated Pathology Learning Centre, University of Queensland

Learning to Manage Trauma-Informed Object Based Learning

Prior to 2022, the Integrated Pathology Learning Centre (IPLC) engaged with object-based learning for medical students. Over the last two years, we have been working with other disciplines within the University to expand our programs. These programs all have OBL at the forefront. Alongside this, we have also transformed our high school education programs to have a stronger OBL approach.

In this presentation, I would like to share how we are employing an object-based learning framework with a human specimen collection to engage these two different groups. Critical to this, is how we are approaching a collection imbued with grief and trauma. How are we using OBL to create a safe space for conversations surrounding disease, suffering, and death?

I will be covering our informal interdisciplinary events with university students and the development of our new high school education program.

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About the speaker

Rebecca Lush is the Curator of the Integrated Pathology Learning Centre at The University of Queensland. She is particularly passionate about interdisciplinary learning and engaging diverse audiences through trauma-informed education programs. In 2022, Rebecca completed a Certificate in Educational Studies in order to develop the museum's object-based learning programs.

Dr Katie Maher

University of South Australia

Tracey Ann Rankin

Flinders University

When Tracey met Katie:

Social justice peers collaborate with and through OBL (A story from Kurna Yarta)

In 2021, Tracey and Katie taught together for the first time, relishing the opportunity to collaborate with objects from Flinders University Museum of Art's (FUMA) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection. In the Museum's teaching space, Tracey, Katie, and the objects made and held space for Australia's complex histories in which they are - and we are - intertwined. Students then collaborated with them all to produce knowledges and sparks that come from thinking and feeling together in an explicit place of learning.

Key to Tracey's and Katie's practices is their understanding that OBL is "deeply democratic". It offers multiple entry points to diverse communities of students and educators who are often non-Aboriginal practitioners on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Countries. Also, when we ask an object, "What brings you to this collection?", we can simultaneously ask ourselves, "What brings me here?". Within this, we can ignite our relationality with each other as a community of learners, knowledge holders, and knowledge producers on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Countries. Tracey and Katie's presentation will also discuss the place of collaboration as a form of collectivism in social justice pedagogies and the importance of peer conversations that act like kindling on the embers of practice.

About the speakers

Dr Katie Maher is a non-Aboriginal educator living on Kurna Yarta. She co-chairs the Pedagogies for Justice Research Group at the University of South Australia where she lectures and researches in culturally responsive pedagogies and Asia literacy. Her work is concerned with the question of how to live in better relation with each other and the world.

Tracey Ann Rankin is a non-Aboriginal educator and feminist practitioner living on unceded Kurna Yarta. She currently works in Health Sciences at Flinders University, with a focus on strengths-based approaches and understandings in curricula and praxis. Her interests include the roles of object-based learning and collectivism in social justice pedagogies.

Naomi Manning

Museums of History

Shannon Foster

Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges FASS, UTS

Working with community to create Indigenous perspectives on Object Based Learning

For this new program at the Museum of Sydney, Garuwanga Gurad, museum deliverers codesigned with community led by Dharawal Saltwater Knowledge Keeper Shannon Foster and her family to develop new ways of learning with objects made with traditional techniques and linked to the stories from the site. Before using these indigenous objects for OBL the program builds and scaffolds the context around an object “the place and people who used them and their ways of learning. One example is that students use the traditional cultural techniques to create an object (string) while hearing a yarn about the past. This gives meaning to the context of the object and reinforces the memories learned while making it-another Aboriginal way of learning. We also use authentic replicas of challenging objects from the past, such as the breast plate worn by Cora Goosberry, to tell challenging stories in an effort to communicate different perspectives and contribute to better cultural understanding.

About the speakers

Naomi Manning is passionate about teaching history. She is a Senior Program Producer at Museums of History NSW, developing and running education programs for school students. Prior to this Naomi worked for over 15 years as a History teacher and IT Integrator at Abbotsleigh, Wenona, Normanhurst Boys and at Community College. She loves developing virtual events and worked on the AMaGA award winning Convict Love Token live virtual event.

Shannon Foster is a Sydney based D'harawal Saltwater Knowledge Keeper and artist who has been teaching her family's stories for over twenty years to a range of audiences in learning institutions. Throughout her career Shannon has noticed a large gap in site-specific, Sydney based Aboriginal knowledge, not just in education but also in the wider Australian community. Shannon hopes to address this discrepancy through her PhD research as she documents the stories and knowledges of her family - the D'harawal people of the Sydney region.

Julie Overton

Georges River Environmental Education Centre

Using live objects in student learning

At the Georges River Environmental Education Centre our teachers have expanded the term “object-based learning” to include living objects from the natural world. To make this learning even more authentic, we regularly use live animals to engage our students. Our live animals are a great addition to our other natural objects, which as Thomas Kador, from University College London, recently published, “include natural heritage such as parks, gardens, forests, natural and cultural heritage sites”.

Georges River Environmental Education Centre, is a NSW Department of Education School, and we have already successfully completed a trial of our live, object-based geography lessons in Liverpool Hospital School, in Sydney’s southwest. Our green tree frog, Murray River turtle, spiny leaf insects, blue tongued lizard and shingleback lizard have been increasing the motivation of young patients to participate in lessons in the hospital school room, and bedside where this is not possible. This unique program has led to increased wellbeing in the students who attend. Unexpectedly, the program also had positive wellbeing outcomes for our student’s parents and family members, as well as the nurses and doctors treating the students. One nurse even commented that it had “made her day” to interact with the turtle.

About the speaker

Julie Overton started her career as an environmental scientist for 15 years before retraining as a teacher. She currently works for the NSW Department of Education as a teacher and mentor at Georges River Environmental Education Centre (EEC), developing and delivering environmentally based lessons, excursions, and teacher professional development courses.

Leen Rieth

University of Sydney Library

Institutional inquiries

Object-based learning can encourage institutional critique by initiating reflection on the curatorial and pedagogical premise behind collections. Institutional critique is a transferrable, interdisciplinary skill that can enhance students' experiences of learning at university, entering a workplace, or discovering how they participate in other constructs they live within.

Rieth will discuss how boxed collections from Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Sydney Library have been used to incorporate institutional critique into classes. The Library's boxed collections contain personal papers, research notes, internal organisation documents, and other unpublished material, which can provide counter-narratives, or a look "behind the scenes" of a person, organisation, or publication. For most students, it is rare to view these kinds of materials within an educational context. The boxed collections prompt them to consider how collections institutions function. Rieth will share experiences of working with two classes: undergraduate art students looking at artist books, protest, and self-published material, and postgraduate creative writing students focused on encounters with personal papers of authors. Rieth will demonstrate how students actively engaged with the significance of collections within their learning, and broader communities.

About the speaker

Leen Rieth is Object Based Learning Coordinator in the Rare Books and Special Collections team at University of Sydney. They are a PhD candidate in the school of Arts, Design, and Architecture at University of New South Wales. In their creative practice and research, they examine transgender experience, institutional narratives, and arts organising.

Mathew Sloane and Megan Baehnisch

Australian National Maritime Museum

Objects from the past: contrasting the use of original items and replicas at the Australian National Maritime Museum

The Maritime Museum education team inspires students using a combination of authentic objects and high-quality replicas as a gateway into the past. We aim to highlight two workshops that demonstrate different ways the education collection and object-based learning can be used in a museum setting.

A long running program is 'Cossies, Swimmers, Budgies and Boardies: The History of Swimwear'. This workshop gives HSC Textiles students the opportunity to discover >100 years of history through changes in swimwear over the last century. Handling authentic objects gives students a deeper understanding of the changing technology and fashions over time and provides insights into different materials and construction.

In contrast, 'Maritime Archaeology' incorporates a diverse range of objects including 3D printed replicas. It engages students (years 7-10) to investigate shipwrecks or land-based maritime archaeology sites such as the Dunbar, Batavia, HMAS Ballarat (WWI) and Sutton Hoo. Through observation and handling of artefacts, students infer their purpose and historical context, understand how artefacts provide a historical narrative and consider the ethical issues and cultural sensitivities surrounding artefacts in museums.

The use of both original items and 3D printed replicas has an important and varied role in museum education.

About the speaker

Mathew Sloane is the Head of Education at the Australian National Maritime Museum. He was previously the Manager of Digital and Outreach Education at the Australian Museum. Mat has Bachelor of Teaching, a PhD in molecular biology and is passionate about translating Museum collections, stories and knowledge into education programs.

Megan Baehnisch is a teacher with a Masters in Curating and Cultural Leadership from UNSW and is currently working with the education and digital teams at the Maritime Museum. She enjoys facilitating engaging learning experiences for students and is currently responsible for the education team's online programs and resources.

Dr Wendy Somerville, Delephene Fraser, Kyrah Hennessey and Frankie Blanchard
Centre for Creative and Cultural Research, University of Canberra

Storying with the collection

The Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra holds an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Artefact Teaching Collection. The collection consists of items made for the souvenir market in the mid to late 1980s. The objects were intended to be part of the training of future Cultural Heritage professionals and since 2019 items from the collection have been used in the teaching of an Indigenous subject focussing on the GLAM sector, and in a Conservation subject. The collection is the attention of research and study by a group of student interns who have undertaken much needed cataloguing, condition reporting and photographing of the cultural objects in preparation for an exhibition to be held at the Canberra Museums and Galleries next year. A part of the internship requires that the interns develop a set of protocols or guidelines for care of the collection. The protocols will be informed by the industry standards. A collaborative storying research approach was used to assess what guidelines would best suit the care of the collection. Our presentation describes the protocols identified by the interns as important in the future housing, care and use of the collection in teaching.

About the speakers

Dr Wendy Somerville teaches in the Culture and Heritage degree at the University of Canberra (UC). She is the inaugural First Nations Post-Graduate Research Fellow in the Centre for Cultural and Creative Research. Wendy's current research is with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts and Artefact Teaching Collection, UC.

Delephene Fraser is a Ngunnawal woman, the traditional owners of ACT and surrounding NSW area. She is interested in policy and completed under-grad and a masters degree in this area. Delephene is currently undertaking an Honours degree at UC. Her dissertation will provide policy for the university's Indigenous collections.

Kyrah Hennessey is a Wiradjuri woman who is in the final semester of her Bachelor of Arts degree (Culture and Heritage) at the University of Canberra. She hopes to put her degree to use working in cultural institutions overseas.

Francesca Blanchard is a non-Indigenous person who loves history and was born and raised on Wiradjuri Country in Orange NSW. She is in her final year of study in culture and heritage at the University of Canberra.

Object-Based Learning - Theory Meets Practice in Schools

This paper brings together academic theory on how and why learning history through objects works with insights from theory-into-practice in the context NSW history classrooms. Incorporating research from Dr Staats' doctoral research into 'haptic (hands-on) history' his son, Mr Staats, draws on his own experience as a new graduate teacher on how to implement this pedagogy in classrooms in South-Western Sydney. The presentation includes practical tools for best-practice in setting up and delivering object-based learning experiences for diverse student audiences in order to achieve maximum engagement and develop historical thinking.

About the speakers

Alexander Staats is an archaeologist, museum educator and high school history teacher. He has degrees in archaeology and museum and heritage studies (USyd) and education (UNE). He brings his experience in material culture to his teaching practice, where he uses object-based learning to teach history to disadvantaged students in South-West Sydney.

Dr John Staats (co-author, not presenting) gained an understanding of the value of object-based learning from classroom history teaching over thirty years. His PhD thesis 'Haptic History: Heads Hands and Hearts' (2020) investigated object-based learning as a multidisciplinary pedagogy for teaching history; it won recognition from the AARE (2021) and UWS (2020) for outstanding research.

Associate Professor Diana Young and Jane Willcock
University of Queensland

Materials knowledge through Object-Based Learning

Anthropologists Franz Boas, and more recently, Tim Ingold, argue that materials participate in the production of objects and, for Boas, how people think is concretized in objects. In this paper, we explore a few of the successes and failures out of the many tutorials with objects we have each, and jointly, designed and delivered using the collection of the UQ Anthropology Museum to teach classes across the university, especially in the Faculty of Humanities Art and Social Science (HASS). Discovery of the object's materials is found with sensory engagement through smell and touch and through analysing the ways that the object is constructed. Broken objects in the museum are ideal for this purpose. Both staff and students can be encouraged to overcome their diffidence to object-based learning - their own perceived lack of knowledge about what the object is and how it is classified for example- by being encouraged to ask the objects what they want.

About the speakers

A/Prof Diana Young is a scholar, educator, curator and a former director of the UQ Anthropology Museum. She has curated exhibitions from collection research used for ad hoc and structured learning and devised and delivered numerous object-based learning events for university course work using objects from the UQ Anthropology Museum.

Jane Willcock is Senior Registrar & Museum Operations Coordinator at The University of Queensland Anthropology Museum. Her current role includes nurturing community and education access to the museum's extensive collection. In her time at the university, she has managed logistics, collection care and delivered hundreds of classes for university students.

From the
Organising
Committee
Thank you

Connect with us

Chau Chak Wing Museum

Object-Based Learning Program

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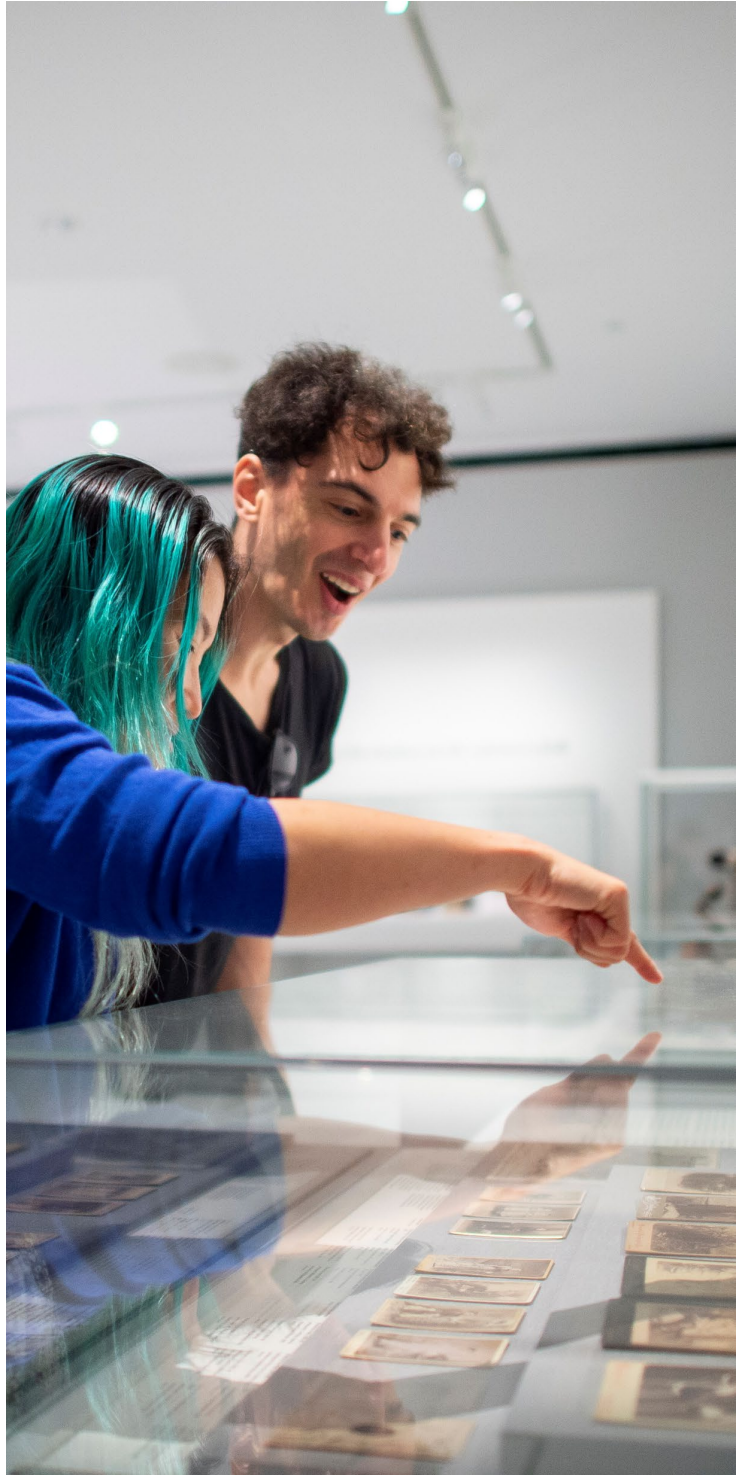
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