

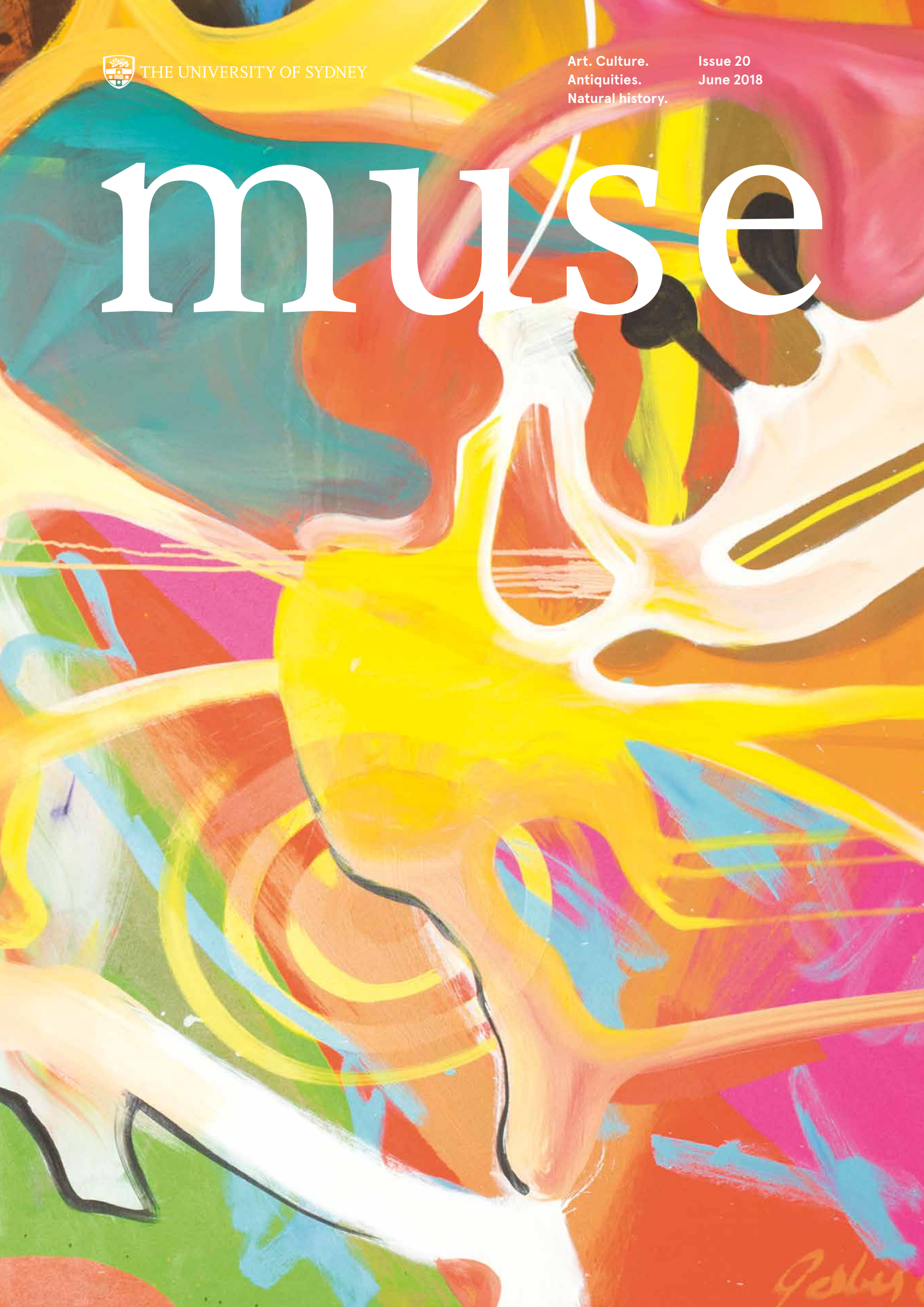


THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Art. Culture.
Antiquities.
Natural history.

Issue 20
June 2018

musée



Feber

From the ground up

A word from the Director, David Ellis

After years of planning, the construction of the Chau Chak Wing Museum on University Avenue has finally started, signalled by the colourful hoardings erected around the site featuring images of museum objects. The ground was officially 'broken' at a small ceremony in June and the builders, FDC, now occupy the site.

Designed by Sydney-based architects Johnson Pilton Walker, the new museum is scheduled to open in mid-2020. You can follow progress of the construction on our website: sydney.edu.au/museums

This issue features stories of benefaction, some recent and some from the past, all of which continue to expand and improve the University's inspiring collections.

A generous bequest by Morgan Evan Hughes, a long-standing Friend of the Nicholson Museum, has enabled us to develop the Egyptian collection by purchasing an extraordinary beaded funerary net.

In addition to being a fine example of its type, the net connects us to the excitement of late 19th and early 20th century Egyptology, and most specifically to the French Egyptologist, Gaston Maspero, one of the most colourful characters in Egypt's colonial history.

The net is from the period and of the kind that once would have shrouded the Nicholson mummy, Mer-Neith-it-es. The recent focus of a segment on ABC TV's 7.30, the story of the 'excavation' and scanning of Mer-Neith-it-es and her cedar coffin went global. The 7100 beads found during that excavation will benefit from comparison with our recent acquisition.

In this issue of *Muse*, we also learn of a multi-generational passion for the Nicholson collection, told through the tale of one of our most celebrated and unquestionably most heavy objects, Hathor, the four-tonne red-granite Egyptian capital. Poetically (if mistakenly) described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1889 as the 'Aphrodite of the Egyptian

Pantheon,' Hathor's acquisition, via the Egypt Exploration Fund and the generosity of a Sydney benefactor Josiah Mullens, is tracked by Sandra Gordon, Mullens's great, great granddaughter and a PhD candidate in the Department of Archaeology.

Other stories include new public art inspired by Indigenous language, our preparation of wonderful Pacific textiles for longevity and display, and a fishy French connection ... We hope you enjoy the June issue of *Muse*.

David Ellis

Director, Museums and Cultural Engagement



Muse edited by Luke Parker.

This edition contains names and images of people who have died. We acknowledge that, for some people and communities, these may cause distress and sadness. Where possible, cultural permission to publish has been sought.

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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.

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.

Become a fan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. sydney.edu.au/museums

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Above, and cover: benefaction in action. Matthys Gerber, *Ultra*, 2000, donated to the University Art Collection by Pamela Hansford through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2003, UA2003.27

Top right: Decorative element from a terracotta brazier, depicting a theatre mask of a New Comedy courtesan character. See story page 21



Researchers re-colour coffin

Although the wooden coffin of Mer-Neith-it-es (NMR.29) was once intricately decorated, it has faded to a dull brown. The Nicholson Museum’s Mummy Project has assembled a team of experts to recolour a high-resolution digital model of the coffin for display. The team recently met with Egyptologist Dr Marie Vandenberg, who was visiting from the British Museum. Researchers include scientists using spectroscopy to identify ancient pigments, scientific illustrators using D-Stretch to bring up ghosted imagery, and Egyptologists reading the hieroglyphics. The recoloured model will be displayed with the coffin in a dedicated Mummy Room in the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

Below, from left to right: Wendy Reade and Jamie Fraser, Marie Vandenberg (British Museum), Alayne Alvis, Luke O’Donnell (Newcastle), Boyo Ockinga (Macquarie University), Bernadette Drabsch and Andrew Howells (Newcastle), Michelle Wood (Sydney Analytical), photo by Thérèse Harrison



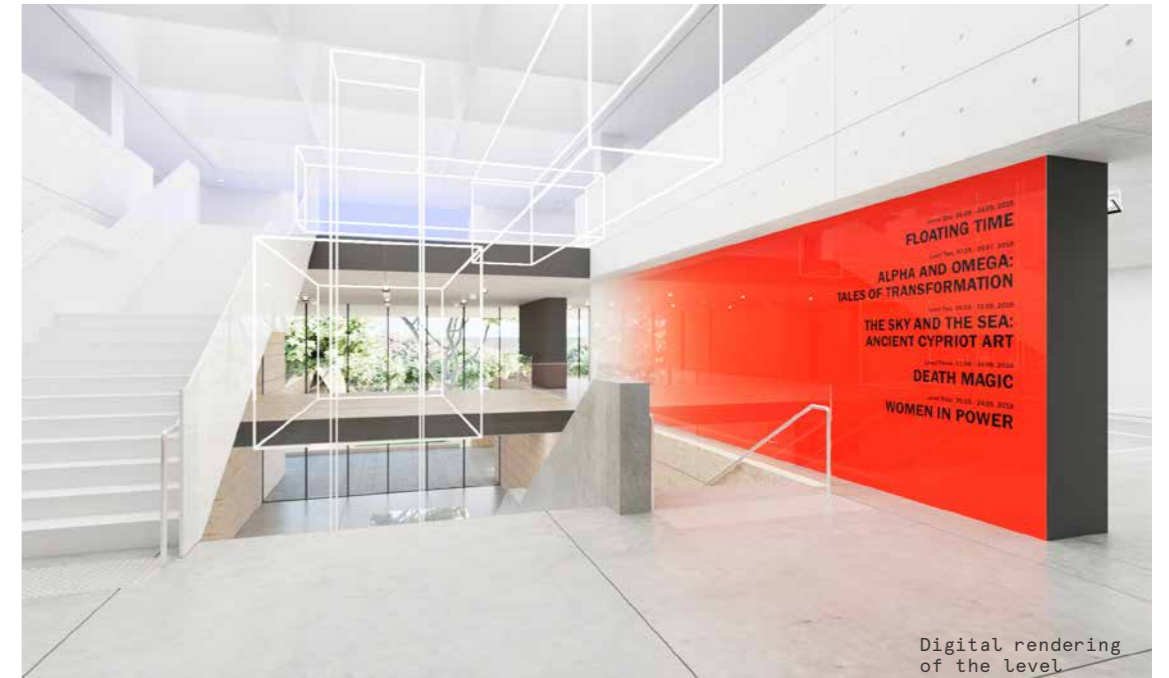
The mother of all mummy discoveries

In March 2018 the Nicholson team began the second stage of a project to scan the linen-wrapped ibis mummies in our collection. CT scans were made of the specimens, in collaboration with Helen Laurendet, Sydney University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, and Zoe Williams and Veronika Tatarinoff, Hybrid Theatre Unit. Initial analysis suggests that one of the ibis packages actually contains two juveniles. This project was reported in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*, with Candace Richards interviewed about the significance of the ibis to the Egyptian god Thoth. Learn more at sydney.edu.au/museums/research



Unique post takes research in a new direction

Thérèse Harrison recently started with us as the Professional Officer for Museums Analyses. This unique scientific post is funded by the University’s Core Research Facility – Sydney Analytical – to expand the research use of non-destructive technologies, including vibrational spectroscopy and x-ray fluorescence, into new research areas. Thérèse is part of an established team at Sydney Analytical that has a wealth of knowledge and broad-ranging experience in the investigation of cultural artefacts and specimens. Exploring the diversity of collections in Sydney University Museums through state-of-the-art instrumentation is sure to raise some challenging questions and reveal information about the production and use of our specimens and objects in the past.



Digital rendering of the level 3 galleries, courtesy of JPW

Towards a new museum

Paul Donnelly gives an update on the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

The process of transforming plans for the Chau Chak Wing Museum into a reality took a major step forward at the end of February with advice that the Development Application had been approved. This enabled the University to engage a building contractor and, for the first time, confidently predict an opening date.

The successful contractor is FDC, a well-established major construction company that, in addition to many award-winning buildings, is currently constructing the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences building at the University of Sydney.

The new museum is scheduled to open mid-2020. After breaking ground in June, the 22-month construction phase has begun. This will be followed by three months of exhibition fabrication and object installation. Having a more definite opening date has given a buzz to museum staff as the much-anticipated bringing together of the three university collections advances closer.

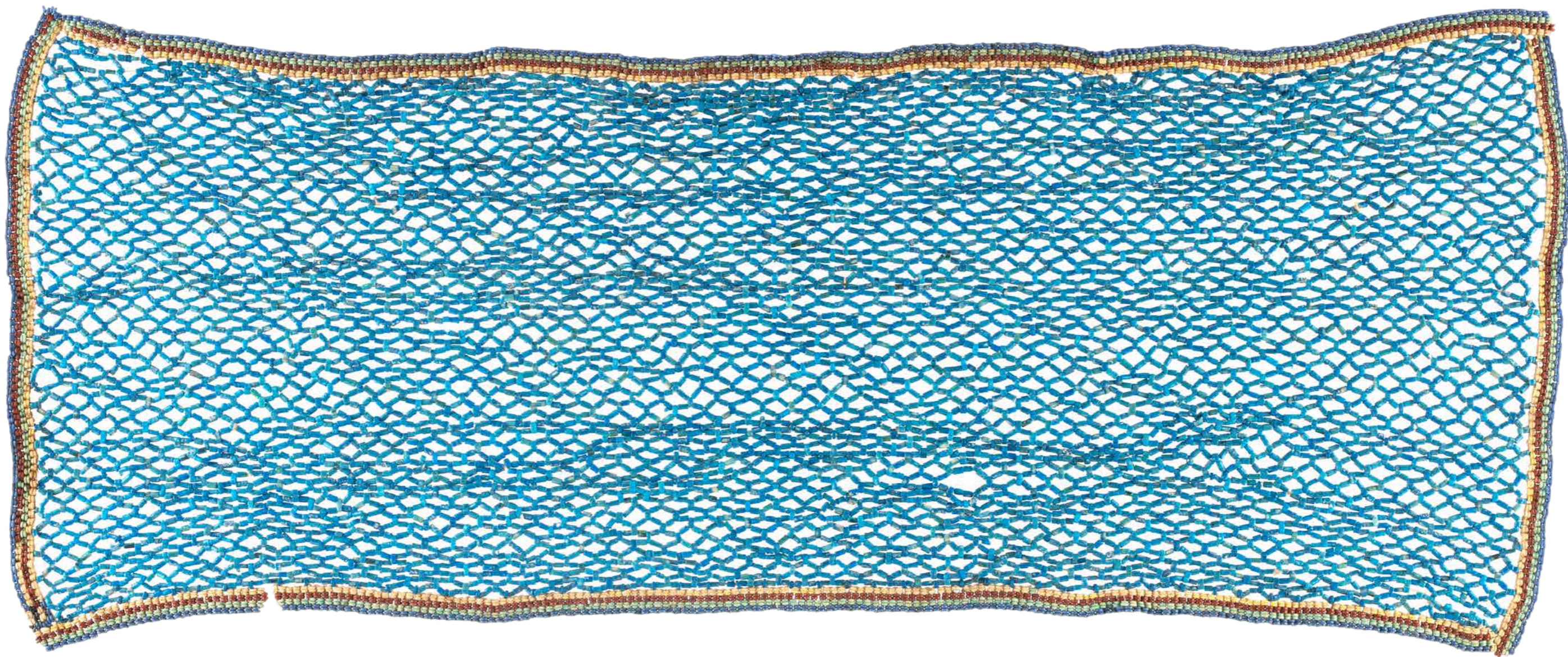
Designed by architects JPW, the new museum will be transformative for the collections. Visitors will experience expansive gallery spaces, including a 6.5 m high temporary gallery, three tertiary-level object-based learning studios, a schools education room, an auditorium, and a licensed café overlooking sculptures in the landscape to Lake Northam in Victoria Park.

We look forward to sharing more milestones with you in the coming months.

Dr Paul Donnelly is Associate Director, Museum Content.

Below: an aerial plan of the campus indicating the CCWM site.





Maspero's beaded net

A generous bequest by Morgan Evans Hughes has enabled the Nicholson Museum to expand its Egyptian collection by acquiring an extraordinary beaded funerary net.

Jamie Fraser explains its significance.

The newly acquired beaded net,
Nicholson Museum, NM2018.132

Egyptian funerary art often depicted Osiris, god of the underworld, draped in a beaded cape. A particularly splendid example is shown on the underside of the mummy board from the coffin for the woman Meruah in the Nicholson (see image on page 6). During the 25th and 26th Dynasties (around 744–525 BC), embalmers recalled this tradition by laying large beaded nets over a mummy within the coffin, thus placing the deceased under the protection of Osiris himself. Nets were often elaborately woven to incorporate stylised faces of the dead or powerful apotropaic figures such as the sons of Horus.

Although beaded nets are represented in many museum collections, these are usually poorly preserved fragments of loosely strung beads. In contrast, this newly acquired net is striking both for its size (59 x 23 cm) and for the variety of beads used. The panel is dominated by turquoise-coloured tubular faience beads, and is fringed by double rows of minute blue, green, brown and yellow disc beads.

The most fascinating aspect of the piece is its acquisition history. The net was originally acquired by the celebrated French Egyptologist,

Gaston Maspero. One of the most colourful characters to have strutted across the pages of Egypt's colonial history, Maspero was initially sent to Egypt in 1880 to establish the Institut français d'archéologie orientale in Cairo. The following year, the Egyptian Khedive appointed Maspero Director of the Cairo Museum, during which time he conducted his famous excavations at the Sphinx.



Although he returned to France in 1886, Maspero was soon recalled to Egypt to take the post of Director of the Service of Antiquities between 1899–1914, making him the most influential Egyptologist of his day.

It is hardly surprising that it was Maspero who introduced a young Howard Carter to George Herbert, 5th Earl of Carnarvon, when Lord Carnarvon sought his advice for an expert to lead a new expedition to the Valley of the Kings.

It was probably during his directorship of the Cairo Museum that Maspero acquired the beaded net, although it is unclear at which site he found it or, more likely, from which dealer it was obtained. However, Maspero did not keep the net for long, gifting or selling it to Charles Octave Bouillon Bey, an engineer associated with the flourishing Cairo sugar industry and a prominent member of French society in Egypt during the 1880s.

When Bouillon Bey returned to France, he took a large collection of antiquities with him, included Maspero's beaded net. The net was kept in the family until 2007, when it appeared in an auction house in Bergerac along

A depiction of Osiris, god of the underworld, on the underside of the mummy board from within the coffin for Meruah. Note the beaded cape draped across his shoulders, Nicholson Museum, NMR. 27.2



with several other items from the established Bouillon Bey collection.

A generous bequest by Morgan Evan Hughes enabled the museum to purchase the net in 2018. Mr Hughes and his partner were Friends of the Nicholson Museum, and regular visitors to its galleries. Upon his death in 1988, Mr Hughes left a bequest for the purchase of Egyptian artefacts, reflecting his passion for Egyptology.

The acquisition of the net honours Mr Hughes' interests, and adds considerable lustre to the Nicholson collection. As featured in a report by ABC TV's 7.30, the museum recently excavated the mixed remains of a mummified individual inside the 26th Dynasty coffin of Mer-Neith-it-es.

These excavations yielded a staggering 7100 beads of different materials, sizes and shapes from a beaded net torn apart by robbers seeking the amulets and jewels wrapped with the mummy beneath. The newly acquired net provides a striking illustration of what these beads once comprised, and will be displayed alongside the Mer-Neith-it-es coffin in a dedicated Mummy Room in the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

Dr Jamie Fraser is Senior Curator of the Nicholson Museum. The article draws on research by Dr Conni Lord and Chris Jones.



Measuring stars

Jan Brazier reflects on an exciting new acquisition from the School of Physics from two unique astronomical instruments.

The beam splitter, now transferred to the Macleay Museum, was at the heart of SUSI, where the two beams were brought together on the optical table. From the beam splitter, emerging beams were then dispersed through the spectrograph prisms and relayed to the photon-counting detectors.



Imagine a 640 m diameter telescope that could measure the thickness of a human hair at a distance of 100 km. A 'telescope' with such a resolving power was built in the late 1980s by the University's School of Physics. Known as the Sydney University Stellar Interferometer (SUSI), it was located near Narrabri in northern NSW. Rather than a traditional telescope, SUSI had a north-south array of 13 stations strung out along a 640 m-long baseline in a field.

Each station housed a steerable 'siderostat' containing a 20 cm diameter flat mirror that reflected light from a star into a periscope and along an evacuated pipe into the main optical laboratory. Light from two stations was combined on a main optical table and an interference signal detected, but only after an 'optical path compensator' had equalised the path lengths traversed by the light from the star via the two stations. The interference signal encoded information about the size of the star.

This was not the first instrument to measure the tiny disks presented by distant stars. The angular diameters of stars had first been measured in 1920 by American physicist Albert A Michelson. In Michelson's interferometer, starlight was collected by two small mirrors mounted on top of a conventional telescope, with the light combined by the optics of the telescope. But technical limitations meant that only a few giant stars could be measured.

The field languished until a new approach was developed under the leadership of Robert Hanbury Brown and his team in the School of Physics at the University of Sydney. With the support of the school's head, Harry Messel, they constructed the Narrabri Stellar Intensity Interferometer (NSII), which measured the angular diameters of 32 hot stars and established the temperature scale for stars hotter than the sun.

The instrument was closed down at the end of 1974. When a successor instrument was proposed, it was originally planned to be a larger version of NSII. However, with advances in optics, lasers and electronics, the design was changed back to the approach of the Michelson interferometer. After the construction of a successful prototype, the new instrument known as SUSI opened in 1991. Able to measure stars of various types, allowing fundamental properties of temperature, size and mass to be determined, SUSI played a key role in the development of modern stellar interferometry in various similar instruments around the world.

Few parts of the NSII remain, but with the retirement of SUSI the opportunity arose for the Macleay Museum to work with School of Physics staff to identify SUSI components to be retained, including the long optical path compensator. The objects will allow the complex story of these two unique astronomical instruments to be understood, and help tell the lead role of the University's School of Physics in international stellar astrophysics.

We wish to thank John O'Byrne, Peter Tuthill and Michael Hrynevych for their assistance.

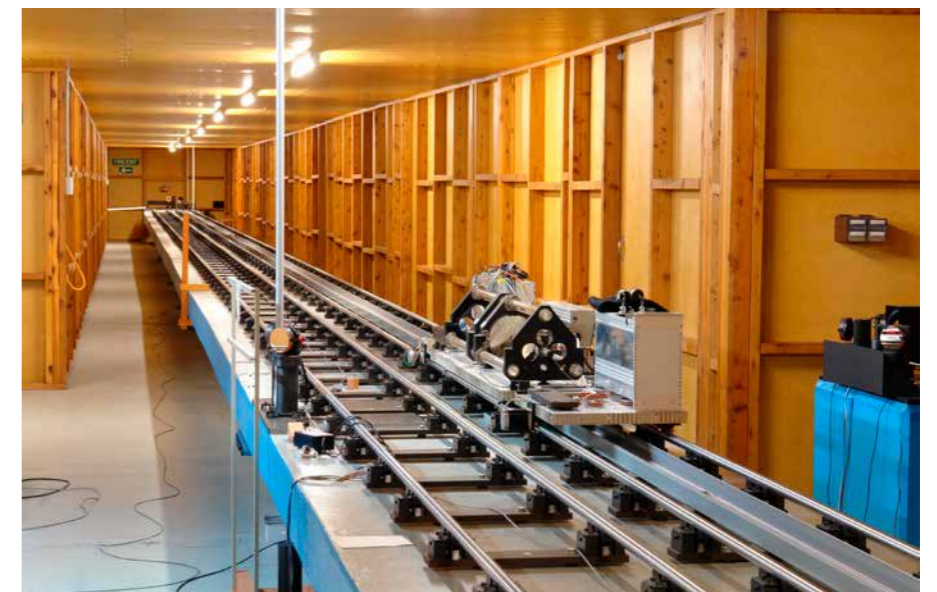
Jan Brazier is Curator, History Collections, Macleay Museum.

View of SUSI's optical path compensator, now transferred to the Macleay Museum, seen on its rails, photo: School of Physics



Above: the NSII reflectors, 7 m in diameter, each consisted of a mosaic of 252 small hexagonal mirrors creating a parabolic mirror. They moved on mounts around a 188 m diameter circular railway track so they could be separated over large distances. The instrument was made in England and assembled in Australia. Three of these mirror panels are now held by the Macleay Museum, photo: School of Physics

Left: view of SUSI from the north end of the 640 m baseline. It was located at CSIRO's Paul Wild Observatory near Narrabri, NSW. The white enclosures held individual siderostats.





Left: digital rendering of Robert Andrew's *GARABARA*, at the entrance to the new Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences building, image courtesy of UAP

Above: Artist Robert Andrew (left) and Richard Stride, from UAP, inspect a test of the tile treatment

GARABARA

old knowledges, new learnings

Ann Stephen introduces a new public art commission, recently unveiled on campus.

The cultures and histories of Indigenous Australia that were believed to be destined for extinction at the time of Federation in 1901 have not merely resurfaced, they have moved from the periphery of Australia's national imagination to its centre, where they rightly belong.

Mark McKenna, 'Moment of Truth', *Quarterly Essay*, 2018

Today, Indigenous artists are transforming our ideas about place by giving a material presence to forgotten or invisible histories. Sydney's creamy-coloured sandstone cliffs and rock platforms were once covered in vast galleries of rock art, made for thousands of years, now partially lost or obscured, along with the meanings of the great ceremonial grounds, erased by more than two centuries of settlement. Instead, the sandstone is largely identified with colonial architecture, like Edmund Thomas Blacket's Great Hall with its neo-Tudor Gothic edifice designed in the 1850s, now part of the University's Quadrangle and cultural precinct.

It is these repressed and overlaid histories that inform a new art commission by Robert Andrew, an Indigenous artist selected to create a work for the entrance of the new Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences building on Science Road.

Andrew, who is based in the remarkably productive department of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University has described how urban Indigenous origins inform his art:

I am a descendant of the Yawuru people from the West Kimberly region of North Western, Western Australia or more specifically the Broome area ... Mum and Dad moved from the West Kimberly region to Perth and this is where I was born and raised. Suffice it to say, as a family unit, we had lost all connection with Indigenous culture and until I was 13 years old I didn't know that part of my history ... My artwork investigates what it means to be a contemporary urban Indigenous artist whilst looking at the particular histories of urban Aborigines and attempts to coherently bring these stories forward toward a process of recognition, understanding and healing.

The new commission, his first exterior work, continues Andrew's fascination with Indigenous languages. To date, the artist has constructed computer-programmed kinetic machines that inscribe walls with words from his Yawuru language, using ochre and an electro-mechanically-operated water gun ingeniously repurposed from 3D printer components. He explains:

Where 3D printing is an additive process I've substituted the original head of the printer with a fuel injector powered by a driver that squirts controlled amounts of water in a predetermined sequence which corrupts what the machine was initially designed to do. →

In one earlier work, a layer of red ochre, sourced from Yawuru in Western Australia, is stripped away to expose the word 'Buru' (Yawuru for 'country').

In developing the brief for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences commission, as part of the University's Wingara Mura design principles for Indigenous engagement, Andrew consulted with a number of local Indigenous groups and individuals, including Nathan Moran of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, the art curator Hetti Perkins and Professor Jakelin Troy, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research at the University. Andrew recalls, "In the early conversations with Hetti, one word kept coming into focus – 'Corroboree'. The word 'Corroboree' has a universal 'understanding' across Australia and internationally."

The crucial key for the current work is derived from Professor Troy's earlier research on the languages of the Sydney region, as Andrew explains:

Corroboree has its origins in the Sydney language and was originally transcribed into an English interpretation in William Dawes' note books. Jaky [Professor Troy] has compiled a list of words and their translations from early colonial sources and local knowledge. Corroboree (Car-rib-ber-re), Garabara, Korobra has its origins in the local Indigenous language of the Sydney area. The word Garabara and all its known and unknown meanings look at knowledge that is continually accessed, uncovered, enacted/re-enacted, read and interpreted, often displaced and re-placed, always moving and always growing.

The eight letters of GARABARA span the external façade facing onto Science Avenue. Each letter is formed from an organic wind-carved pattern creating the appearance of an eroded, almost illegible text. To create these surfaces, the artist made photographic studies of the sandstone cliffs around Bondi, which were turned into 3D models using photogrammetry, then machine-etched to form the shape of letters and sandblasted into granite panels. Bronze and steel pins, inserted within the text, will oxidise and cause rust stains, recalling the internal brown markings on sandstone formed by iron-rich water seeping through the stone. Such bleeds over time will gradually course down and partially erode the letters, representing – in Andrew's words – "old knowledges and new learnings overlaying, revealing, altering and interacting with each other."

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

Left: Robert Andrew, *Transitional text - BURU 2016*, aluminum, ochres, oxides, water and electromechanical controllers, 270 x 240 x 60 cm, courtesy of the artist

Pacific textiles

At the end of 2017, the University Museums began a project to conserve, rehouse and digitise the Pacific textiles held in the Macleay collection.

Chris Jones explains the process.



Salatasi (barkcloth) made in Wallis and Futuna, transferred from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney 1965-79, Macleay Museum, ET87.6.5

Many of the Pacific textiles in the Macleay collection had not been seen for some time because they were not stored in an accessible way. In consultation with visiting Pacific Islander experts on the best ways to store and work with the textiles, curators and collection management staff decided on strategies for the project.

The first step was to unroll or unfold the textiles and allow them to relax. Many kinds of barkcloth, such as Samoan *siapo* and Tongan *ngatu*, are made as gifts, cut up following presentation and stored away. While some textiles have now been carefully re-rolled, for others the folds and creases have been purposefully maintained as part of their history.

The mats woven from pandanas, coconut or banana fibre strips needed extensive flattening out and relaxing. Next, cleaning of the surfaces was performed to remove thin layers of embedded dust and to mend any rips or tears. This step was a logistical challenge as some of the textiles are large, with some measuring more than six metres long. The process required a lot of flat table space and juggling of objects between shelves and tables.

Once the textiles were clean and flat, we were able to photograph them. Again, size was a challenge. We created a large platform to support the textiles with a white paper backing. The platform was on a slight angle and the photographer stood above the platform on a mezzanine level in order to achieve the correct distance.

Following the photography, the textiles were re-housed – some onto rolls, others into boxes. The photographs were added to labels attached to the roll or box to enable easy identification.

The collection is now stored in a method that will better preserve the objects and make them more accessible for researchers and community. The images created will also assist researchers and reduce the need for handling of the objects, many of which are quite fragile.

Chris Jones is Assistant Collections Manager, Sydney University Museums.

Right:
Collections
Officer Madeleine
Sneddon (right)
and volunteer
Louise Pulling
move a barkcloth
from Tonga into
position for
photography



Right: *Masi kesa* (barkcloth panel) made by artist Lia Usa in the Lau Island Group, Fiji, prize winner at the first Pacific Arts Festival, 1972, collected by Beth Dean and Victor Carell, Macleay Museum, ET86.35.100



Rebecca Conway discusses the importance of direct community engagement with collections.

Up close with Pacific fibre art



Above: Mure Lilje (right) and Joyce Robertson (left) both commented on how the maker's individuality and expression can be seen in the textiles. Mure also pointed out similarities between patterns on bilums and traditional tattoos.

The textile and fibre art made by people across the Pacific region includes barkcloth, a felted material made from layering and beating the inner bark of the paper Mulberry tree (commonly *Broussonetia papyrifera*); mats and baskets, commonly made from the leaves of pandanus, banana and coconut palms; and twined plant-fibre string used to make bags, nets and other forms. Collections in museums reveal the creativity, skill and artistry of the mostly female makers of such materials.

Despite the influx of cheap, readily available, mass-produced textiles, Indigenous fibre art-forms continue to be made throughout the Pacific, a testament to the centrality of their role in Pacific cultures and to people's enjoyment and sense of accomplishment in their creation.

Digital photography and databases provide essential forms of access to cultural collections in museums. However, for cultural experts such as artists and makers, an image cannot replace the knowledge revealed with closer examination, including the physical touch and sometimes even the smell of the objects.

In November 2017 members of WeAve Parramatta, an intercultural group that connects peoples through textile art, visited the Macleay Museum collections to view a large selection of barkcloth, mats and other woven objects, and to share their knowledge with each other and with curatorial and collection management staff.

Members of the group generously shared information on production and use of materials, and advised on traditional forms of storage. WeAve's visit and other ongoing consultations have informed the conservation and storage strategies for the collection, along with our curatorial practice.

Rebecca Conway is Curator, Ethnography, Macleay Museum.



Left: Seini Huakau (right) closely examined and explained details of Tongan ngatu production and design to the group and museum staff

Below: *Ngatu* (barkcloth) with Royal crests and symbols made in Tonga, donated by Dr P Searle, Department of Agronomy and Horticultural Science, 1984, Macleay Museum, ET84.159



Right: Members of WeAve Parramatta; guest speakers front row, (left to right) Seini Huakau, Mure Lilje and Joyce Robertson (in bilum hat)

Romantic yet modern

Isabelle Pech takes a close look at the contrasts in Francisco de Goya's paired engravings.

It is impossible to remain unaffected by Spanish artist Francisco de Goya's works. His grotesque scenes and figures speak of the social and political climate of the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Spain and Europe more broadly. They reference the Enlightenment spirit, the Napoleonic wars and the horrors of the Inquisition. This tumultuous historical period is still subject to many cultural debates and controversies, issues that lie at the heart of Goya's art.

A total of 290 engravings and lithographs have been identified as the work of Goya. The University Art Collection has 12 prints ranging from 1798 to the mid-19th century. One was gifted by an anonymous donor in 1993; the other 11 were donated by the late Roddy Meagher AO QC in 2011.

The period of these prints marks the second phase of the artist's life and career, for which the turning point was a grave illness that left him permanently deaf in 1793. This time of personal turmoil gave birth to a new vision, a strange imaginary world, based on Spanish popular culture, superstitions, and the horrors of war.

Among the 12 prints are five etchings from the famous series *Los Caprichos* (1799) and one from *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (circa 1810–15). The collection also encompasses six of the seven known engravings produced at the end of Goya's life and career in Bordeaux, between 1826 and 1828.

Recent research has shed new light on this less well-known group of etchings, which are outstanding in terms of stylistic features and subject matter. The website *Goya en el Prado* (from the Prado Museum in Madrid) categorises them as 'Últimos caprichos' (the 'Last caprichos'), a reference to Goya's first series of prints, *Los Caprichos*.

Based on two albums of drawings, probably Goya's last albums, the engravings are paired and depict three subjects: a single figure on a swing, a young woman, and a smuggler wrapped in his cloak. The back and front of one copperplate was used to create two versions of the same subject: one on a light background and the other on a dark. Goya particularly appreciated black for its expressive quality, and the aquatint technique, producing tonal effects, was the perfect medium for him; he used it for most of his prints.

The analytical approach required to assess these image pairs can be compared to the game in which participants are asked to identify minor differences between images. It is particularly difficult with the depiction of *majas*.

The subject is the same: a full-length portrait of a young woman, standing in a sophisticated three-quarter view, with her hands on her hips, her back slightly arched, and one leg stretched out and slightly bent, creating a provocative demeanour. →

Francisco de Goya, *Maja sobre fondo oscuro* (*Maja on a dark ground*), 1826–28 etching and aquatint, donated by the Hon. RP Meagher through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2011, University Art Collection, UA2011.43

In both prints the woman wears a white dress, embroidered on the bottom edge with flowers. Her eyes are in shadow, created by a black shawl, also called a *mantilla*, a traditional outfit that Spanish women still wear on special occasions. Little room is left for facial expression; the emphasis is on the engaging pose, rather than the face.

Rather than portraits, the engravings are standardised depictions of *maja*, a young Spanish lower-class woman who, with her male counterpart, known as *majo*, were fixtures of Spanish society (especially in Madrid) in the second half of the 18th century. At that time they were admired and imitated for their worldly manner and dress. The highest strata of Spanish society held them in great respect, as they epitomised 'the pure Castilian blood and spirit'.

Art historian Mary Louise Krumrine describes the *majo* as a "fashionable dandy of the poor with a marked dislike for honest work". This categorisation is emphasised by art historian Stephen Eisenman, who describes the picturesque characters as "proletarian aristocrats, or plebeian nobles". In other words, they are individuals on the margins of society, and Goya identified with them.



"Majos and majas simultaneously represented a link to the past and embodied contemporary Spain by honouring and renovating Spanish practices and by wearing supposedly traditional garb, often in conjunction with new trends," writes historian Tara Zanardi.

This polarity is depicted by Goya whose romanticised imagery of *majas* goes beyond stereotypes. Both prints portray some ambivalence, mirroring Goya's unclear attitude, torn between Enlightenment thought and an attachment to his people.

Recent investigations have revealed that *Maja on a light ground* was engraved after the artist's death, by another hand. Although close to a drawing of a *maja* that Goya produced at the end of his career in Bordeaux, the etching is similar to other 19th-century interpretations of his works. As German art historian August L Mayer noticed, it displays a more refined treatment and may have been made by a French artist in Spain or a Spanish artist with experience in French aesthetics.

Maja on a dark ground, the rougher and darker variant, presents characteristics more appropriate to Goya's technique and design. For example, there are barely discernible demons that surround the young woman, who looks more concerned and provocative than her equivalent on the light ground. Absent in the drawing, these demons may be a residue of a previous design, given that copperplates could be used several times for different compositions. Demons are, nevertheless, a recurrent motif in Goya's repertoire of marginal characters from Spanish popular culture.

Whether made by another hand, these engravings possess an undeniable and unique strangeness, like the original *Los Caprichos*, and generate both disturbing feelings and exquisite pleasures.

Isabelle Pech is an art historian researching works in the University Art Collection in preparation for the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

Unknown (formerly attributed to Francisco de Goya), *Maja sobre fondo claro (Maja on a light ground)*, mid-19th century, etching and dry-point, donated by the Hon. RP Meagher through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2011, University Art Collection, UA2011.40

Real life, the theatre and mythology were inextricably linked in ancient Greece and Rome, as Candace Richards explains.



Between Olympus and earth

A decorative element from a terracotta brazier, depicting a theatre mask of a New Comedy courtesan character, made in Egypt, 200-100 BC, acquired before 1964, Nicholson Museum, NM64.388



Left: red-figure bell krater depicting Dionysos and an actor in Satyr costume, made in Paestum, Italy, 350-325 BC, attributed to the painter Python, donated by the Classical Association 1946, Nicholson Museum, NM47.4

Opposite: hollow-cast bronze lamp with mask of Dionysos, made in AD 1-25, excavated from a well (or chamber above) of a Roman house at Hu, Egypt during the EEF excavations at Diospolis Parva in Egypt, directed by Sir Flinders Petrie, 1898-99, donated by the Egypt Exploration Fund 1900, Nicholson Museum, NM00.182.1-2

Below: oil lamp with reconstructed spout and handle, made in Knidos, Turkey, 200-100 BC, acquired before 1964, Nicholson Museum, NM62.693

Some of the most recognisable figures from ancient Greek mythology are satyrs, the jovial, comical and often drunken companions of the god Dionysos. Identifiable from their pointed goat ears and bushy tails, they carry the weapons of revelry: drinking cups, wine kraters, flutes and drums.

Of the satyrs, the oldest was Silenus, also known as Papposilenos. Often depicted as an aged character with wrinkles and white hair, Silenus was the tutor of Dionysos and appears frequently in the comedic tragedies known as Satyr plays. These were invented in 500 BC and were first performed in the annual Athenian theatrical competition that was at the heart of the city-wide festival known as the 'City Dionysia'. In this competition, a playwright would enter four plays; the first three were tragedies, often thematically linked, and the fourth was the Satyr play.

While drawing on the tropes of tragedy, the Satyr play offered comic relief to round out the set. The performances relied on financing from wealthy citizens and were judged by 10 representatives from the citizenry. Of the hundreds that must have been written, only one complete Satyr play survives: Euripides' *Cyclops*.



Over time, the corpus of characters, style of performance and choice of subject matter evolved and new genres of theatre developed. These developments often reflect the changes in the political and cultural landscape of the ever-expanding Hellenic world. Material culture around the Mediterranean increasingly drew on theatrical subject matter for its decoration. Representations of the masks actors wore to play different character types – such as cooks, slaves, old men or women, Papposilenos, Dionysos and many more – were frequently sculpted or painted on vases.

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, household objects, such as lamps and cooking vessels, were decorated with these masks. In the Nicholson collection is a small terracotta mask (pictured on page 21), of the courtesan character found in 'New Comedy' plays, which was used to decorate a brazier or a cooking pot that has not survived. A bronze oil lamp (below), decorated with the mask worn by actors playing Dionysos, was uncovered during Flinders Petrie's excavations of the Roman homes and wells at Hu in Egypt. At Knidos (located in southwest Turkey) a variety of lamps were uncovered that depict masks for the character of Papposilenos, hung between two discs (page 22, bottom). These depictions of hanging masks reflect the fate of the real masks that, after being worn in performance, were hung within sanctuaries as dedications to Dionysos.



Not every representation of a character such as Papposilenos was related to their theatrical representation. Discerning between a mythological representation and a theatrical representation, which used the myths as source material, relies upon the visual codes and cues worked into the image by ancient artists.

On pottery, the architecture of set design, defined costuming and hung masks was often portrayed (some more subtly than others) to demonstrate a theatrical scene. On this bell krater (page 22, top left), Papposilenos is represented as an actor playing the part of the aged satyr. The artist has clearly defined the cuffs on the arms and legs of the character's costume. In the background, an actor's mask, of a slave character with wrinkled features, short black hair and a goatee, hangs from an ivy vine. Following the Papposilenos actor is a representation of Dionysos holding a *kantharos* (drinking cup) and *thyrsos* (a staff with a pinecone). His naked form and youthful unmasked face signal that we are looking at the God Dionysos, not an actor playing the role of the god.

This mingling of the mythological and the performer gives us a real insight into the role that theatre played in ancient Greek and Roman societies. Theatre was the vehicle in which an interplay between the real world and the godly realms could occur. Playwrights and actors took their audience on tragic, comedic and philosophical journeys, encouraging laughter and reflecting on the joys and sorrows of the everyday – all from the comfort of the escapist realm of Dionysos.

The Nicholson's collection of ancient Greek and Roman theatrical artefacts will be the focus of a new display, *The Art of Storytelling* from 25 July 2018.

Candace Richards is the Assistant Curator, Nicholson Museum.

Researching the history of Balranald, his hometown near the Murrumbidgee River, Ryan Kelly learned about an interesting local event, which had caused widespread controversy. His grandfather, Uncle Daniel Kelly, a Mutthi/Wemba elder, was curious to find out more. In 2017, the research led them to the Macleay Museum and a meeting with Therese Apolonio, who was in the final year of her history degree. Here, Daniel Kelly and Therese Apolonio tell their stories.



In 1845, a peculiar skull was found along the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. At the time of the discovery, settlers and Aboriginal people thought the skull belonged to the fearsome Bunyip. Local lore had it that Bunyip preyed on humans, drowning them in the deep water of their swampy homes.

The skull puzzled gentlemen scientists in Melbourne, Tasmania and Sydney, as it was unlike any known Australian mammal. RC Gunn and James Grant, two Tasmanian naturalists, postulated that this was proof of a newly discovered Australian species.

In 1847, the skull was deposited at the Australian Museum and the public was invited to view the "cranium of the supposed Bun-Yip". Prominent natural scientists John Stewart and William S Macleay dismissed the suggestion of a Bunyip species, arguing that the skull belonged to

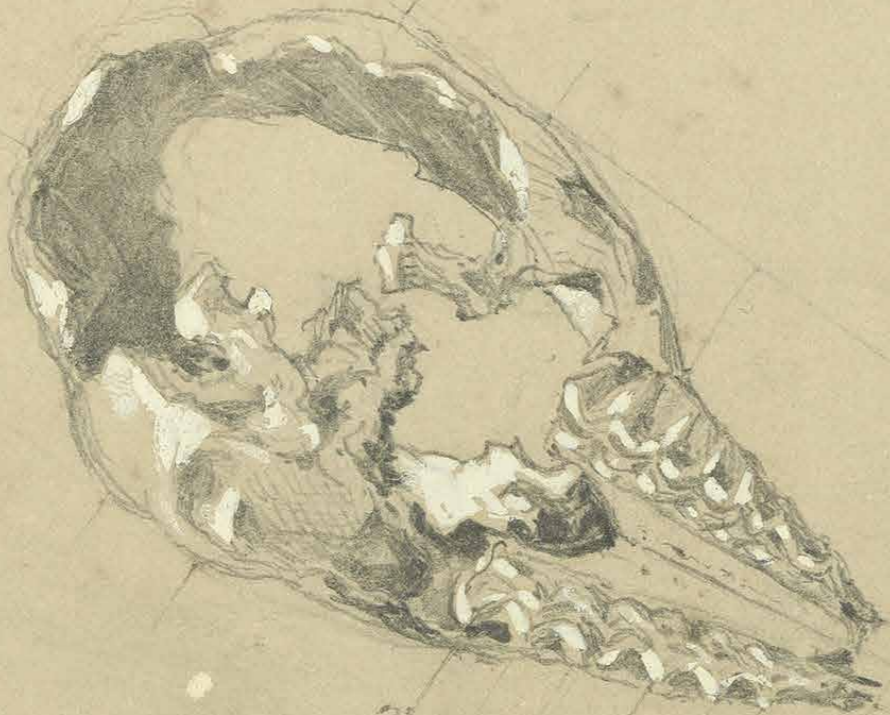
a deformed mammal, with Macleay citing a similar 'monstrosity' in his own collection. The Bunyip for him was simply a creature of folklore.

When Uncle Daniel learned of the skull, he told his grandchildren: "this is something that we always been told about. Because one of the things we was mindful of was not to go swimming without adult supervision [...] Don't go sneaking off and go swimming on your own because the Bunyip will get you, see."

The Bunyip is a significant creature to Mutthi Mutthi culture and dreaming – a part of creation. As a child, Uncle Daniel was told about it by the old people, how the Bunyip lived in deep areas of the Murrumbidgee River, in places where there was a strong current. The threat of being caught by a Bunyip was enough to keep Uncle Daniel and his siblings away from dangerous areas of the river.

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The Bunyip in Balranald



JS Prout illustration, assumed to be of the Murrumbidgee skull, from Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, open copyright: Trove

Uncle Daniel was told about other Aboriginal knowledge traditions which acknowledged the existence of the Bunyip. Wiradjuri elders also had cultural knowledge of the Bunyip, and could point to areas in the river where it lived.

"He's a part of our culture and heritage that we shouldn't let fade away," said Uncle Daniel. "Our children need to know about it because our environment and our learning and lifestyle is changing every day. But we need to get a hold of something ... so that we got it and can last and go on forever. Not just become a fairytale story."

Daniel hoped the skull could be returned to Country for exhibition in the Balranald Interpretive Centre, where community members could go to learn and share traditional knowledge on the Bunyip. In 2016, Daniel wrote to the Macleay Museum asking if they held the 'Bun-Yip' skull acquired by the Australian Museum in 1847. Responding to the enquiry, Jude Philp, Senior Curator of the Macleay, reported that the skull he was looking for had never been part of the Macleay collection, but was often confused with one obtained by William S Macleay, on display in the museum.

This horse skull and skin shows the kind of cycloptic deformity (fused eyes) that led to the mistaken identity of the Bunyip. It is the specimen William Sharp used to refute the Bunyip's existence. *Equus ferus caballus*, collected November 1841 by Dr James Stewart, Hawkesbury River, NSW, Macleay Museum NHM.45



Water pools in the Murrumbidgee, photo: Daniel Kelly 2018

Working together with their unique points of view, neither Uncle Daniel nor Therese were able to find the famous 1847 Bunyip skull, but they did uncover new leads. They learned that in August 1847 the skull was sent to the editors of the now defunct *Australian Medical Journal*. It was then sent to an unnamed museum in Port Philip, where the trail currently ends.

The partnership of a University of Sydney history student and an experienced Mutthi/Wemba elder has had important outcomes, beyond the investigation of the lost skull. For Uncle Daniel: "It's something I always had not forgotten about. Stories I was told from my mother and father and some aunties. They might ha' did it to protect us from wandering away and swimming where they had fear that we could drown. But no doubt that Bunyip, he existed all right."

For Therese: "Early settler accounts often underplay the role of Aboriginal people in history, or misrepresent Aboriginal knowledges. My favourite part of the project was sending Uncle Danny articles and diary entries from the settler archives. We talked about what scientists and local pastoralists had to say about the Bunyip and the skull. Uncle Danny would interject to agree or disagree. It was almost as if we were in conversation with these historical figures."

Uncle Daniel Kelly is a Mutthi/Wemba elder. Therese Apolonio recently completed a history degree at the University of Sydney.



Left: a red granite column capital depicting the goddess Hathor, from the Temple of Bastet, Bubastis, circa 900 BC, donated by the Egypt Exploration Fund, 1889, Nicholson Museum, NM2004.557

In 1889, the University of Sydney received a gift of an immense red granite capital, from Bubastis in the southern Nile Delta of Egypt. Weighing nearly four tonnes, the capital features cartouches of King Osorkon II, who ruled Egypt in the 9th century BC, and dual-heads of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, described in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 18 June 1889 as the "Aphrodite of the Egyptian Pantheon".

The Hathor capital was donated by the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF) in London "in recognition of the eminent services to the society of Mr. Josiah Mullens". But who was Mullens, and how did he secure for the Nicholson Museum what is now one of its most impressive and iconic artefacts?

Like the museum's founder, Sir Charles Nicholson, Josiah Mullens belonged to an elite group of well-educated, wealthy and prominent businessmen who played a significant role in the evolution of the city of Sydney during the 19th century. Born in London in 1826, where his father was a clerk in the Court of the Chancery, Mullens immigrated to Australia in 1852 and was initially employed as a gold buyer. Eight years later, he established his own stock-broking company, Mullens and Co. In 1871, he was instrumental in founding the Sydney Stock Exchange, serving as its chairman from 1874 until his retirement in 1889.

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The Nicholson's Egyptian Aphrodite

Sandra Gordon reflects on a strong family connection to the Nicholson Museum – her great, great-grandfather Josiah Mullens contributed several highly prized artefacts.



Above: this 1907 illustration of a Hathoric column at the Temple of Dendera demonstrates the type of paintwork that would have once adorned the Nicholson's Hathor.

Halftone photo-mechanical print, courtesy of the Wallach Division Picture Collection, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

As well as his business and academic pursuits, Mullens held religion close to his heart and was a staunch Congregationalist. With several of his fellow Congregationalists, Mullens was a keen supporter of the EEF in London where his missionary brother Joseph was a committee member. Mullens became the Australian secretary of the fund and was listed as a Vice President (Australia) in the EEF publications from 1883 to 1907. He was also a member of the Committee of Management for the Nicholson Museum from 1902 until his death in 1915.

Mullens no doubt personally strengthened his ties to the EEF when he visited London and took an extended trip down the Nile in 1891–92. Ultimately, it was his close association with both institutions that assured the museum's acquisition of Hathor and several other significant Egyptian artefacts.

In 1882, on behalf of the EEF, Swiss scholar Edouard Naville excavated at the site of Tel Basta (Bubastis) in Egypt over three seasons from 1887 to 1889. His finds included a temple with a large hypostyle hall containing columns of red granite in the form of lotus buds and palm leaves. Nearby were more groups of columns topped by capitals depicting painted Hathor

heads with their distinctive cow ears and thick, curled hair. One group of larger or 'Great' Hathors was estimated by Naville to be more than seven feet high and he believed they were designed to be viewed from afar: "Looking at them close by, they seem flat, and destitute of expression; whereas at a distance, the features come out with a striking liveliness".

The colonnaded hall, with its rows of monumental painted Hathor faces and polished lotus buds, must have been an awe-inspiring sight and certainly Bubastis greatly impressed the Greek historian, Herodotus, who wrote an evocative account of his visit around 450 BC (*Herodotus* 2.137, 138).

Hathor was not the only important contribution to the Nicholson Museum on Mullens' behalf. In May 1888, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the EEF had donated a head of Rameses II "in grateful recognition of the liberal support which has been accorded to the work of the society by Josiah Mullens, Esq. of Sydney." Later that year at Bubastis, the lower section of the Rameses statue was discovered, but, in a lamentable decision for the Nicholson Museum, Naville, in his 1891 report revealed that he had

"left it on the spot, being much too damaged to be carried away".

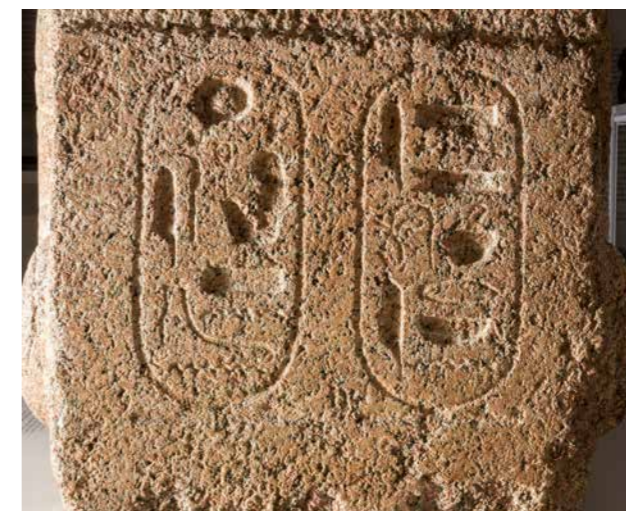
In 1889, six boxes, including pottery from Diospolis Parva and a portion of a mummy case, were transported to Sydney from the EEF on Mullens' behalf. According to a letter held in the fund's archive, these boxes came close to suffering a *Raiders of the Lost Ark* fate when they were left without identification in a shipping office. Fortunately, the University became aware of their existence many months after their arrival.

When she first arrived in Sydney in 1889, Hathor was placed outside the Oriental Studies Room because "her weight was considered too great for admission into the Nicholson Museum of Antiquities". She remained in that position for more than a hundred years until she finally took her place inside the museum in 2009.

Now, Hathor sits as she once did at Bubastis, in silent watch over the crowds who come to visit, and perhaps also as a small tribute to Josiah Mullens and his contribution to the Nicholson Museum.

Sandra Gordon is a PhD candidate in the Department of Archaeology, and the great, great grand-daughter of Josiah Mullens.

Right: the cartouches of King Osorkon II, carved onto one of the sides of the capital



Anthony Gill investigates how six jars of fish specimens belonging to an enigmatic French diplomat, explorer and naturalist ended up in the Macleay Museum.

The French connection



M. le comte de Castelnau.

Above: François Louis Nomp de Caumont Laporte, comte de Castelnau, image sourced from the National Library of Australia, Trove

Opposite page: the Macleay Museum's type specimen of *Kurtus gulliveri*, NHF.394, photo by YK Tea.

Born in London in 1802, the man who became known as François Louis Nomp de Caumont Laporte, comte de Castelnau (hereafter Castelnau) was a French diplomat, explorer and naturalist, known for his descriptions of new fish species.

Using a variety of names throughout his life, Castelnau studied natural science in Paris under two of the most famous zoologists of his time, Georges Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. Like many, the civil uprisings of his era forced Castelnau into a varied career but wherever he went, he continued his passion for natural sciences.

Between 1843 and 1847 Castelnau was directed by Louis Phillipe I to make an expedition to South America. Following the 1848 French Revolution, he began a career as a diplomat, serving as the French Consul in Salvador, Brazil (1848–55), Cape of Good Hope (1856–58), and Siam (Thailand) (1858–62). He was subsequently appointed Consul-General for France in Melbourne (1863–77), where he remained in retirement until his death in 1880.

Castelnau published extensively on insects (particularly beetles) and fishes, mostly based on specimens he acquired during his diplomatic service. Much of his work was taxonomic, and he was particularly active in describing and naming new species. In all, he described nearly 470 new fish species, based on specimens from South America, southern Africa and Australia.



Like many of his peers, Castelnau's descriptions of new species were usually brief and often inaccurate. Due to museum practice of the time, the specimens he studied were widely dispersed, and these two things – brevity of description and scattering of the specimens – have made identification of Castelnau's species challenging. Association of the new species names he proposed with any particular species is dependent on re-examination of his original specimens (known as type specimens), but first they have to be found.

One such group of 'lost' specimens concerns a collection of fishes that Castelnau published on in 1878, shortly before his death. The specimens were collected by TA Gulliver of Normanton, Queensland, and included 25 species of fishes from the Norman River. Castelnau described 12 of the species as new. Type specimens for nine of his species are currently regarded as missing. Aside from one specimen in the Australian Museum, Sydney, specimens of the remaining three species are in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, apparently sent there with the bulk of Castelnau's fish specimens following his death.

This much I had known before I came to the Macleay Museum. So, I was surprised to find, in the collections, six jars of fishes from the Norman River that matched Castelnau's 1878 specimens. These include type specimens of five of Castelnau's new species. For three

of these, the Macleay specimens are the only known types. For the remaining two species, one (*Kurtus gulliveri*, the nursery fish) has type specimens scattered between the Macleay Museum, Australian Museum and Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle. The other (*Acanthoperca gulliveri*, the giant glassfish) has types in the Macleay Museum and Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle.

It's not clear when or how the Norman River specimens ended up in the Macleay Museum, though it's probable Sir William John Macleay acquired them in 1877, the same year Castelnau donated his specimen of *Kurtus* to the Australian Museum (documented in the museum's archives). Sir William was editor of the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of NSW*, where Castelnau published several papers, including his Norman River paper. According to Sir William's diary, he corresponded with the Frenchman about Castelnau's manuscripts and about loans of specimens and books. There is no explicit mention, however, of the Norman River specimens.

More details of the Macleay's Norman River fishes, including the impact of their discovery on current species names, will be revealed in a scientific paper by myself and colleagues Drs Barry Russell and Gary Nelson. Later in the year, as part of the Nicholson Museum's upcoming *Connections* exhibition, the public will be able to view some of the rare specimens Castelnau described, previously thought lost but now found.

Anthony Gill is Curator, Natural History, Macleay Museum



Seeing poetry

Eleanor Megna looks at Lucia Marcucci's *Nove Stanze*, a welcome addition to our collection of Italian Concrete and Visual Poetry.

The University Art Collection has a significant holding of Italian Concrete and Visual Poetry, the largest of its type in Australia. Collated by the artists Giulia Niccolai and Adriano Spatola, 160 artworks travelled from Italy to Australia for the exhibition *Concreto e Visuale (Concrete and Visual)*, held at the University Art Gallery in 1978.

After travelling to Melbourne, the collection was donated to the Frederick May Foundation, the facilitator of the program with a long history of engagement with Italian art and culture. Frederick May was chair of Italian at the University of Sydney from 1962 until his early death in 1976, and raised awareness of Italian language and literature, from Dante in the 13th century to the artists of the contemporary *neoavanguardia* (New Vanguard). The foundation, established after his death, transferred the artworks to the Department of Italian Studies in 1999, and in 2008 the collection was acquired by the University Art Collection.

Lucia Marcucci's *Nove Stanze (Nine Rooms)* (1972) has recently been formally acquired as part of the collection. This work – small enough to fit in a pocket – was initially identified as reference material.

Born in 1933, Marcucci is a prominent and enduring avant-garde artist from Florence whose career spans 60 years. *Nove Stanze* is a series of nine collages printed for the art publication *Underground/A* in Bologna, Italy. *Nove Stanze* demonstrates Marcucci's skill in treating word and language as instruments that can be reevaluated and transformed. This is a fundamental component of the Poesia Visiva (Visual Poetry) movement, whose roots lie in Italian futurism and surrealism, and which was at its most active during the 1960–80s. Poesia Visiva recognises the necessity of change and disorder in the technological age.

Italy's surrender from the Second World War consolidated a move away from a Fascist and monarchical past as part of a series of radical cultural and sociopolitical changes. The establishment of the democratically elected Italian Republic (1946), as well as a major economic boom in the 1950s, saw development in industry, technological progress and better living standards. After the 'economic miracle', 1960s Italy was beset by controversy over political values and wealth inequality between the north and south. As a culture famed for tradition, Italy struggled with social change that challenged predominately Roman Catholic conventions, particularly in response to the legalisation of divorce and abortion, and the sexual revolution.

Nove Stanze demonstrates the struggle of these cultural shifts through the lens of women's rights and the representation of women in the media and film industries. Each of the nine prints features a woman in the public eye – celebrities, models, musicians – alongside a male politician. Each print is accompanied by a collage of slogans, plays-on-words, and Italian phrases common in advertising during the 1970s.

Many of the figures are recognisable – Sharon Tate, Jane Fonda, Faye Dunaway – yet Marcucci does not deliberately reveal their identities as celebrities. The highly stylised images – cut from magazines and newspapers – display an ideal of femininity according to the media, while the images of politicians are candid and unrefined. Marcucci's *L'assurdo (Absurd)* for example, cuts a woman's face in half, purposefully removing her identity to mimic the consumption of women's bodies in the media. Similarly, in *Paradiso (Paradise)*, television personality Minnie Minoprio is brutally cut in two, in a calculated move by Marcucci to demonstrate the objectification of women. In this case, Minoprio's legs have become objects removed from the control of the individual to whom they belong.

Nove Stanze also demonstrates acts of dissent against the traditional standards of behaviour women were expected to uphold in Italian society. For instance, *La Fede (The Faith)* takes its imagery of Jane Fonda from the 1968 science fiction film, *Barbarella*. The film, which eroticises Fonda's character and features frequent sex scenes with various sexual partners, transgressed traditional values in Europe. Marcucci places Fonda alongside the words "Un modo d'acquisto sempre piu diffuso, valido, logico e comod" ["An increasingly widespread, valid, logical, and comfortable way of buying"], referencing the commercialisation of women's bodies in the media and entertainment industries.

Marcucci's work continues to be relevant to the social and political movements of the present. In the age of #MeToo and Time's Up, Marcucci shines a light on the long history of this struggle for individuality and control.

Eleanor Megna is a Master of Art Curating student at the University of Sydney.



Opposite page: ER Sampietro Editore, *Underground/A* edition 6, 1972, containing Lucia Marcucci, *Nove Stanze*, 1972

Left Lucia Marcucci, *Paradiso (Paradise)* from *Nove Stanze*, 1972, letterpress print on card, University Art Collection UA2018.2

Craig Barker considers the irony that one of the most unassuming objects in the Nicholson collection is from a highly significant building in Roman London.

Raising the roof

A Roman roof tile, shaped in its broken form like a slice of pizza, is used in our education program, as part of the 'hands-on' study of objects – many students handle it every year, as they learn about Roman architecture.

The tile, along with a second, more square-shaped fragmentary tile (NM70.10), comes from one of London's most famous archaeological sites, which after half a century of neglect has recently reopened, becoming a major tourist destination.

The Mithraeum (Temple of Mithras) was constructed around AD 240 on the banks of the Walbrook, one of London's mythical lost rivers. The mystery cult of the god Mithras the bull-slayer performed initiation ceremonies, including animal sacrifices, held in underground temples called *mithraea*. Long after Londinium became London, the temple was forgotten beneath the city's streets.



Above: fragment of a Roman roof tile, from the Mithraeum in London, donated by Winifred Stevens, 1970, Nicholson Museum, NM70.9

Left: the Mithraeum in the 1950s



The discovery of the site, in 1954, during the development of a modern office block, Bucklersbury House, on a war-damaged site in Walbrook Street, created a media sensation. On the final day of the excavations, led by WF Grimes of the Museum of London, a marble bust of the god was found and photographed by the *Sunday Times*.

By that afternoon the ruins were swarming with sightseers (30,000 people visited the dig), questions were asked in cabinet and Prime Minister Winston Churchill took a personal interest. Despite this, the government could not afford to preserve the ruins of the temple *in situ*.

A compromise was reached whereby the developers would pay to move the remains to a more convenient location, 100 metres away. The restored building was opened in 1962 but without archaeological supervision. Grimes later regretted, "the result is virtually meaningless as a reconstruction of a mithraeum."

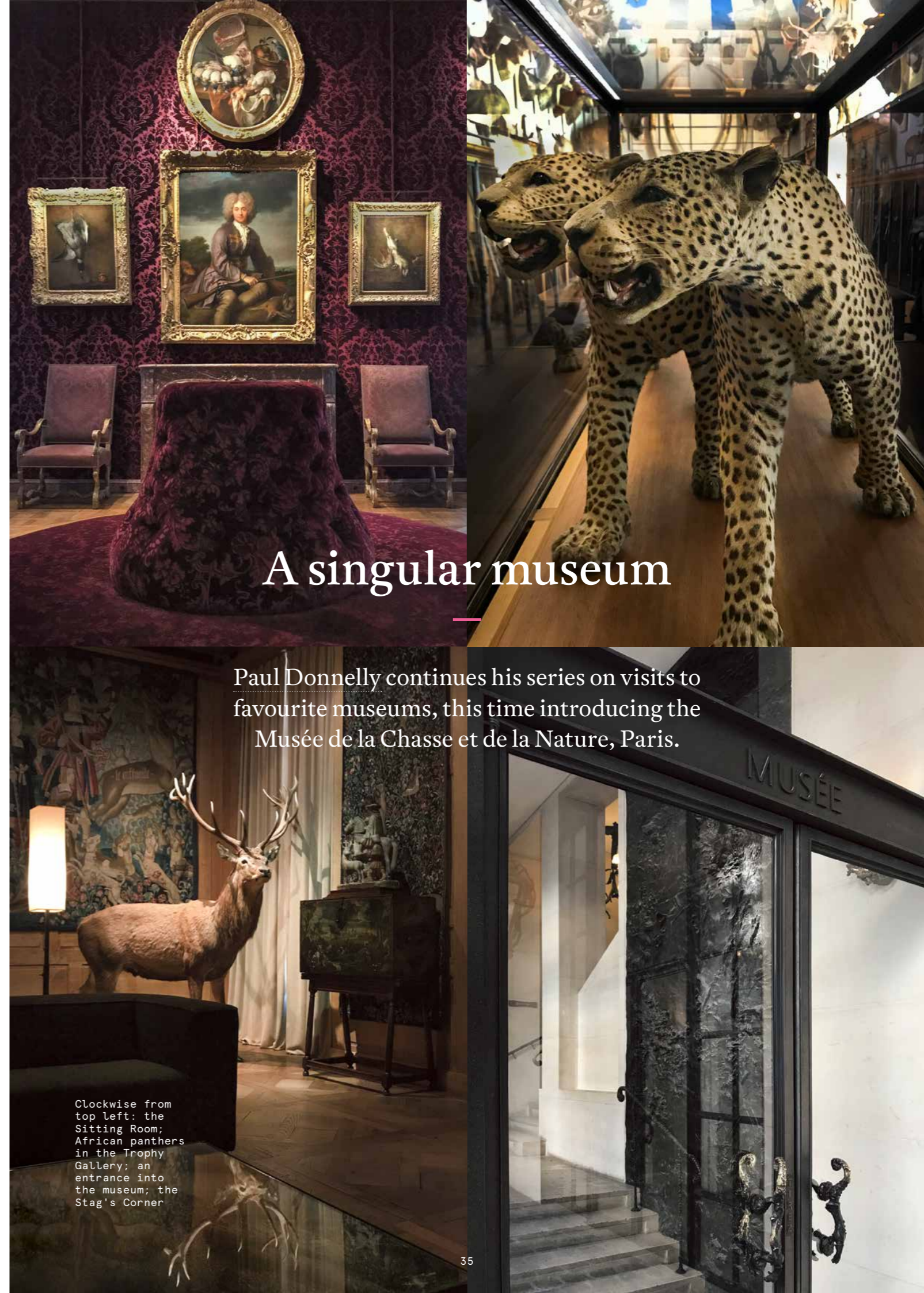
The demolition of Bucklersbury House in 2010 gave the Museum of London a new opportunity to investigate the site. The decision was made to incorporate the Mithraeum into the new development in its original location, and archaeologists were amazed to find the original temple foundations had not been bulldozed in 1954 as originally thought.

The Nicholson's tile was donated in 1970 by a primary school teacher, Winifred Stevens of Wollahra. How she came by the tile is not known, but as part of the Museum of London's newer investigation, the public was asked for their memories of the 1954 excavation. Many instead came forward with antiquities: it turns out workers at the site during the relocation had often given artefacts to visitors as souvenirs.

The Mithraeum, now back in its true location, was reopened in November 2017. Visitors can travel seven metres beneath the new Lord Foster-designed building to see the temple, as well as a gallery displaying more than 600 of the 14,000 objects found on the site. 14,002, if you count the tiles that made their way to Sydney.

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

MUSE



A singular museum

Paul Donnelly continues his series on visits to favourite museums, this time introducing the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris.

Clockwise from top left: the Sitting Room; African panthers in the Trophy Gallery; an entrance into the museum; the Stag's Corner



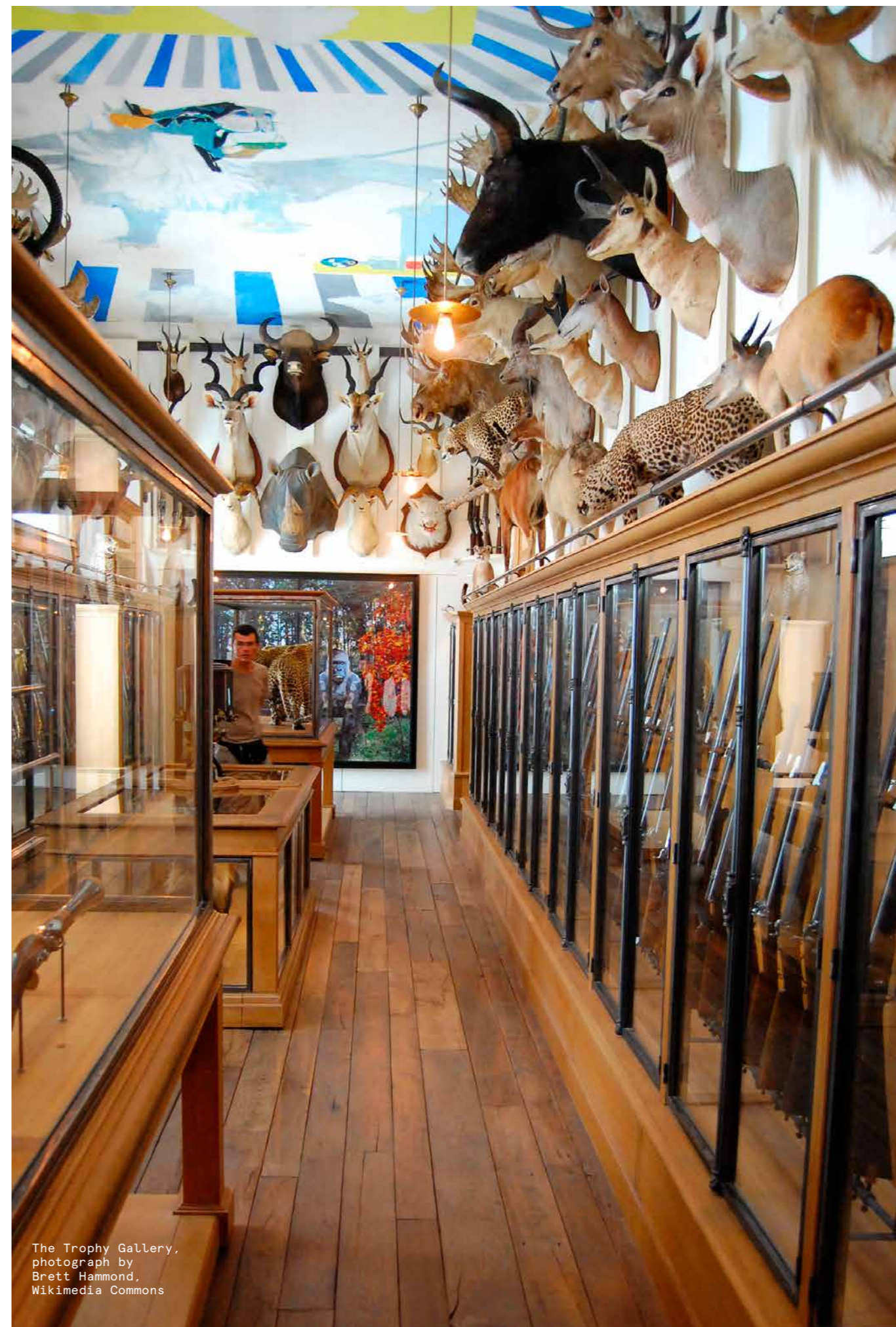
Left: a bronze stag in the Antechamber
Right: the Hounds' Antechamber features a ceramic sculpture by Elmar Trenkwalder

How do you take a difficult subject, distasteful to many, and make it the focus of one of the must-see museums in a European city already filled with other museums and attractions? This was the task set for the staff developing what was to become the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (the Museum of Hunting and Nature). Remarkably, they succeeded in creating one of the most intriguing and beautiful museums in Paris.

This private museum was founded by François and Jacqueline Sommer, who are described in the museum's catalogue, *A Singular Museum*, as "active benefactors, intrepid hunters, and ardent defenders of wildlife". This outwardly clear contradiction between hunting and appreciating wildlife is the leitmotif of the museum, which creates a tension and dynamism that somehow never tips into the apologetic. Instead, the museum's content miraculously and seamlessly tackles the subject head-on, sweeping up the visitor in a visual feast with surprises at every turn, including idiosyncratic objects and groups that leave you second-guessing what you are *actually* seeing. Where did they get that video of a unicorn standing in the rain?

The overall spectacle is achieved through an uncompromisingly designed experience, maximising the impact of a broad collection that spans antiquity to the present day, including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, rugs, tapestries, ceramics, trophies, weapons, armour, furniture, video and taxidermy. The splendid permanent and temporary displays are further enhanced with startling artist interventions, and have featured elements designed by international artists of the calibre of Mark Dion, Daniel Horowitz and Jan Fabre.

The museum's sophisticated, sumptuous displays and interiors are laid out, as per the wishes of the benefactors, as if it were the imaginary house of a hunter/collector. This almost believable subterfuge is enhanced by the museum's location within two adjoined and typical Parisian mansions – the Hôtel particulier de Guénégaud (17th century) and the Hôtel particulier de Mongelas, (18th century), in the heart of the Marais district. Opening in its current guise in 2007, the museum expresses two main themes at its core: the relationship between humans and animals and the changing status of animals over time, and the contribution hunting has made to 'our civilisation', both as a means of observing wildlife and as an inspiration for artists. →



The Trophy Gallery,
photograph by
Brett Hammond,
Wikimedia Commons



Clockwise from top left: taxidermy in the Trophy Gallery; a crossbow in the Weapons Gallery; detail of archival photos and letters in the Sommer Cabin

The rooms are themed to animals or combinations of animals, hunted for sport, feared (and inevitably at the same time admired), harnessed, reviled, or even mythical. The single binding feature of the museum, in addition to the grand domesticity, is an elaborate cabinet in each room where visitors can interrogate the room's subject through discovering objects in drawers and pigeon holes or by peering into anachronistic brass binoculars to see video or graphics. From the hunted boar, stag, and woodcock to the press-ganged collaborators such as falcons, hounds and horses – each journey is always a surprise and delight, and never predictable.

While ostensibly hunting is what binds this museum, what endures in my memory is an authentic admiration for wildlife and a deep enduring connection with humanity. The seductive combination of place, content, and interpretation makes this a special experience for the visitor. For me, as a lover of ornithology, I was particularly taken with the extensive exploration of birdlife and yet, just when I thought it couldn't get any better, the *Bird Car* sculpture by Vincent Dubourg (2006) came into view, a rusted ovoid hulk of a late 1950s BMW Isetta serving as the home of a nest. That's the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature – surprising, quirky, and a total delight.

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

Making history



1. Children's author Stella Tarakson recently launched her books at the Nicholson Museum's ancient Greek myths school holiday program activity day.
2. The coffin of Mer-Neith-it-es returns to the Nicholson Museum, via the Quadrangle, after months of scientific investigation.
3. Justice Anthe Philippides and Professor Edith Hall in the Nicholson Museum following Professor Hall's April 2018 public lecture.
4. University Museums staff recently made a site visit to the new F23 Administration building on campus. When complete, the new building will showcase key objects from across the collections.

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Find your muse at Sydney University Museums

Whether you want to view an exhibition or attend a talk, we have plenty on offer.

For more information and to view the latest timetable, visit sydney.edu.au/museums and click on 'What's on'. Unless otherwise stated, all events take place at the Nicholson Museum.

Free Nicholson Museum tours

Join Nicholson Museum staff every Monday from 3.30–4.30pm for a collection tour with a different focus each week.
Cost: free

July 2018

Friday 6 July, 6pm

Madeleine Colani: pioneer of the Plain of Jars of Laos and doyenne of Southeast Asia's prehistory
Thailand-based scholar Dr Lia Genovese will speak on the work of this intrepid 1920s archaeologist of French colonial Asia.
Cost: free

Saturday 7 July, 2–3pm

The Bronze Age Eruption of Thera: archaeology, science and myth*
Dr Kathryn Eriksson
Cost: free

Monday 9 July, 2–3.30pm

Free Indigenous heritage tour
Join Jimmy Smith as he guides us across the campus, exploring the remarkable Indigenous history of the location and stories of the University's historic relationship with community. To make a booking, email: museums.education@sydney.edu.au
Cost: free

Tuesday 10 July, 10am–4pm

School holiday activity day: NAIDOC Week
Activities for kids aged 5–12 throughout the day.
Cost: free

Thursday 12 July, 10am–12pm

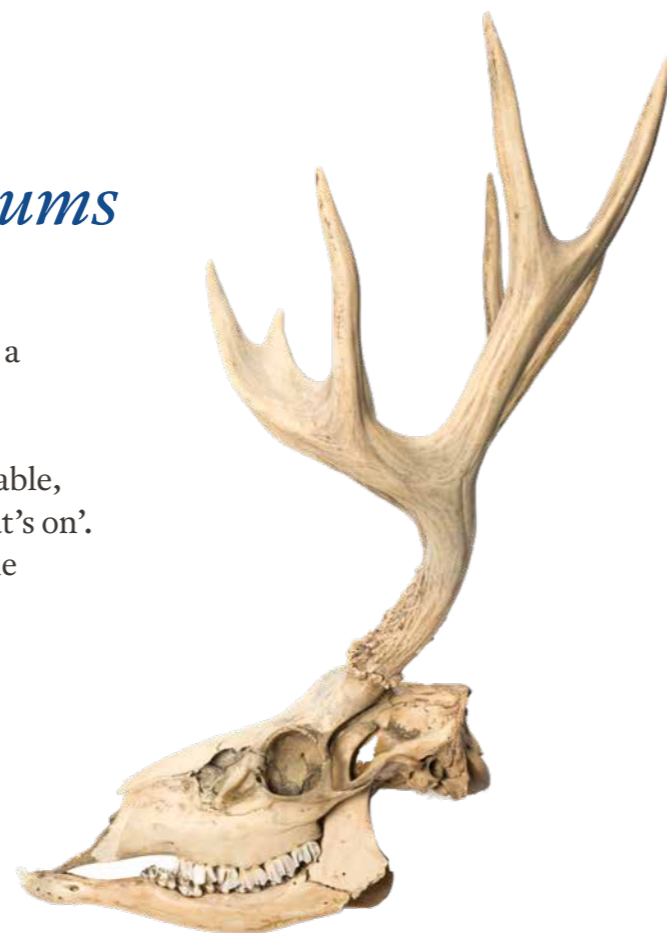
School holiday art workshop: Containers of History
Artist Sarah Goffman leads a creative workshop for children aged 5–15.
Cost: free

Thursday 19 July, 10am–4pm

School holiday activity day: Roman armour
Activities for kids aged 5–12 throughout the day.
Cost: free

Tuesday 24 July, 6 for 6.30pm

An overview of Greek and Roman sculpture in the Nicholson Museum
Professor Hans Goette, German Archaeological Institute
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests, \$10 for students. Includes light refreshments.



August 2018

Wednesday 1 August, 6 for 6.30pm

Decline and Fall: reflections on Rome and the USA
Rt Hon Bob Carr, former NSW Premier
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests, \$10 for students. Includes light refreshments.

Saturday 4 August, 12.30–1.30pm

Greek Vases: Myth and Meaning
Dr Stavros Paspalas, Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, the Nicholson Museum and the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens present a free tour of the Nicholson Museum's collection of Athenian vases.
Cost: free

Saturday 4 August, 2–3pm

Japanese Gardens*
Dr Kathleen Olive, Academy Travel
Cost: free

Above: skull and antlers of *O. Hemionus sitkensis*, Merriam 1898, purchased from Wards Rochester before 1900, Macleay Museum, NHM.19

September 2018

Saturday 1 September, 12.30–1.30pm

Greek Vases: Myth and Meaning
Dr Stavros Paspalas, Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, the Nicholson Museum and the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens present a free tour of the Nicholson Museum's collection of Athenian vases.
Cost: free

Saturday 1 September, 2–3pm

Life and death on the coast of the Atacama Desert, northern Chile*
Dr Chris Carter, Academy Travel
Cost: free

Wednesday 12 September, 6 for 6.30pm

Alexander's Lost World: The Oxus Civilisations and the origins of Zoroastrians
David Adams
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests, \$10 for students. Includes light refreshments.

October 2018

Saturday 6 October, 2–3pm

After Alexander: new perspectives on Classical and Late Antique Pella in Jordan*
Dr Stephen Bourke, University of Sydney
Cost: free

Tuesday 9 October, 10am–4pm

School holiday activity day: Fantastic beasts in the museum
Activities for kids aged 5–12 throughout the day.
Cost: free

Wednesday 17 October, 6 for 6.30pm

Curious Connections: intimate linkages between objects in the Nicholson Museum and objects beyond
Dr Jamie Fraser, Nicholson Museum
Lecture and exhibition opening.
Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests, \$10 for students. Includes light refreshments.



* The 2018 *Postcards from the Past* free Saturday lecture series is sponsored by Academy Travel.

Above: Typewriter with double keyboard, 1950s, manufactured by Imperial Typewriter Co. Ltd, Leicester and Hull, England transferred from the Faculty of Engineering, Macleay Museum, SC2013.1

Current exhibitions

Nicholson Museum

- *Alpha and Omega: tales of transformation*, until Friday 28 September 2018
- *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*
- *Sustaining the Seas*, until Friday 13 July 2018
- *The Art of Storytelling*, from Wednesday 25 July 2018
- *Curious Connections*, from Monday 15 October 2018

Unless noted, all Nicholson Museum exhibitions are ongoing.

Fisher Library

Sydney's women in the field: Phyllis Kaberry and the Abelam, commemorates the UNESCO Memory of the World listing of materials in the Macleay and University Archives, until 31 August 2018.

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, however, events may change due to circumstances beyond our control. Please visit our website for up-to-date information: sydney.edu.au/museums

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



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