

*muse.*

Art. Culture. Antiquities. Natural history.  
Issue 13, March 2016

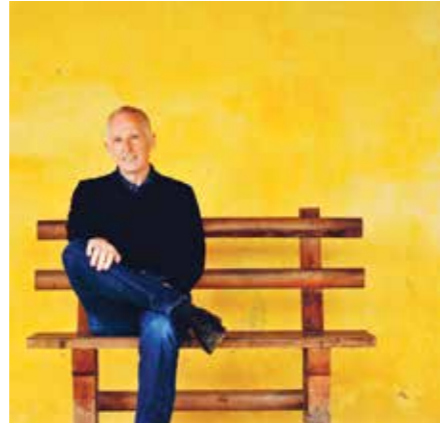


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Detail from a 4th century BC South Italian wine jug with imagery of a Persian. Nicholson Museum.

# Towards a new museum

## A word from the Director



David Ellis.  
Photograph  
by Martin Ho

We had an extraordinary year in 2015 on so many fronts.

With more than 120,000 visitors – a 15 percent increase on 2014 – it was a record year. Most notably, we secured significant funding for the new Chau Chak Wing Museum. This will see the collections of the Macleay and Nicholson Museums and the University Art Collection consolidated into the one site in a refurbishment of the Macleay and Edgeworth David Buildings along with a contemporary extension to link the two.

This critical infrastructure will transform the way we use the University's cultural and scientific collections in teaching and research and greatly expand our capacity for community engagement through exhibitions and related programs. Visitors to the new museum will see far more of the collections than they can at present.

Architects for the project will be Sydney firm Johnson Pilton Walker. We selected these architects because of their experience in designing museums (including the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra) and the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings. They enjoy a strong international reputation and are accustomed to working on projects valued at more than \$20 million. We are delighted to welcome them to the project.

As part of their studio curriculum, our own architecture students were asked to propose conceptual designs for the new museum. They certainly rose to the challenge: see page 24 for some of their brilliant ideas.

We will keep you up to date with the development of the Chau Chak Wing Museum in future issues of *Muse* and, from March, on our website: [sydney.edu.au/museums](http://sydney.edu.au/museums)

Two new exhibitions are opening at the Nicholson Museum. *Sea and sky: art in ancient Cyprus* opens in February while *Alpha to Omega: the beginning and the end* opens in March (see page 2).

At the Art Gallery, *Women in Power* continues until 8 April when it will be followed by a survey of late works by surrealist artist Dušan Marek (see page 4), opening on 18 April. Opening at the Macleay in conjunction with the continuing *Written in Stone* exhibition is *Rapid Prototyping – Models of Climate Change* by PhD candidate Kate Dunn.

Please check our website for details: – [sydney.edu.au/museums](http://sydney.edu.au/museums)

**David Ellis**  
Director, Museums and Cultural Engagement

## In this issue

- 02 Alpha and Omega**  
Opening with a unique flower, an exhibition in the Nicholson Museum honours the old and looks forward to the new.
- 04 Dušan Marek: art/film post 1960**  
We explore the multitalented Czech exile and surrealist's painting and filmmaking.
- 08 Gene genius**  
Gregor Mendel uncovered a whole new scientific field in the humble garden pea. We celebrate his work.
- 11 Stone age Stanley knife**  
Artefacts from our prehistoric past reveal a shared humanity: developing cognition and skills that could be passed on.
- 14 Women in Power**  
Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson AM's speech, read by alumna Anne Summers, to open an important exhibition.
- 17 Tombs of time**  
Pottery from an Early Bronze Age cemetery in Cyprus reveals a great experimentation with form.
- 21 Microscopic abstractions**  
Images from under the microscope rendered large form intriguing works by an emerging artist.
- 24 Visions for the Macleay**  
Architecture students apply their considerable skills to devise stunning designs for a new museum.
- 28 Grave secrets**  
Roman marble funerary stones offer a glimpse into lives long past and encourage us to contemplate our own mortality.
- 31 Donations**  
Sydney University Museums acknowledges the help and contributions of our many supporters.
- 32 Rites of passage**  
Two students take a close look at Indonesian cultures through exquisite objects in the Macleay Museum.
- 34 Making history**  
All the news on University of Sydney museums: talks, acquisitions, VIP visits, new staff, overseas trips, theatre.
- 36 Find your muse**  
For your diary: everything that's coming up at Sydney University Museums over the next few months.



From the cover: detail from a 4th century BC South Italian wine jug with imagery of a Persian. Nicholson Museum NM97.185. Photo: Carl Bento. One of the objects from the exhibition *Alpha & Omega*. See story page 2-3.

**Sydney University Museums**  
Comprising the Macleay Museum, Nicholson Museum and University Art Gallery

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# Alpha and Omega

As the University prepares for its new flagship museum, an alphabetically arranged exhibition comprises an elegy to the past even as it anticipates the future, writes Michael Turner.

*Alpha and Omega: The Beginning and the End* opens in the Nicholson Museum in March. It will be the last major exhibition in the museum before we move to the Chau Chak Wing Museum in 2018.

The exhibition explores things mysterious and beautiful across all three collections: the Nicholson Museum, the Macleay Museum and the University Art Gallery. Each letter of the Greek alphabet will introduce an object or objects with stories to tell.

To begin at the beginning ...

**α** alpha for ἀνθος: anthos\*, a flower

With their flowers and trees, fountains and birds, wall paintings are a haunting reminder of how beautiful Roman gardens must once have been. Added to this visual feast are the writings of Pliny the Younger (61-113 AD), who describes in detail his villa and gardens at Tifernum in

the foothills of the Apennines on the border between Tuscany and Umbria (Book 5.6, *Letter to Domitius Apollinaris*).

In his villa is a wall decorated with trees and birds. In the garden are clipped box hedges and obelisks, bushes cut in the shape of animals, beds of acanthus, a rose garden, plane trees linked by garlands of ivy, fruit trees, water features and marble seats. There are contemporary descriptions of the Roman countryside in Virgil's *Georgics and Eclogues*. Indeed in the 17th and early 18th centuries, no self-respecting garden designer in England would set to work without a copy of Pliny in one hand, Virgil in the other.

Painted on plaster, this picture of a flower is nearly 2000 years old, and comes from the wall of a villa such as Pliny's. Volcanic inclusions in the plaster suggest that the villa was in, or close to, Pompeii or Herculaneum. It has been painted in the true fresco style by which paint



Above: Fragment of a Roman wall painting of an iris, 60-79 AD Nicholson Museum NM80.49. Photo: Carl Bento.

is applied to still-wet plaster. As the plaster dries, the pigments in the paint are absorbed, ensuring that the colours remain vivid.

The style of the painting is impressionistic and typical of the time of the emperor Nero (54-68AD), a period that fits nicely with the redecoration necessary in many villas around the Bay of Naples following the earthquake of 62AD and before the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD.

Cut – some may say vandalised – from a much larger scene on the lower zone of a painted wall, it shows what appears to be an iris *albicans*, a type of iris common in the Bay of Naples area even today.

In his *Natural History* (Book 21. 40-42), Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) describes the iris as being prized for both its exquisite perfume and its root, which was used in medicine and for the making of ointments and perfumes. He writes that the Illyrian iris was multicoloured like the rainbow, hence the name: in Greek mythology, Iris is the winged female personification of the rainbow.

**Michael Turner is Senior Curator at the Nicholson Museum.**

\**anthos*: as in agapanthus (the flower of love); acanthus (the sharp flower); anthology (literally, a collection of flowers).

# Dušan Marek: art/film post 1960

Surrealist,  
visionary, painter,  
filmmaker, outsider.  
Guest curator  
Stephen Mould  
introduces an  
exhibition of works  
by multitalented  
Czech artist and  
exile Dušan Marek.

Imagine the plight of a 23-year-old Czechoslovakian refugee, forced to flee his homeland in the wake of the Stalinist occupation in 1948 and who, after many dangers, adventures and dislocations, arrives in Australia, eventually settling in Adelaide. He knows little of that city except its reputation as the “city of churches”, which plants in his mind an erroneous connection with the city of Prague.

The refugee is a painter, who was born in one of the most beautiful and evocative areas of Czechoslovakia, the “Czech Paradise”, an area rich in magical landscapes and rock formations littered with castles and ancient ruins. The artist has studied in Prague, imbibing the Prague school of surrealism from teachers including celebrated painter and illustrator Frantisek Tichy.

Marek’s impressions on arriving in Adelaide in late 1948 were not recorded, although his subsequent disillusionment about his reception by the local art community is well known.

Marek’s surrealist calling card associated him with an ideology that was highly suspect in postwar Australia and his early exhibitions caused considerable controversy – Marek’s uncompromising attitudes and philosophies failed to win him friends or supporters.

In retrospect, it may be seen

that Marek was referencing an exotic repertoire of surrealist iconography to express his sense of dislocation, alienation and homelessness – a message that failed to resonate among prospering postwar Australians.

During the early 1950s, Marek lived a peripatetic existence, the recognition he sought eluding him, though he painted quite prolifically and also began to make experimental films. Finally, despairing of making further headway in Australia, Marek relocated to Papua New Guinea in 1954, where he lived for nearly five years. This may have been a necessary fallow period – Marek was only intermittently active as an artist, and completed few works during this time.

A new direction unfolded in Marek’s life in 1959 when he returned to Adelaide – releasing the creative block that had characterised his time in New Guinea. The Australian landscape began to feature in his work in an entirely new way. The overtly surrealist iconography of his earlier work did not entirely disappear, but became more discreetly incorporated into landscapes in an abstract, expressionistic style.

During this period Marek also resumed filmmaking, producing a series of animated short films that share many synergies with his painting output at that time. This culminated later in the decade with



Above: Dušan Marek  
*Pharaoh's Paradise*, 1970  
University of Sydney  
Art Collection.

Donated by James Agapitos  
and Ray Wilson through the  
Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program 2005.



Left: Image of Dušan Marek in *Cobweb on a Parachute*.

two feature-length surrealist films: *Cobweb on a parachute* (1966-7) and *And the word was made flesh* (1969-70).

Subsequently, Marek's painting output became characterised by an intense engagement with the landscape, often referenced by philosophical, religious and spiritual resonances. His surrealist sensibility fused with the mystical power of the landscape to create a body of work unique in Australian art.

In recent years, Marek's early works have attracted attention as the history of surrealism in the Australian context has been explored. His works painted prior to 1955 have been increasingly exhibited and written about. Works created since 1960, however, are relatively unknown, and little critical attention has been paid to this aspect of Marek's oeuvre since his death in 1993.

Above (clockwise): Film still from *And the Word was Made Flesh* (1969-70); Film stills from *Adam and Eve* (1962); The blinding scene from *Cobweb on a Parachute* (1966-67).

This exhibition will present a selection of Marek's works that focus on his engagement with the Australian landscape, including several from his groundbreaking exhibition in 1963 at the Bonython Gallery, Adelaide, where he presented a series of abstractions, many painted on metal and inspired by the landscape of South Australia's Coorong, which he visited often, and which came to figure significantly in his work.

There are also works from 1973-82 when the artist lived in Margate, Tasmania, a rural area outside of Hobart, punctuated by a fellowship at the Australian National University in Canberra in 1977. Marek returned to Adelaide in 1982, where he spent the remainder of his life, producing several important series of paintings, notably *Homage to the Sun* (1984) which was a response to the disastrous bushfires in the Adelaide Hills.

As a counterpoint, the exhibition also incorporates a selection of Marek's most important films, including the award-winning animated *Adam and Eve* (1962) and *Cobweb on a Parachute* (1966-7), which was perhaps the first full-length, surrealist film produced in Australia.

Dušan Marek was a virtuosic, multifarious artist, a loner and a maverick. He is unique in having brought to these shores a surrealist sensibility that he developed in Prague, one of the wellsprings of European surrealism. Using this heritage to navigate the antipodean landscape, Marek has created a unique legacy that is ripe for reassessment.

**Stephen Mould is Chair of Opera Production at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He teaches operatic studies and conducting.**

# Gene genius

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Scientist Gregor Mendel is acclaimed as the founder of modern genetics. As the Macleay Museum gets set to celebrate his work, Frank Nicholas considers its lasting significance.

On 8 February and 8 March 1865 – some 150 years ago – Gregor Mendel read a paradigm-shifting paper to the Natural History Society of Brno, now in the Czech Republic. At those two meetings, Mendel reported the results and a radical explanation for eight years of experimental crosses among inbred varieties of garden pea.

Intriguingly, neither Mendel nor any of the scientists who read his paper in the decades following its publication realised the universality of his results and his explanation for them. It was not until 1900 – 16 years after Mendel's death – that scientists began to appreciate his work.

How did Mendel become interested in heredity? Part of the answer takes us to central Europe in the early decades of the 19th century – and Merino sheep. The stud farms of the prized sheep in the regions of Saxony, Bohemia and Moravia (between Dresden and Vienna) were so highly



regarded for wool production that pioneering farmers from as far away as Australia employed agents to purchase rams from these studs. The rams were walked more than 600 kilometres to Hamburg then shipped to Sydney, from where they were distributed to Merino studs, playing a major role in establishing the Australian wool industry.

The Moravian stud breeders were so enthusiastic that in 1814 they formed the Moravian Sheep Breeders Society that was, in effect, a scientific society chiefly concerned with the mysteries of inheritance. By 1837, Abbot Napp of the Brno Augustinian monastery (and sheep farms) was leading discussions in the society on the questions of "what is inherited

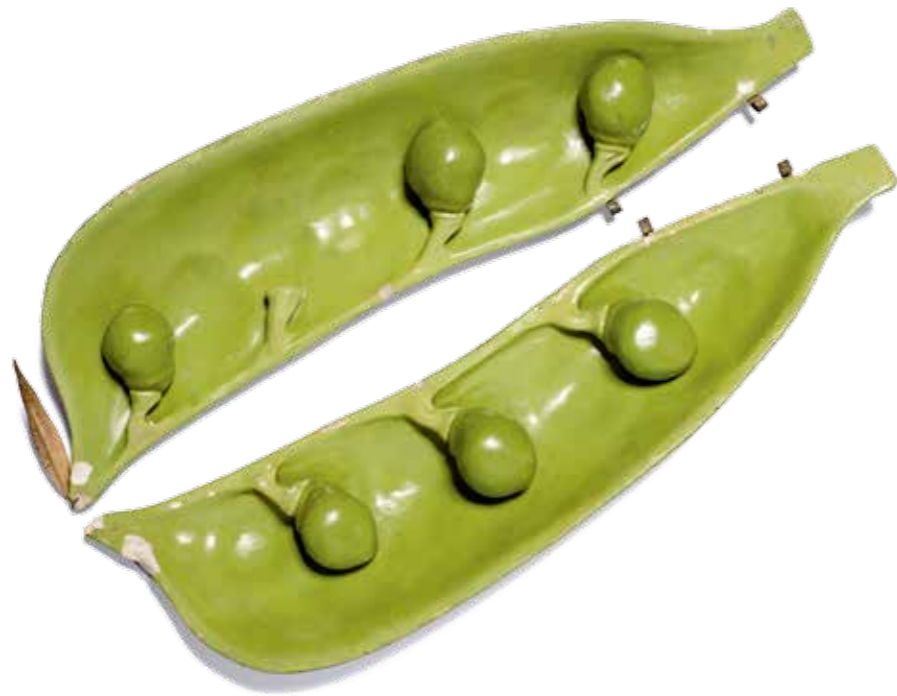
and how?" A few years later, in 1843, a 21-year-old Johann Mendel entered the monastery as a novice monk, taking the name Gregor.

After a few years in the monastery, mainly teaching in schools, Mendel was sent to the University of Vienna where, among other subjects, he studied probability and combinations – knowledge that was to be central to interpreting his own data.

At the monastery Mendel was given the use of the garden and a glasshouse built especially for conducting plant breeding experiments. Mendel challenged himself to develop a "generally applicable law governing the formation and development of hybrids".

British King, a stud ram from HT Edwards's property *Burnima*, in Monaro, NSW (HP83.60), Macleay Museum.

Model of a pea plant used in teaching biological sciences, Macleay Museum. Photo: Carl Bento, 2015.



Starting with 34 different varieties of the garden pea, he soon narrowed his experimental resources down to seven inbred strains, each of which was pure-breeding for a particular set of traits that could be scored easily, for example, difference in the colour of the seed coat.

Over the course of eight years, Mendel collected a large body of data from a formidable array of crosses of two or more of his inbred strains, involving the evaluation of 24,034 pea plants.

The "law" that Mendel developed is best described as a bold hypothesis: assume that each gamete (pollen grain or egg cell) comprises a set of elements, each of which somehow

determines a particular trait. Given this assumption, it is possible to predict the ratio of offspring with particular traits that will result from a mating if we know the elements that exist in both parents.

The truly remarkable thing is that it took more than a century (and many Nobel Prizes) before the nature and function of Mendel's "elements" became properly understood.

This is a wonderful example of the scientific method: developing a hypothesis then testing predictions from it. If the predictions are useful, the hypothesis is useful and can be used, irrespective of whether anything is known about the actual nature of what is assumed to exist.

Join us at the Macleay Museum for the inaugural "Mendel Day" on 8 March 2016 as the Genetics Society of Australasia and geneticists around the world host events to salute Mendel's bold hypothesis – a hypothesis that has enabled us to make so much sense out of so much biological confusion, and to make so much progress in feeding, clothing and improving the health of humanity.

**Frank Nicholas is Emeritus Professor of Animal Genetics at the Faculty of Veterinary Science.**

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## Stone Age Stanley Knife



Implements more than half a million years old held in the Nicholson Museum reflect human cognitive development, writes Patricia Anderson.

Above: NM62.426 Undated leaf-shaped flint knife from Cambridgeshire; its surface, with consistent pressure flaking on both sides and along its edges, suggests a Solutrean artefact created between 22,000 and 20,000 years ago.



NM47.140



NM63.29



NM48.80



NM63.96

Clockwise from above: NM47.140 Small grey flint scraper, possibly from the Mesolithic period; NM63.29 Egyptian axe head; NM63.96 Acheulean handaxe in yellow, brown and red jasper, from Selling in Kent, Great Britain; NM48.80 Yellow, thin, butted flint axe from the Dagger period in Denmark (c. 2800-1700 BC).

Opposite page: View of Lipari, part of the Aeolian Islands of the north east coast of Sicily - the volcanic formation of this group of islands created a major source of obsidian that was traded and used throughout the central Mediterranean from the Neolithic period; inset, NM62.294.7 Obsidian core from Lipari.

The global groundswell of interest in artefacts from our prehistoric past reveals our shared humanity at a time when no written records exist to bear testimony to it.

Indeed, 99 percent of our history is prehistoric, which leaves a lot of humankind's developing apprehension of the world and the skills acquired to negotiate it completely unmapped - except of course for stone tools and implements. These tools, which made their first appearance about 2.6 million years ago, represent our earliest attempts to shape the material world.

From the moment our oldest cousins in Africa cracked a stone to create a chopping or cutting edge to the refinements that led to the smoothly

polished, largely symbolic and much-prized jade and hardstone axes of the Neolithic period (c.10,000-2500 BC) our ancestors were set on a trajectory of skills that could be passed on by example, even before the development of language.

In about 1830, the finds of an amateur French archaeologist, Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes, met with scepticism. Alongside evidence of extinct mammals, he had discovered flints that had been shaped by humans in the gravel of the Somme Valley in Northern France.

Yet the scientific frame of reference required to prove the depth of their antiquity did not yet exist. Archaeology was at the time just a budding field of enquiry. Today those

hand axes are known to be at least half a million years old, perhaps even older, which would link them to Homo Erectus.

The hand axe is the most useful implement in the prehistoric toolkit. It is akin to today's Swiss army knife, and it provides a valuable insight: the capacity for the maker to imagine the shape they wished to achieve in the rough piece of stone - a huge conceptual and aesthetic leap. The most prized materials were flint and chert, found as nodules or seams in chalk and limestone deposits. Both can be given a sharp cutting edge by flaking.

The Nicholson Museum holds many striking examples, especially those found in Great Britain, Denmark and Africa. These include hammer

stones, axes, scrapers, flakes, burins, sickles and chisels. Broadly speaking, the prehistoric maker began with a stone core (a cobble or pebble) from which flakes could be struck.

The technique of precise striking that prepares a core for further refinements is known as a "chaîne opératoire" (or "reduction sequence") and the method of producing flakes from it of a predetermined shape and size is known as the *Levallois* technique (the name derives from a suburb in north-west Paris where such assemblages were discovered). This technique first appeared in the lower Paleolithic period, and the results were known as Acheulean tools.

This Acheulean handaxe in yellow, brown and red jasper, from Selling in Kent, Great Britain, is one of several distinctive examples of that period. It has been flaked on both sides to give it a striking symmetry viewed from both back and front and it would have sat comfortably in the hand (NM63.96, opposite page).

A similar hand axe, flaked from toffee-coloured flint from the Fayum region in lower Egypt, is most likely Neolithic but exhibits the same characteristics. Its particular gloss, a result of age and use, is called patina - one of those characteristics that reassures archaeologists and collectors that they are looking at the genuine article (NM63.29, opposite page).

A small grey flint scraper, possibly from the Mesolithic period, from Long Riston, near Yorkshire, shows the characteristic "bulb of percussion" (below right) where it has been struck free from a core and exhibits the concentric ripples that radiate out from it. This is one of the characteristic ways in which flint, chert, jasper and other gemmologically related stones behave when struck or cleaved (NM47.140, opposite page).

The beautifully proportioned leaf-shaped flint knife (page 11) from Cambridgeshire is undated, but its surface, which exhibits consistent pressure flaking on both sides and along the entirety of its edges,

suggest a Solutrean artefact (that is, one created between 22,000 and 20,000 years ago) (NM62.426).

Polished axes that appeared around the world in the Neolithic period mark a technological advance that partly defines a boundary between the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. A striking yellow, thin, butted flint axe from the Dagger period in Denmark (c. 2800-1700 BC) (NM48.80) is a good example of a tool originally designed to fell trees which then became a status symbol used for ritual exchange. Many have been recovered from the lakes and bogs of Denmark.

Finally, the museum has an extensive collection of black obsidian cores, blades and flakes (NM62.294.7, below). Obsidian is a volcanic glass from which thin, razor-sharp blades can be struck.

**Patricia Anderson is a Council Member of the Friends of the Nicholson Museum.**



NM62.294.7





Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson AM, who was to launch this unique exhibition late last year, was unexpectedly unavailable. This is her speech, which was read on the night by leading feminist, writer and University alumna Dr Anne Summers.

## Women in Power

**In celebrating the ascension of women's art, the Women in Power exhibition charts a slow revolution in the politics of gender that stubbornly took root in the late 20th century. The profound impact of the women's movement on Australian culture is still unfolding as a complex and contested legacy.**

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to commence by acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land, the Cadigal people, who have been teaching and learning here for thousands of years.

I am delighted to have been asked to open the exhibition, Women in Power, here at the University Art Gallery.

What a wonderful and beautifully curated exhibition. I congratulate [curator] Ann Stephen and her team on their work.

And what a great idea to ask women to choose a piece from the Power collection. I am particularly pleased that my own choice, *Labyrinthe Diagonal*, by Martha Boto, has been selected for the cover of the catalogue. It is a stunning piece – industrial and geometric and yet full of light and quite mesmerising.

My choice was motivated by my interest in inspiring women towards science, technology, engineering and mathematics. *Labyrinthe Diagonal* is solid proof that these disciplines can be beautiful.

Indeed this entire exhibition is testimony to the talent and innovation of women artists, and to their deep empathy for their subjects, whatever they might be. It speaks to the breadth and variety of subjects and genres that women have tackled in the last 40 years.

It is during that time that women have really come into their own in the art world – in the West, at least – having previously been confined to the footnotes of art history.

And not, of course, for any lack of ability.

The University's Power Collection – from which this exhibition is sourced – has come a long way since its commencement in 1967, with just three pieces by women.

Indeed, in the nearly 50 years since then, our society has changed a great deal. By way of example, one of my co-selectors for this exhibition is Justice Virginia Bell of the High Court of Australia.

A female High Court Justice was sadly unthinkable in 1967. It was 20 years later that the first female High Court Judge in Australia was appointed. And it was to be another

Left: Architect Penelope Seidler AM at the opening of *Women in Power* with the Helen Frankenthaler print, *Spoleto*, 1972, that she selected from the Power collection. Seidler recalled the association she and her late husband, Harry Seidler, had with the artist. "Harry and I bought her large stained work *Hillside* for the entry of our Killara house ... we later commissioned Helen to design a huge tapestry for the new Hong Kong club that Harry designed and completed in 1984."



Rosie Dhawupu Rodji, *Mindirr* [pandanus palm collecting bag], c. 1984; ochres on pandanus palm, hand-spun bark fibre string and Margaret Dhawupu Gindjimirri, 2 *Mindirr* (pandanus collecting bags), c. 1984. Selected for the exhibition by Justice Virginia Bell AC.

18 years before a second woman took her seat on the High Court. I am pleased that Virginia is in fact the fourth.

The reasoning behind her choice of pieces by Ramingining women [of the Northern Territory] is indicative of her deep interest in social justice and reconciliation. (The story is on page 30 of the catalogue.)

Each of the women who chose artworks for this exhibition has given her reasoning in the pages of the catalogue. It really is fascinating reading. Women's stories fill these pages as well as hang on these walls.

They are stories as valid and as well told as those of any man. They are stories with an additional poignancy – that of the struggle to be heard which underlies each and every one, and which is alluded to directly in the untitled piece by Barbara Kruger selected by [art historian, Professor] Virginia Spate.

There is a long way still to go. This is one of the last exhibitions that will be seen in this lovely but somewhat limiting space. As many of you will be aware, the University Art Gallery will close towards the end of next year as we plan for the opening of the new Chau Chak Wing Museum.

The Museum is a really exciting project. It will bring together the collections of the Macleay and Nicholson Museums and this Gallery, in an adaptive reuse of the Macleay and Edgeworth David Buildings.

The Chau Chak Wing museum will enable us to truly showcase the University's amazing collections. More than 2000 square metres of exhibition space will be available for temporary and semi-permanent exhibitions.

The temporary exhibition galleries alone will be seven times the size of this gallery. The possibilities for what we can do with that space are just wonderful.

We will be able to bring back the Power Collection and to display far more of it at any time.

The new museum will also provide custom study rooms to allow students to access the collections.

I don't want to wish the years away, but I am very much looking forward to the opening of the new Museum in 2018 – it will be the start of a new era.

Ladies and gentlemen, I do hope you enjoy this exhibition.

**Belinda Hutchinson AM is Chancellor of the University of Sydney; Anne Summers is a leading writer, journalist and feminist.**

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## Tombs of time

The Nicholson Museum houses material from an important Early Bronze Age cemetery in Cyprus. Dr Craig Barker examines items recovered in the 1930s by a former curator.

Above: Fig.1. A Red Polished I Ware Lug jug with incised decoration (NM53.164).

In 1937, Australian-born archaeologist James Rivers Barrington Stewart (1913-1962) and his first wife, Eleanor, began archaeological excavations at the Early Bronze Age (c. 2400-200 BC) cemetery site of Vounous in the northern foothills of the Kyrenia mountain range on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. The Stewarts noted the site's proximity to Turkey across the Mediterranean: "On a clear day the Taurus Mountains in Asia Minor stand like a cloud along the northern horizon."

Working under the aegis of the British School at Athens, the excavations mark the first time an Australian archaeologist had led a formal expedition anywhere in the Mediterranean. Although then based in Cambridge, Stewart would return to Sydney in 1947 to take up a teaching role at the

University of Sydney. He would eventually become curator of the Nicholson Museum and hold the first Australian professorship of Middle Eastern Archaeology.

In the 1950s, Stewart and his second wife, Eve, would return to Cyprus to excavate other Bronze Age sites in the island's north. Through his work, the Nicholson Museum would become one of the world's foremost centres of Cypriot archaeological research – the museum's support of University of Sydney archaeological work at the ancient theatre of Nea Paphos continues this tradition today.

Stewart was particularly interested in the development of early ceramic traditions. The burials at Vounous had already proved important even before the Stewarts worked

there: the cemetery had undergone excavations by pioneering Cypriot archaeologist Porphyrios Dikaios (1904-1971) on behalf of the Cyprus Museum in 1931-2, then a joint season in 1933 by the National Museum of France and the Cyprus Museum directed by Dikaios and Claude F A Schaeffer (1898-1982). The 1937-8 excavations would see Stewart become one of the pre-eminent Bronze Age scholars of his generation.

The cemetery of Vounous (the associated prehistoric settlement has never been located) is close to the village of Bellapais, made famous in 1957 by novelist and travel writer Lawrence Durrell in *The Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*.

The village is dominated by the nearby ruins of the 13th



Fig 3: Bellapais Abbey, North Cyprus, where the Stewarts located their dig workhouse in 1937-8.



Fig. 2: A Red Polished I-II Ware spouted milk-bowl excavated from Tomb 154 (NM53.181).

century Abbaye de la Belle Paix (Bellapais Abbey) [see Fig. 3].

The Stewarts excavated 84 Early Cypriot rock-cut tombs in two burial mounds over 18 months. Setting up their workspace in the Great Hall of the Abbey, they set to work recording the finds Cypriot workmen cleared from the tombs.

The finds from just one of the tombs indicate the vibrancy of Early Cypriot pottery traditions. Tomb 154 was a typical burial of the era: a 2.5 metre sloping dromos (entrance) leading into a sealed bedrock cut chamber, about 2.7m by 2.35m. The chamber had been disturbed by water – many items were covered with silt and pieces seemingly had

floated off the chamber's floor and moved from their original position.

Tomb 154 was dated to the Early Cypriot I phase (c.2400-2150 BC) by the excavators, who noted that it seemed to contain only a single burial (published as a male but the bones were in bad condition).

The body was interred with a homogenous group of ceramics items. The Stewarts noted the high proportion of small pots compared with other tombs in the cemetery. In their 1950 publication of the excavation, James and Eleanor record 39 items from Tomb 154.

The tomb group reflects the range of experimentation with form

undertaken by Cypriot potters in this era. So-called Red Polished pottery was common; it was hand-made, distinguished by a dark, red-brown surface slip, the colour of which was derived from oxidising conditions during firing. The surface was usually highly polished.

A Red-Polished I-II spouted milk-bowl (NM53.181), designated tomb find no. 19 [Fig. 2] was excavated. Although these have become known as milk bowls, there is no definite knowledge of their actual function.

Stewart would write later in his corpus of Cypriot pottery: "I have taken the name from Sir John Myres, who believed that these bowls were used in dairy-farming for separating

# Microscopic abstractions

Emerging artist Nick De Lorenzo is exploring the Macleay Museum's intriguing microscopic images – for maximum impact in his work.



Nick De Lorenzo,  
Microscopic  
Abstraction #7  
(HP90-35-103).  
Unique silver  
gelatin print  
and gold leaf  
on paper,  
55x75cm, 2015.



Fig.4 A reproduction of Eleanor Stewart's illustration of the red-crossed bowl now in the Nicholson Museum (NM53.169), originally published in the 1950 excavation report.

cream and milk. The tubular side-spouts would enable the milk to be drawn off without disturbing the creamy surface."

A Red Polished I Ware ear-lug pot (NM53.164), designated tomb find no. 32 [Fig. 1] demonstrates the creative incision decoration of the era: geometric lines and dot patterns across the top of the body, with a blackened surface over the neck and part of the body.

A distinctive shallow Red Polished Ware red-crossed bowl (NM53.169) designated tomb find no. 12 [Fig. 5], was so exquisite that the Stewarts published an extraordinary colour

illustration of the vessel in the 1950 excavation report [Fig 4]. The three vessels show the wide range of shapes of Red Polished Ware created by potters of the era.

These and other finds from the 1937-8 season were scattered to collections around the globe, and the Nicholson Museum material was donated by Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in 1952.

Today the Nicholson Museum holds a substantial amount of pottery from the Vounous cemetery site, not just from the Stewarts' excavations, but also from Dikaios and Schaeffer's

earlier fieldwork. Stewart had arranged to bring it to Australia from the Cyprus Museum in 1956 but had not completed by the time of his death in 1962. Objects from Vounous are displayed in the Nicholson Museum's new exhibition *The Sea and the Sky: Ancient Cypriot art*.

**Craig Barker is a Cypriot archaeologist who directs the University of Sydney's excavations at Paphos. He is Manager, Education and Public Programs at Sydney University Museums.**



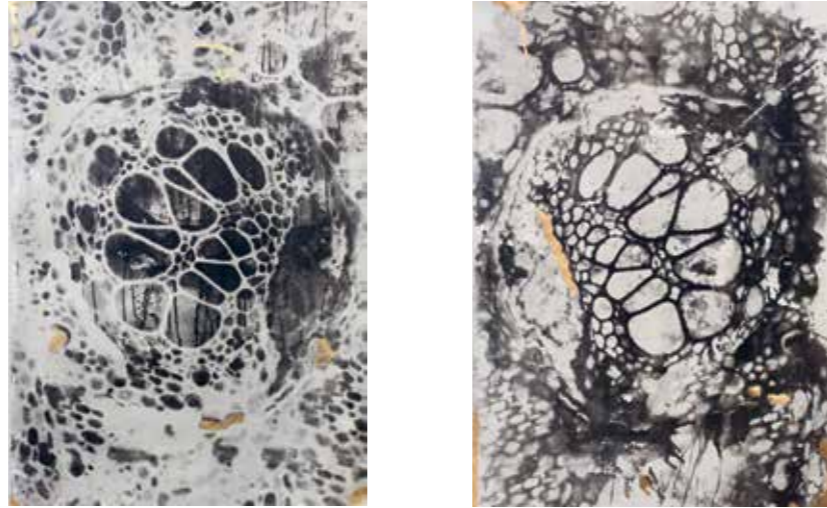
Fig.5. This Red Polished Ware bowl (NM53.169) is distinguished by its painted red-cross pattern that hints at the linear creativity explored by Cypriot potters and painters in coming millennia.

Clockwise from right:  
 Nick De Lorenzo, *Microscopic Abstractions #17 (Positive)* (HP90-35-471), unique silver gelatin print and gold leaf on paper, 75x105cm, 2015

*Microscopic Abstractions #17 (Negative)* (HP90-35-471), unique silver gelatin print and gold leaf on paper, 75x105cm, 2015

Composite image of lantern slide HP90-35-583 from the Historic Photography Collection

*Microscopic Abstractions #8* (HP90-35-103), unique silver gelatin print and gold leaf on paper, 55x75cm, 2015.



When I started research with the Macleay Museum's Historic Photography Collection (a sizeable archive spanning all sorts of photographic, cultural and social histories from the late 1840s to the 1960s), I wasn't really sure what I was looking for or what I would find.

Found imagery, both physical and digital, has always played a role in my work and, following a suggestion from my supervisor, artist Mikala Dwyer, who had recently worked with the Macleay's geology collection, I was interested in seeing the museum's microscopic images.

Curator Jan Brazier led me through some of the Macleay's vast collection of lantern slides – a format of reproducible glass plate transparency used around the turn of the 20th century as teaching aids (the PowerPoint presentation of its day).

I became interested primarily in microscopic images from the early days of the University's Department of Botany. Microscopic images fit in well with my work as they

exist between abstraction and representation: while they depict a reality – a micro view of something that once existed – without context they are beautifully abstract.

These abstract microscopic images reflect something distinctively photographic: the medium's unique ability not just to represent reality but to visualise what is invisible to the naked eye; to capture, record and transmute to image the unseeable.

The lantern slides are already at a remove from the original specimen photographed through the microscope. I manipulate digital reproductions of the slides in Photoshop, print them to acetate and enlarge them onto sensitised paper in the darkroom.

Each step further distances and obscures the final image from its initial reality, playing with the photograph's indexicality (the connection between a photo and its subject), in a sense creating new realities by corroding long-lost ones.

While the photo's indexicality lingers in part, it is fragmented and obscured by the materiality of the image itself. As the image is pushed through various digital, chemical and physical manipulations, it reaches a point where it holds only a tenuous connection to its origins.

Many of the lantern slides in the collection have little or no record of what they depict. Detached from their original context and purpose, the initial use and worth of the photo-object (as a scientific teaching aid and source material) is diminished and obscured.

Such slides hold more intrigue for me, and by repurposing these images, I hope my work can bring a fresh perspective and generate new purposes for these otherwise overlooked images.

**Nick De Lorenzo is undertaking a Master of Fine Arts at Sydney College of the Arts. View his work at [www.nickdelorenzo.com](http://www.nickdelorenzo.com) or follow him on Instagram @nicoflasho**

# Visions for the Macleay

Architecture students have contributed exceptional designs for a new museum in the Macleay Building. Jennifer Ferng reveals several concepts that wowed the judges.



The Faculty of Architecture, Design, and Planning has begun using real-world planning projects as part of the undergraduate studio curriculum. These design exercises are grounded in the University's endeavours to expand learning facilities on campus. They are aligned with Strategic Plan initiatives that focus on sustained enquiry and community-engaged learning.

In Semester 2, 2015, students in the second-year architecture studio examined a range of 20th-century buildings such as hospitals, museums, prisons, and scientific laboratories to explore how such institutional typologies have changed over time.

Using the University campus as a site, coordinators Dr Jennifer Ferng and Dr Sean Anderson asked students to propose conceptual designs for a new museum extension in the existing Macleay and Edgeworth David Buildings.

The extension would increase the museum's floorspace by 1000 square metres. Ferng and Anderson formulated a simplified design brief around some of the existing criteria set for the museum extension funded by philanthropist Dr Chau Chak Wing, which is well underway in the design process.

Students were asked to analyse contemporary museum precedents and, as a result of these case studies, propose architectural plans and models that included archive and collection spaces, an exhibition gallery, a café, and a multimedia theatre in their proposed schemes.

This project offered specific challenges for these architecture students, who had to contend with designing effective circulation and public entry for their buildings as well as provide learning resources for fellow students.

Above: Gloria Neo, Interior perspective.



Right: Alex Prichard, Interior Spaces Axonometric.

These student projects present innovative, alternative visions of the Macleay Museum and its position on the campus as a leading cultural institution.

Five staff members involved with the University museums – among them Director David Ellis, curators Dr Jude Philp, Michael Turner, Dr Ann Stephen, and Power Professor of Art History Mark Ledbury – were invited to the final reviews to select some of the most outstanding student work. Some of these original schemes are highlighted here.

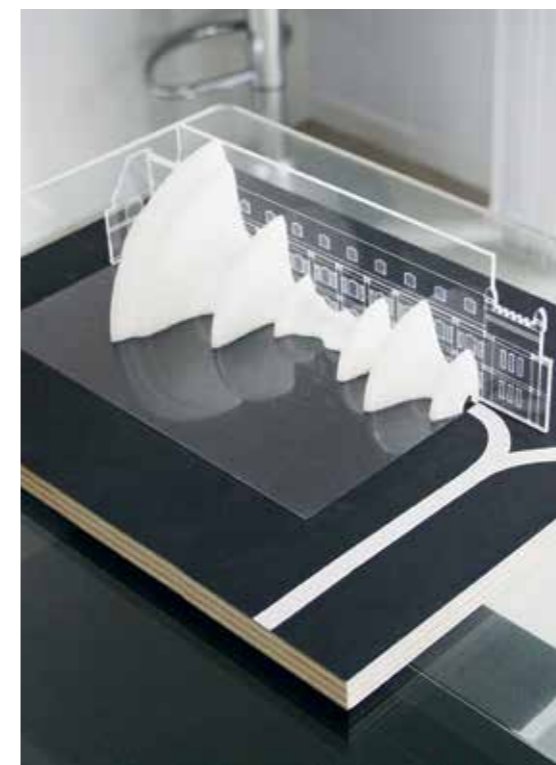
**Gloria Neo:** Neo sought to stimulate visitor experience through innovative use of the heritage structure. As shown in this render (see page 24), the solid brick walls of the building provide openings between areas. Glass walls offer vistas, and are also the solid boundaries between the spaces.

**James Feng:** Feng’s work (below left), inspired by the much-celebrated urban architecture of Bilbao, Spain, creates a deliberate visual rupture between the heritage building and his addition. His ‘museum of relevance’ is conceptually and practically oriented to Parramatta Road rather than the internal University architecture.

**Karen Lin:** In designing an extension for the existing heritage building (below, 2nd and 3rd from left), Lin conceived a form constructed from a mechanical steel frame that could change shape in relationship to the activities within.

**Alex Prichard:** A deconstructed cube (below right) provides space and dynamism for the museum’s exhibition areas. Prichard reinterprets the heritage building for a library and study rooms, along with storage and offices.

Dr Jennifer Ferng is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning and a co-editor of *Architectural Theory Review*.

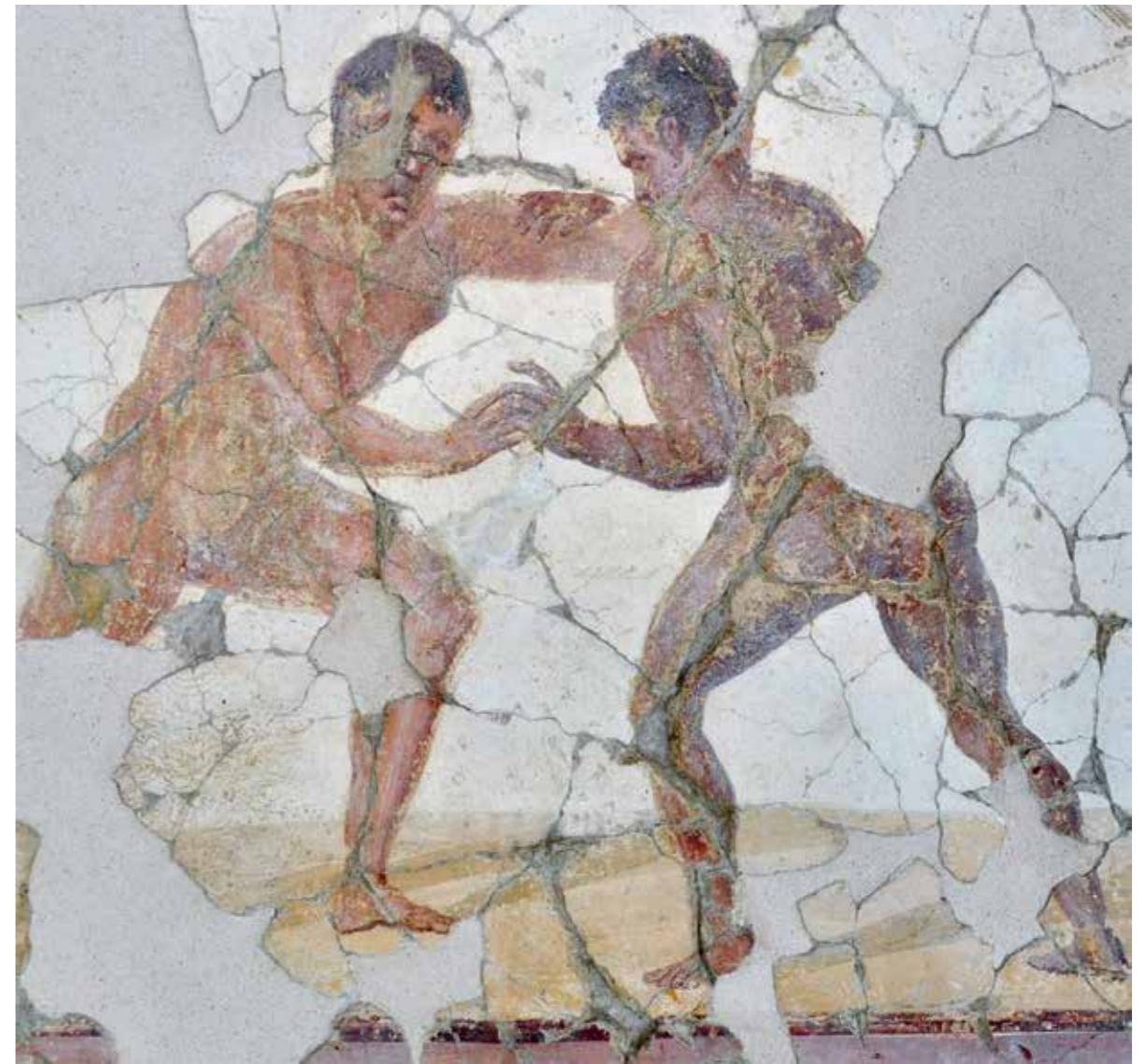


A Museum of Relevance: from left, James Feng, section; Karen Lin, soundscape exterior (detail); Karen Lin, soundscape site model; Alex Prichard, exterior view from Parramatta Rd.



NMR. 1090

Opposite page: Fresco depicting wrestlers, 3rd century AD; from the latrine of the Baths of the Wrestlers, Saint-Romain-En-Gal (France).



## Grave secrets

An exhibition of marble funerary stones provides evocative memories of 64 Romans who lived between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, writes exhibition co-curator Candace Richards.

*Memento* is one of those intriguing words the meaning of which has changed subtly over time. In early Latin, it was the imperative form of the verb ‘remember’. In Medieval Latin, it was used primarily in the literature and teachings of the Catholic Church in the phrase *Memento Mori* – literally, “Remember death”, meaning to reflect on one’s mortality, a concept that influenced art and philosophical thinking for centuries.

Today a memento is a keepsake – an object specifically used as a physical reminder of a moment in life.

Sixty-four Roman marble funerary inscriptions in the Nicholson Museum, acquired in 1857-58 by Sir Charles Nicholson, are the basis of a new exhibition, *Memento: Remembering Roman Lives*. These stones encapsulate all three meanings of ‘memento’, allowing us to remember the individuals named and to reflect on the lives of the long deceased as well as our own. They are in themselves mementos of Nicholson’s Italian travels.

The inscriptions record the names of Romans who lived between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, with occasional hints of other details such as their age, their relationships, their role in society or, in the case of sailors in the imperial fleet and travellers, their ethnicity.

One inscription, written in ancient Greek, is for a wrestler named Diogenes from Amastris in Asia Minor (NMR. 1121, below right). Recent research by Robert De Vita suggests that Diogenes may have died in, or near, Misenum while travelling in Italy to compete in the Greek games held in Rome, Pozzuoli and Naples in the early third century AD.

Thirty-eight inscriptions record the deceased’s age. The youngest is for a boy, Domitius Heraclianus, who lived for just a year and two months.

Paternal or familial love is one of the most common themes expressed in the inscriptions. One of the most emotive is that for the unnamed son of Tyche (NMR.1090, above):



NMR. 1121

*“Here I lie, having lived among men during the cycles of four years and in addition to them six cycles of the holy moon, but while I was still a child my mother Tyche laid me in this stone tomb suffering great grief.”*

Each stone, translated by the Nicholson Museum’s Senior Curator, Michael Turner, conjures feelings so imminently relatable that one cannot help but reflect on the nature of grief and mortality.

Nicholson, in his 1862 lecture ‘Recollections of Italy’ at the University of Sydney, remarked on





NMR.1110

the emotive nature of the inscriptions he had recently acquired:

*“The Latin language is peculiarly expressive when employed for commemorative or dedicatory purposes, and the style in which both pagan and Christian funeral inscriptions are couched is often the most touching and appropriate ... [They] bear eloquent testimony to the identity and permanence of the passions that agitate the human heart – in all ages and under the most varied conditions.”*

Most of the inscriptions were collected by Nicholson in Rome and Naples. While few have exact archaeological find spots, the provenance of the stones takes us into a fascinating world of 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian collectors. We know through early publications of antiquarian academic CL Visconti that many of the stones procured in Rome were found or collected by Giambattista Guidi, who was honorary Inspector of Excavations in the city and ideally placed, it would seem, to be trading in antiquities.

Many stones from the Bay of Naples region were part of a larger collection of Roman inscriptions made by a local priest, Giuseppe de Criscio.

De Criscio was an avid collector and was assisted by his parishioners, who gave him their own finds. The dedication to Vitellia Felicitas, who died at the age of eight years and five months (NMR.1110, above) was found by a local Pozzuoli (peasant), who gave it to de Criscio. It was later acquired by Nicholson.

Through this history of collecting, the stones capture moments in time as well as their initial remembrance dedication, and so have become mementos of 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian peasants, priests, collectors and travellers.

*Memento: Remembering Roman Lives* is open at the Nicholson Museum.

**Candace Richards is the curatorial assistant in the Nicholson Museum.**

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Mamuli ornament, Sumba Island, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Photo: Sarah Kennedy, 2015, Macleay Museum (ET2014.2144.1-.2).



Ancestor figures: left, from Kisar Island, Maluku Province, Indonesia. Photo: Holly Parker, 2015 (ET2014.2210 and ET2014.2194); right, from Biak District, West Papua (ET2014.2230). Macleay Museum.



## Rites of passage

Sarah Kennedy and Holly Parker, two University of Sydney students, enhance our understanding of Indonesian cultures.

University of Sydney alumnus, physician, surgeon, and art collector Dr Peter Elliott (1927–2014) made many generous donations to the Macleay and University Art Gallery collections. His last was the bequest of Indonesian artefacts that today form part of the Macleay ethnographic collections.

Principally associated with West Papua and islands east of the Wallace line (indicating distinct ecozones), these materials have recently been the focus of two internship projects.

Master of Museum and Heritage Studies students Sarah Kennedy and Holly Parker have together rehoused and catalogued more than 120 items as part of their placements and the completion of their studies. They share some of their research and insights into the collection.

### Mamuli Sarah Kennedy

The desire to create and possess objects of gold is common in many Indonesian cultures, particularly those to the east of Java. Some of the finest examples are the mamuli ornaments of Sumba Island in Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

In Sumbanese society gold was believed to be celestial – to have come from the sun. Considered intrinsically ‘hot’ and ‘bitter’, it had to be handled and treated with the utmost care and respect. For this reason and because they were believed to have possessed connections to ancestor spirits, mamuli were often kept hidden.

Despite the fact they are often found in pairs, like the two collected by Dr Peter Elliott, it is unclear whether mamuli were worn as earrings or pendants. Owned by noble families, they were used as

ritual objects, burial goods, part of a formal bridal gift from the groom’s family to the wife’s family. They were also worn by men as adornments.

Traditionally made in a diamond shape, mamuli could be left relatively plain or be highly decorated – embellished with animals, birds, ships or soldiers.

Thought to date from the late 19th, early 20th century, the mamuli in the Macleay collection are ornamented with human figures on horseback, granulation on the finials and scrollwork lining the centre split. The horse is a prestigious symbol of kingship and power in Sumbanese art.

### Ancestor figures Holly Parker

For generations, carved wooden figures of ancestors have played an important role in the daily and ceremonial lives of many Indonesian societies.

Dr Elliott (see page 32) was an avid collector of this kind of cultural object, especially those in the style of the Biak region, West Papua and islands in the south of the Maluku Province. Human figures served a purpose richer than pure aesthetic value in these places and give us a glimpse of the ways some of these societies viewed death.

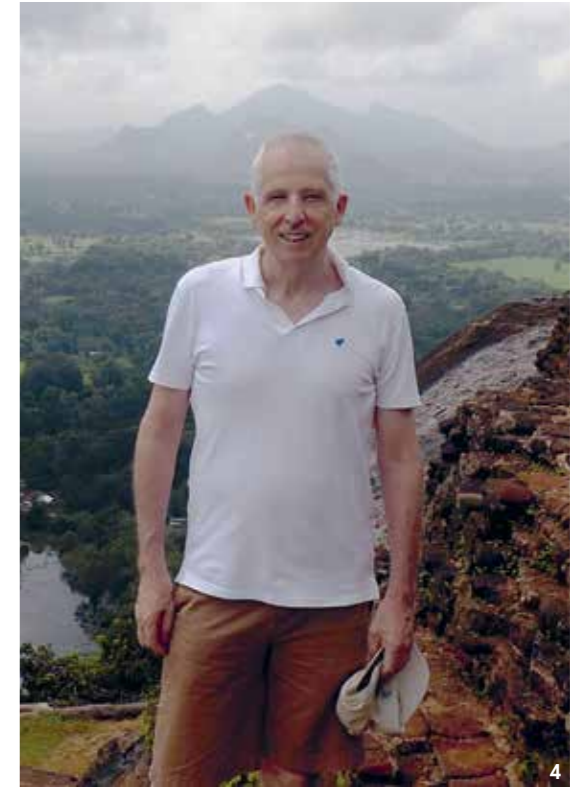
A relationship of complementarity and reciprocity exists between the living and the dead. In the Biak region people could become a spiritual ancestor by their clan association; they did not need to have biological descendants. Sometimes the

manner in which people died, as well as their treatment after death, determined whether they would manifest into protective or harmful spiritual ancestors.

The spirits of deceased ancestors are asked to enter the objects and are embodied in the carved wooden figures. In return for being looked after by the living, the figures could be asked to provide guidance or advice on how to deal with daily or important matters.

The ancestor’s advice was usually heeded and found useful. In *The Eloquent Dead* (Jerome Feldman, 1985), however, there is mention that if outcomes of events proved truly catastrophic, it was not uncommon for a figure to be destroyed.

# Making history



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1. Senior curator Ann Stephen, Lynette Fern, Emeritus Professor Virginia Spate, Penelope Seidler AM, Julie Ewington and Professor Susan Best at the launch of Women in Power.

2. The Nicholson Museum's Candace Richards with Xinzhi Qiu, who visited the museum in January while filming the Chinese TV show *Travels with Superstar*.

3. Manuel Castejon and Jude Philp in the library of the ADCK (Agency for the Development of Kanak Culture) Centre Culturel Tjibaou, New Caledonia. Sydney University Museums donated a series of maps to Tjibaou for their programs.

4. Director David Ellis at Sigiriya Rock, a 1500-year-old palace and now UNESCO World Heritage site in central Sri Lanka, 2015.

5. Stayin' alive with Dr Craig Barker on a new staff orientation tour.

# Find your muse at Sydney University Museums

Whether you would like to view an exhibition or attend a talk, we have plenty on offer. For further information and to view the latest timetable, visit [sydney.edu.au/museums](http://sydney.edu.au/museums) and click on 'What's on'.

## March

Tuesday 1 March, 6.30pm

### Cypriot Art in the Nicholson Museum

Public lecture by Dr Craig Barker, Sydney University Museums  
Cost: \$40 (\$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests)  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Thursday 3 March, 5.30

### Exhibition opening: Kate Dunn (UNSW) Rapid prototyping: models of climate change

Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

Saturday 5 March, 2–3pm

### The rise and fall of the classical English landscape garden: Celebrating 300 years of Capability Brown

Public talk by Michael Turner FSA (Nicholson Museum)  
The 2016 Series *Classicism Ancient & Modern; how Rome transformed our world* is sponsored by Academy Travel  
Cost: free  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Saturday 5 March, 2.30–3.30pm

### Women in Power: In conversation

Novelist and academic Larissa Behrendt and philanthropist and collector Gene Sherman in conversation with Senior Curator Ann Stephen  
Cost: free  
Venue: University Art Gallery

Tuesday 8 March  
Mendel Day

Join us for the inaugural Mendel Day as the Genetics Society of Australasia and geneticists around the world host events to salute Mendel's bold hypothesis – a hypothesis that has enabled us to make so much sense out of so much biological confusion, and to make so much progress in feeding, clothing and improving the health of humanity.  
Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

## April

Saturday 2 April, 2–3pm

### Roman History and the American Revolution

Public talk by Matthew Laing (Academy Travel)  
The 2016 Series *Classicism Ancient & Modern; how Rome transformed our world* is sponsored by Academy Travel  
Cost: free  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Saturday 2 April, 2–3pm

### Women in Power: In conversation

Curator Julie Ewington and Professor Virginia Spate in conversation with Dr Ann Stephen  
Cost: free  
Venue: University Art Gallery

Tuesday 5 April, 6.30pm

### Exhibition opening Alpha & Omega: the beginning and the end

Cost: \$40 (\$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests)  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Wednesday 20 April, 6–7pm

### Art and Science investigating climate change panel

Kate Dunn, Dr Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick and Dr Elizabeth Carter.  
Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

Wednesday 27 April, 1pm

### Dušan Marek

Guest Curator Stephen Mould discusses the work of Dušan Marek  
Cost: free  
Venue: University Art Gallery

## May

Saturday 7 May, 2–3pm

### Modern Ovids: 20th century transformations

Public talk by Dr Paul Roche, University of Sydney  
The 2016 Series *Classicism Ancient & Modern; how Rome transformed our world* is sponsored by Academy Travel  
Cost: free  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Saturday 7 May, 3–4pm

### Lazarus Species

Public talk by Macleay curators Jude Philp, Anthony Gill and Robert Blackburn  
In conjunction with Nation Trust's Heritage Festival 2016  
Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

Wednesday 11 May, 6pm

### Uncovering the hidden past of the Macleay Museum kakapo using archives, geographic information systems and ancient DNA

A public talk by 2015 Macleay-Miklouho-Maclay Fellow Dr Lindsey Gray  
Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

All details are correct at the time of publication, but events may change due to circumstances beyond our control.

If you wish to contact the Macleay Museum, the Nicholson Museum or the University Art Gallery, please see page 1 for our details.

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The Nicholson Museum, Macleay Museum and University Art Gallery have their own Facebook pages and Twitter feeds.

## June

Saturday 4 June, 12–1pm

### Role of new technologies in communicating science

Kate Dunn in conversation with journalist Paddy Manning  
Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

Saturday 4 June, 2pm

### Dušan Marek

Curator Stephen Mould and the artist's niece, artist Olga Sankey, discuss the work of Dušan Marek  
Cost: free  
Venue: University Art Gallery

Saturday 4 June, 2–3pm

### Neo-classicism, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution

Public talk by Michael Adcock (Academy Travel)  
The 2016 Series *Classicism Ancient & Modern; how Rome transformed our world* is sponsored by Academy Travel  
Cost: free  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Wednesday 29 June–1 July

### Exhibition: The colonial author photographs from Thu Van Tran

Cost: free  
Venue: Macleay Museum

## Heritage tours and education programs

Sydney University Museums offer extensive school (K-12) and adult education programs and group heritage tours. For more information email us at [museums.education@sydney.edu.au](mailto:museums.education@sydney.edu.au)

To view the latest timetable visit [sydney.edu.au/museums](http://sydney.edu.au/museums) and follow links to the events calendar.

## Activities for children in the April school holidays

Sydney University Museums hosts a series of special activity days for children aged 5-12 during the school holidays. Entry is by gold coin donation, and arts and craft activities run throughout the day.

Bookings are not necessary.

Thursday 14 April, 10am–4pm  
Greek Myths and Legends

Learn about the ancient Greek gods, goddesses, heroes and heroines!  
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Tuesday 19 April, 10am–4pm  
Written in stone

Explore Indigenous culture and handle genuine Aboriginal stone tools!  
Venue: Macleay Museum

Thursday 21 April, 10am–4pm  
Is it real or is it surreal?

Discover the surreal and create your own masterpieces!  
Venue: University Art Gallery

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## Memento: Remembering Roman Lives

Exhibition now on.  
Free admission.

Their names are inscribed in stone yet their stories can only be guessed at.

An exhibition of Roman funerary monuments from the Nicholson collection.

**Nicholson Museum**  
The Quadrangle  
The University of Sydney

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 10am – 4.30pm,  
first Saturday of each month 12 noon – 4pm.  
Closed on Public Holidays  
[sydney.edu.au/museums](http://sydney.edu.au/museums)



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