In 2006 the Student Projects Program facilitated the placement of 26 Students with many of the cultural collections on campus. While these students came from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds they all had in common the desire to work closely with a particular aspect of the University's collections. Some completed their placements as part of their degree structure, for example Masters in Art Curatorship internships and History in the Field placements, while others chose to volunteer their time and work on a student project in order to gain practical experience that would assist them in their future professional endeavours. No matter what their motivation all students who worked with collections this year generously gave of their time. They enthusiastically saw their projects through, from the initial project brief that caught their interest to the completion of the project be it exhibition installation, significance assessment, conservation management or creation of a catalogue. It has been a very successful year for Student Projects and one where as a direct result of this productive relationship between the students and collection managers, the collections themselves have greatly benefited.

The students, the projects, the collections...

The varied nature of the projects, coupled with the fact that students are matched to a project that suits their individual needs ensures a mutually beneficial arrangement from the start. As a result of the placement and through their work with a specific collection, the student has an enriched study experience and a meaningful encounter with a feature of the University which otherwise may have remained unknown to them.

Listed below are the students who have worked with the cultural collections this year and a brief summary of their successfully completed projects:

**Samira Afrasiabi and Anna Stockley**, completing the final year of a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree at the University of Melbourne, were able to undertake one of the student projects as part of their Major Project subject. In a Student Projects first, their Major Project consisted of two components: for the Cultural Collections component a Significance Assessment on the AGM Michell Crankless Engine Collection, and to satisfy their Engineering degree requirement, a design audit on the Crankless automobile engine itself. An excellent result was attained because their mechanical engineering background and technical knowledge placed them in an ideal position to complete the significance assessment and fully gauge the impact of this collection within the engineering community and beyond.

**Holly Ambler** was completing a Masters in Public History at Monash University, and undertook a student project as part of her 'Public History Field Placement' unit. For her project, Holly worked with the collections of the Harry Brookes Allen Museum. In liaison with Rita Hardiman, curator, she researched and developed content for a forthcoming exhibition that will celebrate the Departments of Anatomy & Cell Biology and Pathology centenaries this year. The planned exhibition will showcase the history and achievements of the two groups.

**Clover Beckford-Saunders** was studying for her Masters of Art Curatorship degree and as part of her internship subject nominated to work with the Rare and Historic Musical Instrument Collection. Clover's project saw her completing a Significance Assessment on those instruments in the collection which had been catalogued in 2005 as part of a student project. Much of Clover's research for this assessment concentrated on the Melba Gift instruments and through the process of writing the report she found new information on these significant instruments and how they came to be part of the University's collections.

**Sophine Chai** is completing an Honours year as part of a Bachelor of Arts degree. Sophine's project has seen her working with collection manager Nicole Middleton at the Herbarium where she has been labelling, documenting and ensuring all historical data involved with the original drawings from Alfred J Ewart's *Flora of Victoria*, c.1930 is recorded. Sophine mentioned recently that while she had limited botanical knowledge before she commenced work on the project she has since developed quite a knowledge in this area.

**Liz Cohen** has just completed a Masters of Museum Studies at Deakin University and has worked on two student projects this year in an effort to extend her practical work experience with collections. Her first project had her working with the Classics and Archaeology Collections at the Ian Potter Museum of Art,
where in consultation with RE Ross Trust Curator Andrew Jamieson, she completed general collection management related duties on the Sir Flinders Petrie Collection. Liz worked on the second project in collaboration with Kerrianne Stone who is completing a Masters in Art Curatorship. Together they curated a display of plaster models from the Classics and Archaeology Collection which includes introductory text panels and extended object labels. This exhibition entitled Casting the Ancient World is currently on display and may be viewed on level one of the Old Arts Building.

Robert Cook was studying for his Graduate Diploma in Records Management & Archives at Curtin University, WA and for his ‘Archives, Concepts and Practice’ unit he undertook a placement with Archives. His project had him arranging and describing the Douglas Diomedes Alexandria collection and creating a basic finding aid.

Cecilia Cranfield was matched to a student project to fulfil the requirements of her ‘Public History Placement’ as part of her Masters in Public History at Monash University. For her project she undertook a placement at Archives where she investigated potential University of Melbourne Archives and Regional Victorian Historical Society partnerships.

Andrew Finegan was enrolled in a Master of Applied Science - Library and Information Management at Charles Sturt University through their distance education program. For his ‘Professional Experience’ subject, Andrew chose to undertake a ‘General Work Placement’ with Special Collections. He was keen to get the opportunity to gain practical knowledge in this area and also be exposed to aspects of the University’s library collections with which he had previously been unfamiliar.

Nicola Forster was enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree and for her ‘History in the Field’ placement wanted to gain some experience working with cultural collections. Working with the Archives art collection her project saw her gain practical skills in the rehousing, to conservation standards, a selection of works on paper.

Natasha Frisch who is completing a Diploma of Arts in Furniture Design at RMIT was keen to take on a student project in order to gain some additional vocational experience with art collections. Her project has seen her work in consultation with Steve Martin at the Ian Potter Museum of Art in a technical assistant role – this experience has included helping with departmental hangs and the rehousing of artworks.

Masters of Art Curatorship student, Monica Healy elected to do her Internship placement subject with one of the student projects at Archives. For her project she completed a Significance Assessment on their acetate and nitrate photographic negative collections. In addition to completing the Significance Assessment, Monica learnt much about the best practice management techniques for these collections and generated recommendations on how Archives might best deal with these collections in the future.

Victoria Hobday enrolled in a Masters of Art Curatorship, completed her Masters thesis (commenced in 2005) on the nineteenth century wax anatomical models in the Harry Brookes Allen Museum. Entitled A Body of Evidence: An Art Historical perspective on Eighteenth and Nineteenth century Wax Anatomical Models, Victoria used the wax models in the Museum as a starting point to explore the conventions of style and influences that were employed in their production.

Michael Hynes, studying for a Diploma of Library and Information Services at Swinburne TAFE, chose to undertake a placement with Special Collections for accreditation in his ‘Preservation of Materials’ unit. Michael completed a general work placement with Special Collections which allowed him to gain experience across many areas of Special Collections and in particular to work closely with the Rare Books collection.

Bachelor of Music student, Holly de Jong recently undertook a project which engaged with the Rare and Historic Musical Instrument Collection. The placement was part of her ‘Special Study’ subject and saw her complete a Significance Assessment on the Indonesian Instrument Collection with particular emphasis paid to the two gamelan sets. Holly had to apply her extensive knowledge of music to the Significance methodology which while challenging, proved to be a very successful process.

Helen Kiddell was completing her Masters in Public History at Monash University, where as part of her ‘Public History Placement’ she worked in conjunction with Dr Caitlin Stone and Cally Martin on the Law Heritage Collections. Helen’s project involved research and the creation of exhibition text panels on student life in anticipation of the Law Schools upcoming 150th anniversary.

Kathleen Kiernan completed her internship for her Masters in Art Curatorship with the Baillieu Print Collection. Her placement had her complete an inventory on part of the collection and also carry out a variety of collection management duties which included working with the EMu catalogue, digital imaging, research and inscription examination.
Christine Kousidis a student at Monash University, chose to undertake a 'General Work Placement' project at Archives as part of her Graduate Diploma of Information Management & Systems. Her project saw her focus on the David Orme Masson papers where through this work she gained a practical understanding of the role of an archivist and the physical preservation of archives.

Patricia Lissel completed her placement at Archives. A student of the School of Business Information Technology, RMIT she was in the midst of her Graduate Diploma in Information Management. For her project Patricia created finding aids for the Joseph Burke Collection.

In preparation for her research Lucy Spencer examines the anatomical plaster models in the Harry Brookes Allen Museum. University of Melbourne, History in the Field student Alison Rabinovici chose to undertake her placement working with the Rare Collections in the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library. Alison, who has a passion for music history, has been working with an orchestral ledger that dates from 1905. Her project involved both conservation and research. While Alison has since completed the requirements for her subject, she has decided to continue on with the conservation of the ledger. Through this dedicated work she is ensuring the ledger remains a valuable and accessible resource to researchers.

Miriam Ross was completing her Masters in Art Curatorship and as part of her Internship subject was keen to work with the collections in the Ian Potter Museum of Art. With guidance from RE Ross Trust curator Andrew Jamieson she created an exhibition trail for a display in the Classics and Archaeology Museum. The trail entitled Connecting with People of the Past was a self guided tour that enabled a visitor to navigate a specific pathway through the exhibition.

Lucy Spencer from Monash University was undertaking a Masters in Public History. For her Public History Research project (commenced in 2005) she completed a thesis on the plaster anatomical models in the Harry Brookes Allen Museum. Her thesis The Artist's Knife: the art and science of plaster anatomical models at the Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology aimed to assess the models in the history of anatomy and also to explore the meeting between art and science.

Maria Tallarida had just completed her Masters in Art Curatorship and wanted to gain some additional vocational experience working with collections. Maria's project was to catalogue the Architectural Atelier drawings of 1920s and 1930s which are part of the Rare Materials Collection in the Architecture and Planning Library. These drawings have since been put onto a database and will soon be accessible to students, academics and the wider community through the Rare Material Collection's website.

Erica Tsai and Cristy Yoe are two Bachelor of Music students at the University of Melbourne and for their 'Work Experience and Career Preparation' subject worked with the Rare and Historic Musical Instrument collection. Their project had them cataloguing the historic instruments held within the Faculty of Music. For their placement, Erica and Cristy had to first learn the museum methods necessary to catalogue the instruments and then apply these skills to a varied collection which included lutes, chitarrones and harpsichords. For two students whose background had seen them more playing instruments than documenting them it proved to be a challenging and engaging project.

It has been an exciting year for the Student Projects Program with Cultural Collections – much has been achieved from a collection management perspective, but also from the students’ perspective there has been much success. As well as the immediate satisfaction students have gained from working with the collections, many will have longer term benefits as they take what they have learned through their placements onto other positions. It is satisfying to think that some of their future achievements may in part be attributed to time spent working with the University’s cultural collections.

We look forward to building on these achievements in 2007 and creating an even wider network of ‘alumni’ from the Student Projects Program. Once again I would like to thank all involved with the projects, whether by supporting, or directly participating in this Program you have contributed to making it a successful year.

Helen Arnoldi
Student Projects Coordinator, Cultural Collections
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For more information on the Student Projects Program go to our web site at: