

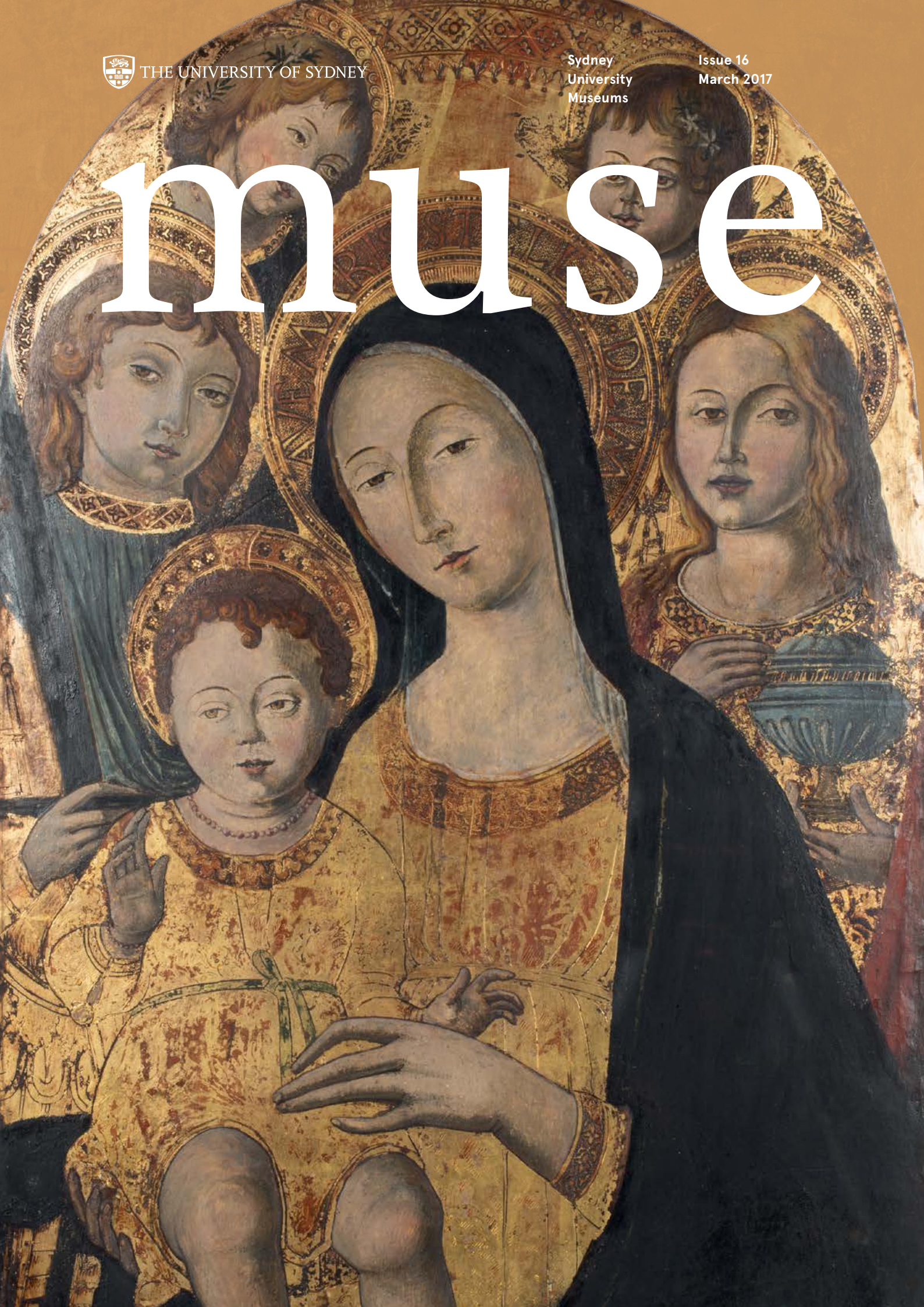


THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Sydney
University
Museums

Issue 16
March 2017

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New museum moves swiftly ahead

A word from the Director

2016 was a big year for the University's museums and collections. The museums and art gallery remained as popular as ever with more than 100,000 visitors enjoying a vibrant program of exhibitions, talks and events.

We secured capital works funding for the new Chau Chak Wing Museum and confirmed its location on University Avenue. Design and planning for the new museum that will bring together all the collections in a new purpose-built facility is forging ahead.

With the exhibition galleries in the Macleay Museum and the Art Gallery now closed, our visitor focus is on the Nicholson Museum, which will remain open until construction of the new museum is complete.

Last year we farewelled Michael Turner, who retired after 11 years of exemplary service as senior curator of the Nicholson Museum. This year we welcome Dr Jamie Fraser, currently at the British Museum, who will start duties as senior

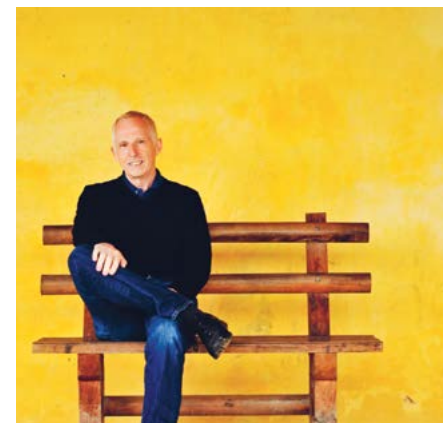
curator in April. Candace Richards has been acting as senior curator of the Nicholson Museum in the interim period. We also welcome Ross Clendinning, project manager for museum fit-out, to the team.

As curators and researchers develop new exhibitions for the museum, fascinating stories are emerging about our collections and individual items within them. These stories often relate to who collected them and to how they came to be in the University's cultural and scientific collections. In many instances these background stories are as interesting as the objects.

In this issue, Dr Wendy Reade investigates the meticulous work needed to piece back together a significant but largely unseen 3300-year-old section of decorated pavement from ancient Amarna; Dr Jude Philp reflects on the Macleay Museum and the closing of the museum's exhibition galleries; Dr Tony Gill, with the help of school students, names a new species of fish; Rob Blackburn links one of our

oldest insects to Dru Drury's 1782 volume on natural history; Dr Ann Stephen reveals a new portrait by acclaimed local artist Daniel Boyd; and Katrina Liberiou reflects on new research being undertaken on the University's collection of icons. It includes the exquisite icon featured on the cover of this issue.

For details and updates of museum programs and progress of the Chau Chak Wing Museum, visit sydney.edu.au/museums
David Ellis
Director



David Ellis, photo by Martin Ho

Sydney University Museums

Comprising the Macleay Museum, Nicholson Museum and University Art Gallery

The Macleay Museum and the University Art Gallery are now closed as we prepare for the opening of the Chau Chak Wing Museum in 2018.

The Nicholson Museum remains open: Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm and the first Saturday of every month, 12 to 4pm. Closed on public holidays.
General admission is free.

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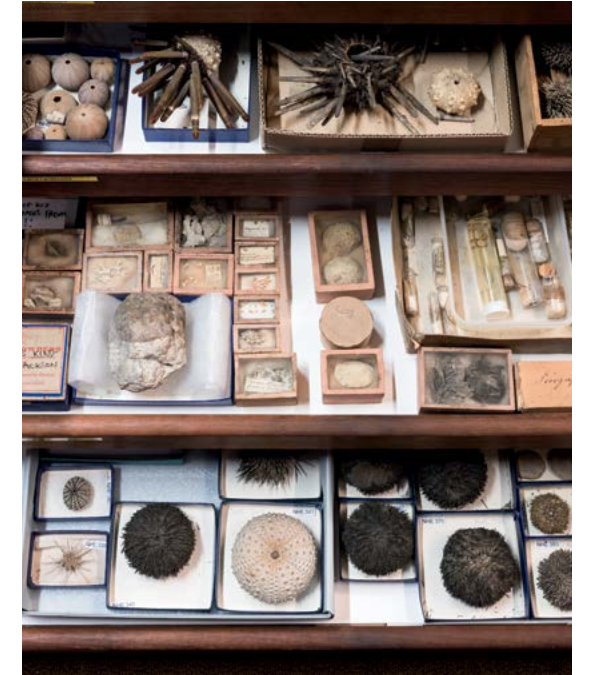
Front cover: Artist unknown, *[Madonna and Child with saints and angels]*, c.1450-60, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest 2011 (UA2012.688). See story on page 21



When one door closes

Dr Jude Philp recounts the last days of the Macleay Museum and says a fond farewell to a beloved space – while looking ahead to a new one.

Above: Southeast corner of the Macleay Building
c.1900, Macleay Museum (HP83.57.12)



Left: Rob Blackburn working on entomology collections
Right: Cabinet drawers of echinoderms and reef specimens in their original pink boxes

Tuesday 22 November 2016 was particularly busy. In the gallery, Natural History Curator Tony Gill introduced Year 9 students to taxonomy and the challenges of naming and identifying new species. At the other end of the gallery, Matt Poll, Curator for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage in our care, was working with a group from Tranby National Indigenous Training College on educational opportunities between our two Institutions.

Meanwhile, the ABC was getting ready to film the closing days of the Macleay. By the afternoon, with filming in full swing, and between meetings to plan for exhibitions in the new Chau Chak Wing Museum, I started preparations to host the Australasia Society's end-of-year drinks, getting out little-seen items to talk about with the group.

That same day in the photography store, History Curator Jan Brazier worked with the photographic collections, assisting first academic then curatorial and student visitors with their research. Three teams of workers occupied the stores, one in photography, one in

ethnography and one in natural history, patiently and steadily photographing the collections for online access.

The Curator of Ethnography Collections, Rebecca Conway, was in Kiribati on long-service leave but not missing the opportunity to learn and talk with people about the collections. And between coordinating volunteers for the gallery and assisting the ABC film crew, Curatorial Assistant Rob Blackburn was busy locating insect specimens from the 1790s within the entomology cabinets to answer overseas research enquiries.

Yet one of the most common remarks visitors make in the Macleay gallery is "it's so lovely and quiet here, you must have a great job". It is absolutely true that I have an enjoyable and rewarding job, thanks to the variety of activities, the people we meet, and the vast collections of the Macleay that connect us to so many places, historical events and peoples across the world. But it is certainly not a quiet job. And so we made the decision to close the gallery and prepare in earnest for the task of moving the collections and creating new exhibitions for the Chau Chak Wing Museum.



Left: Crown Studio portrait of George Masters at work, c.1900, Macleay Museum (HP86.63.22)

Above: the Macleay Museum attic space - no available space is wasted

Right-hand page: inside one of the four scientific instrument stores

It's an exciting time for us. Ever since the major structural changes to the Macleay building of the 1920s the museum's curators have struggled to store and display the collections within the attic space and curator's office spaces at the Gosper Lane entrance. A foggy atmosphere of naphthalene would have permeated the curator's rooms thanks to the entomological collection safely enclosed in Alexander Macleay's expensive Chippendale cabinets. Tanks of ethanol containing jars of fish, reptiles, marsupials and mixed specimens from coral reef investigations were located in the foyer.

Onto the new attic floor came the huge cedar cabinets, famously hauled through windows on the second floor and up through the laboratory ceiling before the hole was cemented up. Into these cabinets went the dry collections, bird skins and mounts, items made by Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific peoples, tens of thousands of shells, sponges, marine and land mammals that had once occupied the entire ground floor. We have no photographs documenting this time nor records of efforts to move the collection out of central Sydney during the Second World War then

back again. We have not made the same mistake this time and are thoroughly recording our present place for the future. There is, however, a photograph of entomologist and Macleay curator from 1874 to 1912, George Masters, cheerfully installed behind the huge collection desk. Here he would have listed incoming and outgoing specimens in ledger books, but he never quite finished the mammoth task. All subsequent curators and researchers have been frustrated by the lack of clear information attached to a given specimen or object. While Masters had an unrivalled knowledge of Australian animals, much of it went unrecorded as he disliked writing.

It took a truly fearless undergraduate, Elizabeth Hahn, to begin bringing the museum into the modern age in the late 1950s. Recognising that something needed to be done to ensure the future of this historic collection, Hahn began by locating 'types' - that is, specimens originally used to prepare descriptions of new species. These specimens are the ultimate reference point for a species and are part of an international library of animals crucial to biological research. It took four years to isolate some 6000 types among the hundreds

of thousands of pinned and preserved entomological species. However, with the assistance of the Australian Museum and University of Sydney specialists, Hahn compiled a 180-page monograph duly listing the enormous number of designated type specimens.

Another undergraduate, Jenny Anderson, took over the curator position in the 1960s and continued to work away steadily at the collection, systematically assigning numbers to the specimens and objects for the first time. Vanessa Mack's time as director gave rise to the beginnings of a web-accessible catalogue, as the Macleay collections joined three other national university museums to pioneer Australian University Museums online (AUMOL) in 1997. The documentation and registration work continues today with the museums digitisation project, a three-year, funded program to photograph the Macleay, Nicholson and University Art collections.

The Macleay's fluctuating economic fortunes offer an element the public and researchers love most: sight of the past. Ephemeral traces of the people who collected and worked on the collections include cigarette cases and glove boxes, calling cards with shells glued to the back, and paper with the pin marks and workings of taxonomic ordering in entomology.

Paper labels written by Masters on the specialised glass plates made to exhibit shells reveal the previous presence of silverfish; while little pink cardboard boxes still bear the hand of William John Macleay himself

as he marked off and itemised each shell during the pioneering *Chevert* expedition to the Torres Strait and southern New Guinea in 1875. These ephemeral items are rarely preserved in museums and are part of what makes the Macleay collections unique, conserving both the history of museum practice along with the collections that still have enormous purpose in the world.

During Peter Stanbury's tenure as director in the 1980s, the collections significantly expanded to include important scientific instruments used in the University's research and teaching and a 60,000+ photographic collection. To date much of these collections have never been exhibited because of the old gallery's limitations - yet in our stores we have physical records of science at the University from blood centrifuge chambers to anthropologists' camp beds and the box kite designed by inventor (and *Chevert* engineer) Lawrence Hargrave and taken to Antarctica with geologist and Antarctic explorer Edgeworth David. The photographic collections include images taken during these anthropological and geologic expeditions, as well as some of the earliest photographic images taken in Australia, and a great variety of photographic processes and equipment.

Side-by-side with new technologies, the reuse of the cedar cabinets will ensure the continuity of the collection's history in the Chau Chak Wing Museum as we embrace this wonderful opportunity to see our collections anew.

Jude Philp is Senior Curator, Macleay Museum





Daniel Boyd, *Charles Perkins*, 2016, synthetic polymer paint, PVC and oil on canvas, 244x200cm, purchased with funds from the Charles Perkins Centre, the University of Sydney, 2016 (UA2016.24)

A new painting commissioned by the University unites celebrated contemporary artist Daniel Boyd with the late Dr Charles Perkins. Dr Ann Stephen explores this striking new artwork.

Portrait of a pioneer

In 2016, the University commissioned a portrait of the late Aboriginal leader Dr Charles Perkins AO (1936–2000) of the Arrernte and Kalkadoon people. Perkins graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney in May 1966, the first Aboriginal man to graduate from a university in Australia. His achievements included appointments as secretary of the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission and Aboriginal Hostels. The portrait will hang in the foyer of the Charles Perkins Centre research and education hub on the Camperdown Campus, named in honour of Perkins's extraordinary achievements.

The Perkins family supported the commission of artist Daniel Boyd, of the Kudjla/Gangalu people of North Queensland and descendant of a Kanak labourer. Boyd, renowned for his dazzling contemporary reinvention of historical paintings, had exhibited to considerable acclaim at the 2015 Venice Biennale. His recent paintings recover a familial history, based on 1788 First Fleet material held in the Natural History Museum in London. As Boyd explains:



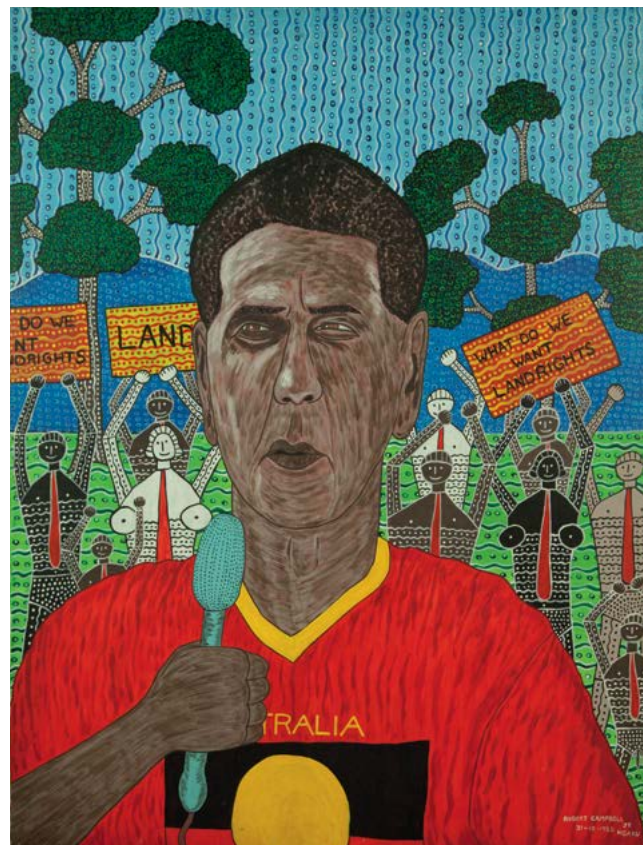
Daniel Boyd and Hetti Perkins at the Charles Perkins Oration when the portrait was unveiled

I actually used the *Endeavour* voyage as a starting point. The landscape of Cooktown – where they stopped to repair the ship after they'd hit a reef – was a way to speak about other things too. I used Cooktown as a way of exploring my great-great grandmother's connection to that area and her relationship with my great-great grandfather from Vanuatu, Samuel Pentecost. With the introduction of the White Australia Policy, they had to be sent back ... This was all happening post the abolition of slavery in North America, Europe and the Caribbean. It was almost as if a colony [of Britain] was able to turn a blind eye because it was around the other side of the world.

Boyd based his painting on a photograph of 26-year-old Perkins at the start of his university career. An internationally renowned soccer player at the time, Perkins is posed informally, his lean face assured, caught in a poised and reflective moment and framed by the outline of the University's historic architecture.

It was from this site two years later, in February 1965, that Perkins would set off with some 30 other university students on the two-week Freedom Ride through rural NSW to protest racial discrimination. Fellow Freedom Rider and historian Anne Curthoys has described its consequences: "The Moree and Kempsey pools were desegregated and so too (eventually) was the Walgett RSL Club. Charles Perkins became a well-known Aboriginal leader and student support for Indigenous rights continued to grow."

Boyd's large monochrome canvas blurs its photographic origins under a curious dappled form of pointillism. The repetitive dot surface – developed by Papunya Tula artists in the 1970s to conceal their dreaming stories – has a different function here. Boyd has described the dots as a kind of lens. The constellation of globules made from semi-translucent glue illuminates and refracts light across the underlying photographic image. Such handmade veils or screens are not mechanical like Ben-Day dots or electronic pixels but are in parts



Robert Campbell Jnr
Charlie Perkins, 1986
synthetic polymer
paint on canvas
120.5x91cm,
University of Sydney
Union collection,
purchased in 1991,
© the artist's
estate, courtesy
the artist's estate
and Roslyn Oxley9
Gallery, Sydney,
photo © Michael Myers
2010 (USU1991.16)

smudged with charcoal to conceal as much as to signify. The process produces a tension between the ready-made photograph and the artist's touch, which variously animates or darkens with each glutinous drop, as he brings the archival photograph into the sphere of art. Boyd's approach draws a glistening veil across the dark surfaces, confronting the visitor with a commanding presence.

In a remarkable coincidence, the late Aboriginal artist Robert Campbell Jnr (1944–93) of the Ngaku people of Western NSW, painted another powerful portrait, *Charlie Perkins* (1986), 30 years earlier. Campbell represents Perkins, microphone in hand, standing with his people in the midst of a land rights demonstration. Campbell, who was self trained, had a strong association with the University Art Workshops (known as the Tin Sheds) at the time. His abbreviated graphic painting is superbly matched to those activist times.

Daniel Boyd's monumental portrait, twice the size of Campbell's, illuminates Perkins as a visionary figure dedicated to achieving justice for Indigenous people through entering, challenging and reshaping Australia's major institutions.

**Dr Ann Stephen is Senior Curator,
University Art Collection**



Fig 1: Assyrian limestone relief, 700–612BC, from South West Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh, excavated by Sir Austen Henry Layard 1840, purchased in 1951 (NM51.323)

Recent conflict in the Middle East has led to the destruction of many important archaeological sites. Candace Richards explores the recent, sad fate of Nimrud and Nineveh in northern Iraq.

Antiquity lost

In 612 BC, Nineveh, which was the capital of the Assyrian Empire from 704 BC, was destroyed after a three-month siege by a combined force of Babylonians and Medes. During those three months, the occupiers stripped the city of many of its riches before finally burning it to the ground. Sadly, more than 2500 years later, Nineveh has once again been destroyed, this time with modern explosives during the 2016 occupation of the ruins by Daesh militants.

Nineveh lies on the outskirts of modern Mosul in northern Iraq. This seemingly final and devastating destruction targeted the once impressive monumental gates and city walls that were first uncovered by English archaeologist and historian Sir Austen Henry Layard in the mid 1800s. During his excavations, many of the monumental sculptures that decorated the palace were removed and shipped to the British Museum. One of these sculptural works, depicting two Assyrian archers, was acquired by the Nicholson Museum in the 1950s (Fig 1).



Fig 2-5: From Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud, excavated by Max Mallowan, British Museum and BSAI excavations in 1949-58, purchased in 1959 (NM59.10, NM59.9, NM59.4, NM59.3)



Fig 2 (left): Ivory couchant lion, 911-612BC

Fig 3 (above): Fragment from an ivory lion, 730-720BC



Fig 4 (above): Burnt ivory palette with carved sphinx, 911-612BC

Fig 5 (right): Ivory plaque with enthroned lady holding a lotus, 730-720BC



Excavations at the site continued throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century by expeditions sponsored primarily by the British Museum. In the 1950s the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage began excavations under the direction of Mohammed Ali Mustafa and continued throughout the second half of the 20th century. The archaeological work undertaken during these 150 years uncovered a rich series of palaces, complex ancient irrigation systems, a library full of cuneiform texts (the world's oldest writing system) and much more. Significant conservation work was also undertaken to preserve the monumental walls and create an archaeological 'park' for visitors from around the globe to enjoy and study.

The Mosul museum, which housed many of the finds from Nineveh and other archaeological and religious sites in the region, had already been subjected to looting throughout the past 20 years of conflict, occupation, United Nations sanctions and economic upheaval. In 2016 it too was stripped of its antiquities. ISIL filmed its destruction of some of the pieces,

including the Winged Bull of Nineveh, provoking worldwide outrage.

Nimrud, around 55 kilometres south of Mosul and Nineveh, known as Kalhu in ancient times, was the capital of the Assyrian Empire before Nineveh, between 879BC and 706BC. It too was completely destroyed with explosives and bulldozed to a flat plain in the two years of militant occupation between 2014 and 2016. In late 2016, Iraqi forces reclaimed the ruins and the extent of the devastation is now slowly coming to light. Initial BBC reports confirmed that 95 percent of the ancient city has been obliterated, with the once 50-metre tall Ziggurat (a form of temple) now a mound of rubble.

Like Nineveh, the ancient city of Nimrud also has a rich past of continual archaeological investigation that has uncovered treasures and knowledge of the Assyrian empire. Its arguably most famous excavators were husband-and-wife duo Max Mallowan and famous writer Agatha Christie, who discovered many thousands of carved ivories. The Nicholson Museum purchased

a small collection of these from the Archaeological Institute at London in 1959 (Figs 2-5).

While the destruction has been devastating at both sites, it appears that all is not lost for Nimrud. From initial surveys undertaken in late 2016, several fragments of sculpture, cuneiform texts and building materials might yet be saved or even restored. However, with the ongoing military offences in the city of Mosul itself, it appears it will be some time before the region will be stable enough to allow for renewed archaeological and conservation work on the ruins.

One response to the deliberate and targeted destruction of these and other important sites of cultural heritage in Syria and Northern Iraq has been the development of Cultural Heritage Initiatives by the American School of Oriental Research and the United States Department of State. Their mission is to document damage, promote global awareness and plan for emergency and post-war responses (see www.asor-syrianheritage.org).

In late 2015, UNESCO approved the training and deployment of UN forces, known as 'blue hats', to protect vulnerable heritage sites throughout the region. Individuals, including 17-year-old Iraqi artist Nenous Thabit, have responded to the loss of these monuments by sculpting replicas and creating new works honouring their heritage in the face of oppression (see: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/17/middleeast/nimrud-iraq-mosul-artifacts/index.html>).

While a global community mourns the loss of these cultural treasures, it is but a sad backdrop to the tragic loss of hundreds of lives and displacement of millions of people throughout the region during these ongoing wars.

Artefacts and sculptures from Nineveh and Nimrud are now on display in the renewed exhibition *Tombs, Tells and Temples: Excavating the Near East*, at the Nicholson Museum.

Candace Richards is Acting Senior Curator, Nicholson Museum.

From architecture to art form



Dr Paul Donnelly begins a new *Muse* series exploring museums and collections around the globe that inspire us to think, feel and create.

Museums and galleries can surprise and delight with their collections – often beguiling and sometimes reviling the visitor through their emotive connections with people, places, events, and the wonders of science and nature.

A museum can also make the visitor feel privileged to be in its midst, which is how I felt during a long overdue visit to Sir John Soane's Museum – the historic house, museum and library of distinguished 19th century architect Sir John Soane at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London.

Sir John Soane RA (1753–1837) was one of Britain's greatest and most idiosyncratic architects, with the Bank of England and Dulwich Art Gallery among his many credits. His home was a combination of three large terrace houses that, even in his lifetime, were designed to be a showpiece. From 1794, he remodelled No. 12, No. 13 and No. 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields into his own brand of neoclassicism.

Interior of the museum, courtesy of Sir John Soane's Museum, photo by Gareth Gardner



Images from *The union of architecture, sculpture, and painting; exemplified by a series of illustrations, with descriptive accounts of the house and galleries of John Soane, London: 1827*

Far left: Section of museum breakfast room, looking west, Plate IV

Left: View in the museum, in the Sarcophagus Room, Plate VII

He lived here with his family while teaching and inspiring a generation of British architects. Hidden rose-hued glass skylights wash the walls of his many-roomed house with coloured light, highlighting myriad objects – notably a mixture of ancient, plaster cast and imitation sculpture and architectural pieces – that cram the walls and fill every nook. These make a lasting impression and tend to define the museum. Yet the collection is much broader, as revealed by the wording of the 1833 private Act of Parliament that vested the museum “for the benefit of Amateurs and Students of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture”. Soane hoped the museum and its collections would be an ‘Academy of Architecture’ with free admission to all.

A striking element the Soane museum has in common with more conventional house museums is that it is an artefact in itself. Visitors can appreciate it as a journey through a physical cacophony of architectural parts, sculptures, paintings, prints and models. A guided tour brings the museum to life, including the origins of much of the material, which reads like a who's who of

18th century and 19th century art, architecture and adventure. A sculpture of Venus was bought from painter George Romney in 1801 and there are works by Soane's good friend John Flaxman, a sculptor and draughtsman whose modelling talents also contributed to the well-known china of Josiah Wedgwood. Dozens of original paintings by William Hogarth fill the clever multi-layered picture room, and Soane was proud of a celebrated copy of the Apollo Belvedere sculpture once owned by the Earl of Burlington.

Soane himself watches over his domain through portraits including a large oil by Sir Thomas Lawrence hanging on the Pompeian-red wall of the library, and a bust by Sir Francis Chantrey set above the crypt where Soane's most famous purchase sits: the sarcophagus of Seti I (c.1300 BCE). It was found and brought to London in 1817 by colourful Italian explorer and pioneer archaeologist Giovanni Belzoni (1778–1823) and snapped up by Soane after the British Museum baulked at what it considered an astronomical price tag of £2000. As a young man in Rome, Soane met the much celebrated

architect and artist, Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78). Piranesi, a celebrator of antiquity who was famous for his etchings of Rome, gave the star-struck Soane four of his drawings – the beginning of the largest Piranesi collection in Britain.

The influence of this meeting on the trajectory of Soane's collecting speaks to the continued influence Soane's collections and passion for the past had in turn on the next generation of scholars and collectors. This generation spawned the likes of Sir Charles Nicholson, who took it upon himself to amass a collection of antiquities and artworks for the education of University of Sydney students.

This passion for the past is unmistakable upon entering the Sir John Soane Museum. And today we share his legacy of sincere belief in the educational value of collections and the necessity of making them available to the wider public.

Dr Paul Donnelly is Associate Director, Content, Chau Chak Wing Museum

William Macleay's passion for fish continues today through the rigorous process of naming new species, and the latest has just been published, writes Dr Anthony Gill.



Something fishy

Girella cyanea
Macleay 1881 - blue drummer, photo by Carl Bento; this specimen is most likely Macleay's original (type) specimen of the species (NHF.1429)

Sir William Macleay's decision in 1874 to expand on the essentially entomological collections amassed by his uncle and cousin considerably increased the significance of the natural history collections in the Macleay Museum.

Sir William achieved his vision of representing all major orders of zoology, though his research interests veered towards his passion for fishes. Although the fish collection had its beginnings with specimens collected from the Sydney environs or purchased at the fish markets in Woolloomooloo, it was through Sir William's expedition aboard the *Chevert* to the Torres Strait and southern New Guinea in 1875, the first Australian scientific mission to a foreign country, that the collection grew substantially in size and diversity. His first publication on fishes was a report on those collected on the *Chevert* expedition (co-authored with Dr Haynes Gibbes Alleyne).

As one of the oldest fish collections in the country, and still largely stored in original ground-glass jars, the Macleay ichthyology collection provides important insights into where and how specimens were collected, exchanged and purchased. It also provides an important snapshot of past distributions of species. Habitat destruction and the introduction of exotic species have severely reduced past ranges, particularly of freshwater species. Climate change too has altered the distribution patterns of many fish species. Historical collections such as the Macleay's provide critical baseline information for ongoing monitoring of fish distributions.

However, the primary purpose of the fish collection was – and still is – for taxonomic research. Taxonomy, the science of naming, identifying and classifying species, is the essence of documenting biodiversity and forms the foundation of all biological research. Our understanding of the taxonomy of the world's organisms is based largely on specimens housed in natural history museums and herbaria. By carefully studying such specimens, taxonomists establish how species vary, how they may be differentiated from each other, and how they are related to each other.

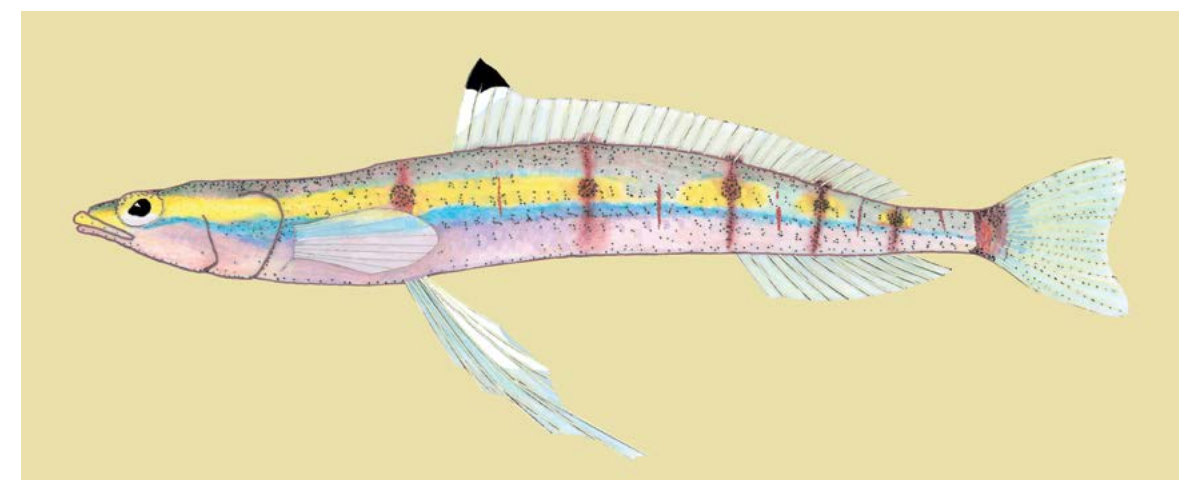
Sir William Macleay described more than 250 new species of fishes, about 50 of which are still recognised today, and he produced the first substantial catalogue of Australian fishes. Most of his species names were derived from classical languages, but some were derived from the places from which the specimens originated, or the names of people who provided the specimens. The tradition of naming new fish species has continued at the Macleay Museum, and will also continue in the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

Each year we invite school students to participate in the taxonomic process. The students are given a presentation on the science of taxonomy and the process of naming species, then asked to nominate and vote on possible names for an undescribed new fish species. The winning name is then published in a scientific journal along with the description of the new species.

This scientific research and publication process can be somewhat drawn out, however, so the names may not appear for some time after the students vote. The latest name, *Pseudotrichonotus belos*, was published in the journal *Zootaxa* in December 2016, although the students voted on it more than a year earlier. The name they selected, *belos* – from the Greek meaning arrow or dart – references the dart-like shape of this new sand-diving lizard fish.

**Dr Anthony Gill is Curator,
Natural History, Macleay Museum**

Pseudotrichonotus belos –
dart sand-diving lizard fish,
illustration by A Gill



Made in Japan



Left: Natori Shunsen, *The actor Ichimura Uzaemon XV as Iriya Naozamura*, 1925 (UA1990.732)

Below: Kazuma Oda, *The Great Bridge at Matsue*, 1924 (UA1990.731)

Chris Jones examines the provenance of six Japanese prints in the University Art Collection that speak of alumna Margaret Lake's long-lasting fascination with the 'Land of the Nippon'.

Born in 1883, Margaret Lake joined Sydney Teachers' College in 1919 as a lecturer in handicraft. While at the college, she enrolled to study at the University of Sydney. She was awarded a BA in 1924, and began to study Japanese under Professor Arthur Lindsay Sadler in 1925, graduating in 1927.

Soon after graduating, Lake took extended leave from the college. She left Sydney on 2 January 1928 on the steamer *Mishima Maru* bound for Japan. She lived in Japan for more than a year where she studied Japanese language and handicrafts, and observed educational methods. Returning to Sydney on 11 February 1929, newspapers reported that she had a pleasant stay in Japan, and that she hoped to return to complete her studies.

Lake returned to the Teachers' College where she taught Oriental Studies, including the Japanese language, art and literature. She gave regular public lectures on ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging, and took night classes in ceramics, casting and moulding. In November 1939, she gave an illustrated lecture on ikebana to the Pacific Club, recently formed by students attending lectures in Japanese at the University, to foster interest in far-Eastern languages and cultures.

Japanese was first taught at the University in 1918 by the inaugural Professor of Oriental Studies, James Murdoch. Following his death, Sadler was appointed to the position in 1922 and remained until 1947. Sadler's interest in Japanese culture included art, design and architecture,

interests reflected in Lake's focus on art and craft as well as language. When Sadler took leave in 1935 and 1941, Lake filled his position.

In January 1940, following the outbreak of the Second World War, an unofficial code-breaking group was established at the University of Sydney by two mathematicians, Thomas Gerald Room and RJ Lyons. They were later joined by Arthur Dale Trendall, professor of Greek and honorary curator of the Nicholson Museum, and Athanasius Pryor Treweek, a lecturer in classical Greek. Room and Lyons needed to learn Japanese as quickly as possible. Lake taught them successfully in eight weeks.

During the 1940s and '50s, Lake continued to lecture in Oriental Studies, researching ikebana and translating Japanese folk songs. In 1952 she organised an exhibition of Chinese and Japanese arts and

crafts for the University Arts Faculty centenary celebrations. Lake stopped teaching in the late 1950s in favour of translating, including Colonel Masanobu Tsuji's book *Singapore: the Japanese version* in 1960.

In 1959, Lake donated six Japanese prints to Sydney Teachers' College. It is likely she had collected the prints when she visited Japan in 1928. The prints were transferred to the University Art Collection in 1990 along with the rest of the Teachers' College collection. Though some of the prints are faded, this reflects how the college actively used its collection, displaying artworks throughout the building and allowing students to handle them as part of their training.

Chris Jones is Assistant Collections Manager, Sydney University Museums.



Fig 1: After treatment, section of Maru-Aten floor fresco, depicting papyrus plants, Amarna Period (1352-1323BC), donated by the Egypt Exploration Society in 1925 (NM64.415.2)



Scenes from the Nile

Conservation work has begun on a rich floor fresco in the Nicholson Collections. Conservator Dr Wendy Reade introduces her work.

When Pharaoh Akhenaten and his Queen Nefertiti built their new capital at Amarna, occupied for only 15 years in the 18th Dynasty, from about 1347 to 1332BC, they had it decorated in splendid fashion.

Situated about halfway between Cairo and Luxor, Amarna lies in dry desert sand that has well preserved the remains within it. Among these is the building known as the Maru-Aten, an extraordinary structure containing a row of interlinked T-shaped water tanks with low, plastered walls surrounded by fine, plastered floors.

The plaster was painted with colourful aquatic plants in the fresco technique. To the visitor it must have given the illusion of wandering through a richly flourishing Nile scene in and around the water pools. The Nicholson Museum is fortunate to have in its collection five sections of the little that remains of this plaster pavement.

It has been a long journey from burial in the sands of Egypt 3300 years ago. The floor panels, made of a coarse mud plaster coated with a thin, fine, white lime plaster, were cut from their original location and lifted in the 1920s, and at some stage were set in plaster of Paris and framed.

Though records are brief and we are mostly left to ponder its history since excavation, we know that the recent plaster support was removed from three of the five sections in the 1980s, but we don't know why.

Part of the conservator's work is to identify the components of an object: what and how it was made. We assess the object's condition: what damage has been suffered, the nature of previous treatments or interventions, and the object's stability. Then comes the challenging task of designing a treatment strategy based on the object's needs and the requirements for display within the guiding



Fig 3: Section of fresco containing the imprint of basketry made by the artist at work in antiquity



Fig 2: Before cleaning

framework of modern conservation that, having learnt from past experiences, requires the minimum of intervention that is sufficient to achieve stability and increased longevity of the object.

I have been working on two sections that clearly join each other, but which are broken into 111 pieces. Microscopic examination revealed great detail, including that the white lime plaster was strengthened by the incorporation of very fine plant fibres, and the paint surface had been coated since excavation with a substance that is now brown.

This coating lies in the multitude of tiny pits and abrasions of the plaster surface, which also bears the impression of baskets and cords that its creators rested on it when damp (Fig 3), and fabric impressions from the wet cloths that they applied to stop the plaster from setting before the paint could be applied.

The use of the fresco technique has ensured the pigments have remained bright and well adhered. Cleaning off this organic coating has required hours of swabbing with a solution of ethanol and water, and picking away the remaining coating, and dirt trapped under it, with a fine-pointed dental tool under a microscope (Fig 4). The organic coating has encouraged the growth of black mould that has now been treated.

Because the pavement fragments with their crumbling edges were fragile, I consolidated them with a weak solution of a high-quality, conservation-grade adhesive. This necessitated the construction of a solvent-resistant mesh basket for dipping the fragments a few at a time in a steel basin of consolidant, carefully sealing it to allow the consolidant to wick up into the porous fragments, thoroughly permeating and strengthening them.

Next the pieces of this ancient jigsaw have to be joined, again with a special adhesive that can be dissolved if necessary and that will not become brittle and discolour over time.

Because the plaster was laid directly on the ground its thickness is uneven, requiring support underneath so that it does not have to take its own weight with the risk of further fractures. We need to design a support system that meets the requirements of display and safe handling.

Work on the pavement continues, and the excitement builds as this wonderful vignette from the distant past once more evokes the exotic Nile and the achievements of Akhenaten's brilliant craftsmen.

Dr Wendy Reade is a Conservator, Sydney University Museums.



Fig 4: Dr Wendy Reade manually cleans a fragment of the fresco

Fig 4: Artist unknown, *Madonna and Child, Mother of God the Episkepsis* - type, 19th century Greece [Asia Minor] egg tempera, gold leaf and liquid gold 13x10cm, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest in 2011 (UA2012.575)



Iconic images

A visit by author and art historian Professor Sasha Grishin sheds new light on the University Art Collection's religious icons. Katrina Liberiou presents some initial findings.

In 2012, the University of Sydney received the Hon. RP Meagher bequest, a significant gift from the late Roddy Meagher (1932–2011), former Judge of Appeal of the Supreme Court of NSW, legal scholar and fervent art collector. Meagher bequeathed more than 1200 paintings, drawings and sculptures to the University. Given he was a devout Catholic with a deep interest in religion, his gift included a group of 15 icons.

The word ‘icon’ comes from the Greek εἰκών or ‘eikon’, meaning image. Icons originating from Eastern Christianity (Greece, Russia, Eastern Europe and parts of the Middle East) are religious works of art, typically painting (egg tempera on wood) but they can also be made from mosaic, enamel, metal, paper and cloth. Often they would be overlaid with metal to protect them, and some were adorned with gemstones and fine jewels.

Icons were created by artists who were deeply spiritual and upheld the moral teachings and principles of the church, such as monks. In early Christianity, there were strict rules about colour and the representation of subject matter – this was a period of high illiteracy during which the depiction of a consistent image illustrated sacred and religious teachings.

The important role of the icon continues to this day, particularly in Eastern Orthodox churches. Icons can be presented as gifts on important occasions, such as marriage, baptism and saints’

name days. Small icons could accompany a soldier to war or a traveller on their journey. Bringing an icon into the home references God’s presence.

In late 2016 we invited Professor Sasha Grishin, a specialist in medieval art, especially Byzantine and Russian art, to assess our collection of icons. Among some junk-shop finds and tourist trinkets, Grishin discovered an interesting collection of icons possibly dating from the 15th century through to the mid-19th century.

A potentially remarkable find was the resplendent *Madonna and Child with saints and angels* (Fig 1). Currently noted as by an unknown artist it could possibly be a valuable Renaissance panel painting. If this is the case, it would date from circa 1450–60. From Grishin’s first investigation, it appears “the painting is on oak and has been cut down from a larger panel; the top rounded section is part of the original form with a

handmade nail of some antiquity; the garment of the Virgin has been damaged and repainted in probably an azurite pigment that has turned black”. Azurite was the most common and important blue pigment in European painting from the 15th century to the middle of the 17th century.

Grishin notes that the panel “has been trimmed on our right with repainted red garment and trimmed also on the opposite side and at the bottom”.



Fig 1: Artist unknown, *Madonna and Child with saints and angels*, c.1450–60, egg tempera on gold leaf on wood, 49.4x31.8x2.4cm, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest 2011 (UA2012.688)

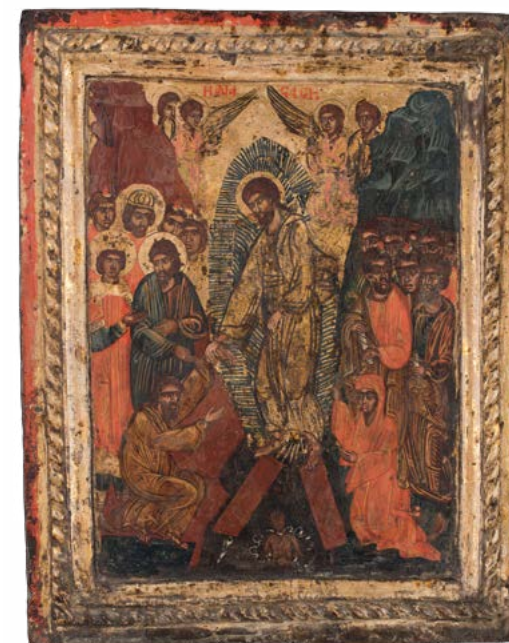


Fig 2 (left): Artist unknown, *Anastasis*, [Resurrection, Byzantine], Crete, Greece, 18th/19th century, egg tempera, gold leaf and liquid gold on pine wood panel, 29.5x23.2cm, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest in 2011 (UA2012.576)



Fig 3 (right): Artist Nikodim [attributed], *Resurrection* [Western tradition], 1844, Greece, 47.8x35cm, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest in 2011 (UA2012.574)

Of particular significance, he says, is that “the workshop has employed a red bole [clay] and gilded the surface before the design was incised – the quality of stamping is high and the Virgin’s halo has the stamped inscription *Ave Maris Stella Deim* (‘Hail Star of the Sea’ in Latin), a plainsong Vespers hymn to Mary”.

Other notable discoveries include *Resurrection*, attributed to the artist Nikodim from 1844 (Fig 3) and *Madonna and Child, Mother of God the Episkepsis* by an unknown artist – this is possibly a 19th century copy after the Byzantine original from the 12th or 13th centuries (Fig 4). This particular depiction, where the two faces are gently touching cheek to cheek, is known as the *Glykophilousa*, which translates to “of the sweet kiss”. It shows the Virgin

as a mother while emphasising her role as protector of humankind. This dual role is articulated in her face, which exudes both love and concern.

Also of interest was *Anastasis* from Greece (possibly Crete) from the 18th to 19th century (Fig 2). In this Byzantine iconographic type, the Resurrection portrays Adam and Eve being pulled from their sepulchre while treading on the gates of Hades.

We will be undertaking further research into this collection in 2017, and you can follow Sasha Grishin’s works and travels through his blog: www.sashagrishin.com/news

Katrina Liberiou is Assistant Curator, University Art Collection.

A delicate group of Coptic Egyptian domestic textiles, thought to have been included with the deceased in burials, has found a new audience online. Suzanne Kortlucke tells their story.

Where there's a weft there's a way

Many of the Nicholson Museum's most cherished ancient Egyptian artefacts were acquired through the Egyptian Exploration Society in the early 20th century. The University of Sydney paid an annual sum to support excavations and in return received artefacts from that season's work at sites such as Abydos, Amarna and Diospolis Parva.

During 1913-14 the society conducted excavations at Antinopolis (Antinoë), a city founded on the site of an Egyptian village by Hadrian in the 2nd century AD, named in memory of his beloved Antinous, a Greek youth. From these excavations the Nicholson Museum

received a small but representative collection of Coptic textiles.

Small in size with often minute detail and a serious sensitivity to light, this collection of almost 40 fragments is yet to be put on public display. Recently, the museums have undertaken a new digitisation project to photograph and publish the collection online. As a result, the designs and craftsmanship of these textiles are coming out of the dark.

The Christian Egyptians, known as the Copts, produced huge quantities of domestic textiles dating from the 3rd to the 7th century AD. Many thousands of fragments are found

Fig 5: Fragment of a tapestry woven textile, 400-500AD, from EES excavations at Antinoë, Egypt 1913-14 (NM62.649.35)



Fig 5

Fig 1: Fragment of a tapestry woven textile, 400-500AD, from EES excavations at Antinoë, Egypt 1913-1914 (NM62.649.13)

Fig 2: Fragment of a tapestry woven textile, 400-500AD, from EES excavations at Antinoë, Egypt 1913-1914 (NM62.649.13)

Fig 3: Fragment of a tapestry woven textile, 400-500AD, from EES excavations at Antinoë, Egypt 1913-1914 (NM62.649.3)

Fig 4: Fragment of a tapestry woven textile, 400-500AD, from EES excavations at Antinoë, Egypt 1913-1914 (NM62.649.14)



Fig 1



Fig 4



Fig 2



Fig 3

highlights the pluralistic nature of early Egyptian Christianity – the story of Europa could connote ideas of fertility and the divine while not competing with Christian ideals.

The early and rapid spread of Christianity also manifests itself in these delicate tapestries. Depictions of trees from the highly stylised (Fig 3) to more realistic designs (Fig 4) are likely to be symbolic of the Tree of Life, the second of the two trees that stood in the garden of Eden. The Tree of Life appears many times in biblical tradition and was a frequent source of artistic inspiration for many Coptic weavers.

Motifs were reused and the technology of Coptic looms carried on from the horizontal low warp used by Egyptian weavers in earlier periods. Most of this collection was constructed with the simplest and most common tabby or plain weave, where the anchored warp threads are interwoven with the weft in an over/under pattern.

One of the more threadbare pieces, a mere scrap of band with stylised flowers that evoke love hearts (Fig 5), has decayed in such a way as to steadily reveal the pale yellow warp thread.

You can view the Coptic textiles at sydney.edu.au/museums/collections_search

Suzanne Kortlucke is Education and Public Programs Assistant, Sydney University Museums.

in collections around the world. Their survival can be attributed to their inclusion with the deceased in burials and the arid conditions of the Egyptian climate; the combination of dark and dry providing the best scenario for the preservation of organic material.

The fragments in the Nicholson collection come from garments as well as coverings and cloths used in domestic and religious settings. Usually only the decorative borders and roundels – circular ornamentation – survive. These were made from a mixture of dyed wools woven into undyed linen backgrounds. In Fig 1 you can readily

see how the pattern of stylised flowers is picked out in sky blue, navy, red and yellow dyed wool, woven into a plain linen piece. These segments could then be incorporated into a larger linen cloth or garment.

Illustrating a period of changing sensibilities and religious beliefs in Egypt, these delicate textiles often combined Christian and classical tropes in their designs, while continuing traditions of ancient Egyptian patterning and vibrant colours. In one roundel Europa cavorts with Zeus in the guise of a bull, a story drawn straight from the lives of the Greek gods (Fig 2). The use of classical mythology

Perfect specimens

The legacy of the Macleay fascination with insects, including their provenance and preservation, is explored by Robert Blackburn.



Fig 1 (right): Drawer of Orthoptera (grasshoppers, crickets, and allies) from the Macleay collections. Photo by C Bento, 2013

Fig 2 (left): *Goliathus regius* (Royal Goliath beetle), collected before 1775 near Sierra Leone, Henry Smeathman, photo by Sydney University Museums, 2016

Alexander Macleay (1767–1848) and William Sharp Macleay (1792–1865) curated their insect collections with an eye to capturing the animal world’s diversity and making them available for scholars to study.

More than 100,000 specimens are thought to form the early collections the Macleays acquired between 1756 and 1836. Carefully pinned insects are kept taxonomically arranged in bespoke entomological cabinets. Each cabinet is filled with cork-lined drawers with hidden reservoirs for camphor and airtight lids.

The successful preservation of these fragile collections is almost entirely

due to the finely made pieces of furniture, some of which were designed and built in the 1780s.

Since their donation to the University, many of the drawers of insects curated by William Sharp have been largely undisturbed and almost represent a still-life of the process of entomological work in the 19th century.

These collections came from an incredible variety of sources: personal collections made at home and abroad; trades with travellers in the expanding British Empire; exchanges with scientifically minded colleagues; and auctions of collections made

by fellow entomologists. Spirited bidding at auction made some of these acquisitions very expensive – several individual beetles in the Macleay collection were bought for more than £5 each, well above a labourer’s average monthly salary.

Modern scientific insect collections require accurate labelling to preserve crucial data such as collection locality, date, method of collection, and the collector. The older specimens in these collections were collected before this practice was widely accepted, so a great many have sparse data if any at all, with some labelled simply “Africa” or “N. America”. Thus, detective work examining



the species, pins, and handwriting styles on labels is necessary to attribute provenance to individual specimens.

Fortunately, some of these insects were used as models for illustrations in scientific texts. Our specimen of *Goliathus regius* (see Fig 2 and Fig 3) was identified as the beetle used to illustrate plate 40 in British entomologist Dru Drury’s *Illustrations of Natural History*, volume 3 (1782). Captured near Sierra Leone before 1775 by English naturalist Henry Smeathman, this specimen has been in the Macleay collections since 1805 when it was bought from the auction of Drury’s



Fig 3: *Goliathus regius* (Royal Goliath beetle), plate 40 in *Illustrations of Natural History*, volume 3 (1782) by Dru Drury, illustration by Moses Harris

collections for a whopping £12 1s 6d. It retained none of the crucial label information to designate this specimen to its history, but the precise illustration in 1782 enables us to identify it.

The Macleay collections endure as an important scientific and historic data bank of global biodiversity. Research in these collections helps develop our knowledge of the environment, providing both a scientific basis for taxonomic principles and a snapshot of the history of science in Australia and the world.

Robert Blackburn is Curatorial Assistant, Macleay Museum.

A stroll through the Camperdown Campus can become a journey through the University's collection of modern art, writes Dr Craig Barker.

Come walk with us

Although the University Art Gallery has closed in preparation for the Chau Chak Wing Museum's opening, it doesn't mean that some of the significant items in the University's art collection are not accessible to view. Many of the artworks are currently displayed across the campus, adorning the walls of faculties and schools, as well as some of our gardens and walkways. You might consider booking a group to take part in one of our popular art walking tours, which enable participants to explore some of these works in depth.

A sandstone sculpture titled *The student* by Tom Bass (1916–2010) is one of the University's most popular works of public art (Fig 1). Acquired in 1953 following a public art competition organised by Town Planning Professor Denis Winston, it was the earliest modernist public artwork on the campus. Positioned near the University's main gate on Parramatta Road, it stands very close to the site of the future Chau Chak Wing Museum.

The monolithic block has its back turned to the outside world, deep in internal reflection. The hunched student buried in his book has welcomed generations of fellow students and other visitors to the University, including Bass himself when he was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2009.

The solitary figure contrasts with a more recent acquisition: *Individuals* by sculptor Andrew Rogers. Comprising 15 bronze and stainless steel figures, it can be found in front of the Law School (Fig 2).

Fig 1: Tom Bass
The Student,
sandstone,
purchased in 1953
(UA1955.5)



Fig 2: Andrew Rogers
Individuals
bronze and
stainless steel,
donated by the
artist through
the Australian
Government's
Cultural Gifts
Program, 2014
(UA2014.6)

The 2013 work was donated to the University by the artist through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program and, in the artist's own words, acts as a "metaphor for the inseparable relationship between singularity and community". The forms reflect the bustle of this busy section of the campus, with human forms rushing between lectures.

Inside the Law School, a number of important paintings hang in foyers and public areas. A large mixed-media painting by Elwyn Lynn (1917–1991) *Dawn Field* (UA1991.8) graces the corridors of level two.

Lynn was a writer, artist and the curator of the Power Gallery at the University of Sydney from 1969 to 1983.

The work itself is an abstract field with a cross at the top and a set of stones embedded in paint running diagonally across the work. Painted in 1989, it was donated to the University by Lynn in 1991. Like many of his later works, *Dawn Field* is a striking metaphor for human suffering and endurance. It evokes a harsh landscape and the work demonstrates Lynn's ongoing interest in damaged and shredded surfaces.



Fig 3:
David Boyd
The trial III
oil on board,
donated by the
artist in 2008
(UA2008.36)

Two works by David Boyd (1924–2011) can also be seen in the Law School – both dramatic encapsulations of justice. His oil portrait of one of the University's most famous graduates, Geoffrey Robertson QC, from 1999 (UA2010.106) hangs at the entrance to lecture theatre 104. Robertson is positioned in the centre, with figurative representations of death and of a prisoner to his right, while to the left Robertson is seen in judicial robes in his global legal struggle to abolish the death penalty.

Boyd's *The trial III* of 1962 watches over the Law School's level one foyer (Fig. 3). The oil painting was donated by the artist and is a dark, abstract depiction of two judges hovering over two entwined and embracing figures of arms, legs and marks.

You can explore these works and many others with an expert guide. To book a group walking art tour, heritage tour of the Quadrangle or an Indigenous heritage walking tour, please email our Education and Public Programs team: museums.education@sydney.edu.au

Dr Craig Barker is Manager, Education and Public Programs, Sydney University Museums.



Saving paper

A new artwork acquisition has thrown up some challenges for conservator Deidre McKillop. She explains the process of treating this watercolour.

The art movement known as the Hermannsburg School was established in the 1930s in the mission town of Hermannsburg in the Western MacDonnell Ranges of the Northern Territory, most notably associated with Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira.

Albert Namatjira was impressed by watercolours he saw painted by Rex Battarbee and John Gardner, who were painting in Central Australia in 1934. He was later taught by them, and had his first exhibition in Melbourne in 1938.

The Hermannsburg School represented a change in direction in Aboriginal art, creating a bridge between Aboriginal and Western cultures. The desert paintings, mostly done in watercolour, captured the effects of changing light and colour on the desert and snow gums with soft hues.

Keith Namatjira was one of Albert's five sons. One of Keith's works, *Mt Conway*, painted in 1969, is a watercolour landscape capturing the immensity of the ranges with a snow gum in the foreground, typical of the Hermannsburg School. This work was donated

Fig 1: Keith Namatjira, *Mt Conway*, 1969, watercolour on paper, donated by Andrea Abel van Es in memory of Professor Andras Abel, 2016 (UA2016.23)

Fig 2: Deidre McKillop at work in the conservation lab

Fig 3: Second backing board discovered attached to the work on paper



to the University Art Collection in 2016 by Andrea Abel van Es in memory of Professor Andras Abel. Upon acquisition, the work went through a rigorous conservation assessment and treatment.

The artwork had seemingly been stored in a damp location and there was mould on both the artwork and its frame. After acquisition by the University of Sydney, the artwork was taken out of this frame and the dry mould spores were removed by a fellow conservator. It was at this point I was asked to conserve the watercolour painting.

The watercolour had a window mount on the front (Fig 4), and had a wood pulp board adhered to the back. All these materials were yellowed, stained and acidic, which is damaging to works on paper over time.

The treatment I proposed involved cleaning the artwork, removing all supporting material due to its damaging acidic nature, and remounting in museum standard archival, acid-free materials in preparation for display and storage.

The first stage was surface cleaning using a soft brush and dental aspirator to remove old mould spores and surface dirt, then mechanical cleaning using a variety of agents (Fig 2). This revealed a clearer image with little fading but with some irreversible staining from the mould spores.

I then removed the window mount by slowly delaminating the board in thin layers. The delamination process on the back revealed another board layer, emblazoned with the brand name "fashion board" (Fig 3). Attached to this layer is the watercolour paper onto which the work was painted.

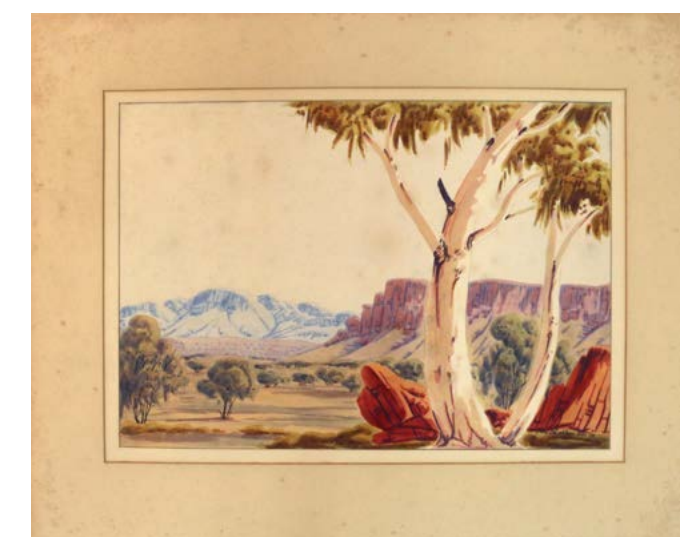
Upon further assessment, it was clear that this board is also acidic and thus detrimental to the watercolour painting. After consultation with Dr Ann Stephen, Senior Curator, I decided to remove this last layer of board.

Again the board was slowly delaminated in thin layers. The adhesive was determined to be water soluble and all residues were delicately removed, followed by flattening the whole work under weights. The final result is an artwork that is cleaned and safely preserved for the future.

The treatment of this small watercolour is just one of the many behind-the-scenes projects that take place in the conservation lab all year round.

Deidre McKillop is a Conservator, Sydney University Museums.

Fig 4: *Mt Conway* pre-treatment



A fond farewell

On 24 November 2016 the Macleay Museum and University Art Gallery closed their doors for the final time in preparation for the new Chau Chak Wing Museum opening in late 2018. Staff, both present and past, celebrated with our friends, supporters and all those who make up our museum and gallery family.



1. A performance by the Matavai Cultural Arts group from Western Sydney

2. Left to right: Vanessa Mack, Dr Peter Stanbury OAM, David Ellis, Suzanna Edwards, and Dr Paul Donnelly

3. Students Lei Dai (left), playing the yangqin, and Zhengjie Yang, playing the erhu, during closing celebrations in the University Art Galley

4. Guests sign the final pages of the Macleay Museum visitors book, from left: Lydia Bushell, Pam Bell, Elizabeth (Hahn) Boesel, Baoying Tong, Auri and Arissa Read-Lilje, and Osu Lilje

Sydney University Museums

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Kelsey McMorro
Eleanor Megna
Eleanor Munro
Elliot Nolan
Vu Tuan Nguyen
Anne-Laure Paquot
Holly Parker
Connie Peters
Anne Philp
Jack Philp
Rachel Procter
Louise Pryke
Lise Pyres
Madeline Robinson
Frances Robson
Imogen Saxon
Rehan Scharenguiel
Alexandra Seifertova
Deborah Shadbolt
Henry Simpson
Sneha Singh
Antony Skinner
Alan Spackman
Rebecca Staats
Gabrielle Steele
Jasmine Stewart
Zan Tabart
William Tan
Yasmin Tegen-Anderson
Christina Templis
Bao Ying Tong
Nathalie Vermeer
Claire Vincent
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Making history



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1. After the 2016 Charles Perkins oration, the unveiling of the portrait, with, from left, Mrs Perkins, the Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP, the Hon. Linda Burney MP, Richard Weston, CEO - Healing Foundation, and Senator Malarndirri McCarthy

2. Curator Matt Poll, left, spent some time late last year with Mutitjulu community elder Samuel Wilson at Maruku arts centre in central Australia

3. Kylie Holmes, left, and Aggie Lu photographing a natural history specimen from the Macleay Museum collection as part of the ongoing digitisation project.

4. Claire Vincent, 2016 Museum Studies intern at the Nicholson Museum, at work in the field as part of the 2016 season of the University of Sydney's Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project

5. Artists and experts from Millingimbi at the Macleay

Front row from left: Michael Mungula, George Milaybumba, Raymond Bulambula

Back row from left: Joe Dhamanydji, Joyce Naliyabu, Doreen Djandjay, Margaret Gamuti, Judy Gawuki

6. Aggie Lu and Nastaran Forouzesh, cleaning busts from the Art Collection, temporarily removed from the Great Hall as part of a complete lighting upgrade

7. Dr Paul Donnelly at work on the University of Sydney's excavations at Pella in Jordan in January 2017. Photograph: Bob Miller

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 and click on ‘What’s on’.

March

Saturday 4 March, 2–3pm
Those Barbarous Celts (and Don’t Get Me Started on the Thracians): Postcards from the Edge in Augustan Rome
Dr Anne Rogerson, Department of Classics and Ancient History
Cost: free
Venue: General Lecture Theatre

Thursday 8 March, 5.30pm
Eating the Ocean: Talk and book launch
Professor Elspeth Probyn, Department of Gender and Cultural Studies
Launched by Dr Jodi Frawley, Sydney Environment Institute
Cost: free
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Wednesday 15 March, 12–1pm
NSW Seniors Week
Free Heritage Tour of the Quadrangle
Cost: free
Bookings: museums.education@sydney.edu.au

Tuesday 21 March, 6 for 6.30pm
A Life in Archaeology: In Conversation with Judy Birmingham
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends and their guests; includes light refreshments.
Venue: Nicholson Museum



Giant water bug, unknown collector, unknown date, Macleay collections, photo by Carl Bento, 2013

April

Saturday 1 April, 2–3pm
Crossing the Owen Stanley Ranges in 1890s PNG
Dr Jude Philp, Macleay Museum
Cost: free
Venue: General Lecture Theatre

11 April, 6 for 6.30pm
Nostalgia: From Homer to Vintage Hats
Dr Julia Kindt, Department of Classics and Ancient History
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends and their guests; includes light refreshments.
Venue: Nicholson Museum

School holiday programs

8–25 April 2017

Wednesday 12 April, 10am–4pm
Greek Myths: School Holiday Activity Day
Cost: free
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Wednesday 19 April, 10am–4pm
Macleay’s Fishy Fossils: School Holiday Activity Day
Cost: free
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Friday 21 April, 10am–4pm
Art Workshop: School Holiday Activity Day
Cost: free
Venue: Nicholson Museum

May

Thursday 4 May, 5.30 for 6pm
Reconnecting turtle shell masks to Islander histories
Leah Lui-Chivizhe, UNSW
Cost: free
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Saturday 6 May, 2–3pm
Venice and the ancient world: Byzantine and Roman Models*
Dr Robert Veel, Academy Travel
Cost: free
Venue: General Lecture Theatre

Thursday 18 May, 3–4pm
Curator’s tour of the Nicholson Museum for International Museum Day
Cost: free
Bookings: Nicholson.museum@sydney.edu.au
Venue: Nicholson Museum

Thursday 25 May, 6 for 6.30pm
Aristophanes’ Clouds
A performance by Department of Classics and Ancient History students
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends and their guests, \$10 for Students; includes light refreshments.
Venue: Nicholson Museum and Refectory

June

Saturday 3 June, 2–3pm
A Postcard from Carchemish: in the footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia
Dr Jamie Fraser, Nicholson Museum
Cost: free
Venue: General Lecture Theatre

Thursday 29 June, 6 for 6.30pm
A Life in Archaeology: In Conversation with Vincent Megaw
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends and their guests; includes light refreshments.
Venue: Nicholson Museum



*Sponsor of the 2017 series *Postcards from the Past*

Current exhibitions

Please note: the Macleay Museum and the University Art Gallery are now closed as we prepare for the opening of the Chau Chak Wing Museum in 2018.

Nicholson Museum

- *Alpha and Omega: tales of transformation*
- *The sky and the sea: ancient Cypriot art*
- *Lego Pompeii*
- *Death Magic*
- *Memento: remembering Roman lives*
- *Tombs Tells and Temples: excavating the Near East*
- *Actors, Athletes and Academics: life in ancient Greece*

All Nicholson Museum exhibitions are ongoing.

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/sydneyunimuseum or find us on Facebook by searching for ‘Sydney University Museums’.

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 inside front cover for our details.

