

# News from the collections

## David and Marion Adams Collection

Wednesday 15 April 2009 was an auspicious occasion for the University's Classics and Archaeology Collection. A function at the Ian Potter Museum of Art celebrated the gift of the David and Marion Adams Collection. Ranging across many cultures—Cypriot, Byzantine, Greek, Indian, Persian, Roman, African, Oceanic and American—the 200 artefacts were carefully selected over several decades by the late Professor Marion Adams (née Heatley) and her husband Mr David Adams. Professor Adams was a distinguished academic in the field of German literature, whose career at the University of Melbourne included the deanship of the Faculty of Arts from 1988 to 1993. Mr Adams is a retired engineer who graduated in mechanical engineering from the University of Melbourne. At the celebration at the Potter he spoke eloquently about the enjoyment and new understandings that he and Professor Adams gained from collecting on their wide travels, and the choice of the University as the collection's long-term home, where it can be used for teaching, research and enjoyment by the widest possible audience for generations to come. An exhibition of selected items, curated by the Spencer-Pappas Trust



Curator and Lecturer, Dr Andrew Jamieson, is on display in the Potter's Classics and Archaeology Gallery until 11 October 2009.

## Annual Appeal assists the Grainger Museum

Each year the cultural collections benefit from the generosity of alumni, staff, students and other supporters who donate to the University's Annual Appeal. Money from those donors who select 'Library and cultural collections' as the beneficiary of their gift is distributed for various projects across the University. This year, the money raised from the 2008 appeal will be dedicated to one high-priority project: the re-opening of the

Grainger Museum. The Museum has been closed for several years due to longstanding structural and damp-proofing problems. These are currently being rectified, and other improvements to the building and its services are being made, all under the supervision of heritage architects Lovell Chen. The Museum is scheduled to re-open in late 2009. Funds from the 2008 Annual Appeal will contribute to the presentation and interpretation of the collection, through a range of new exhibitions being created for the re-launch of this internationally significant museum.

If you would like to make a donation to support any of the University's cultural collections, this can be done online at [www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni/giving/](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni/giving/) (choose 'Library and cultural collections' for 'Gift purpose'), or contact the University's Advancement Office on (03) 8344 1751.



Previous page, above: Sandstone head of Devi (goddess) with elaborate coiffure and earring, Kushan, Mathura (north India), 3rd century CE. Collection of David and Marion Adams. Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

Previous page, below: Grainger Museum Curator of Collections and Research, Astrid Krautschneider, checking out the roof repair works, March 2009. Photography by Brian Allison.

Right: Past and present staff of the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library at the launch of the exhibition *Keeping scores* in the Baillieu Library, December 2008. Left to right: Georgina Binns, Richard Excell, Pasqualina Grosso, Gordon Dunlop, Christine Webster, Lena Vigilante, Margaret Greene, Evelyn Portek and Jennifer Willis.



### **Keeping scores: 100 years of the Music Library**

The University's Music Library celebrated its centenary in 2008. To mark this important occasion an exhibition was held in the Leigh Scott Gallery of the Baillieu Library from 1 December 2008 to 1 March 2009. Curated by Music Librarian Evelyn Portek, with assistance from Music Cataloguer Richard Excell and Exhibitions Assistant Kerriane Stone, the displays included printed and manuscript scores, musical instruments, concert programs, archival documents, portraits, scrapbooks and memorabilia. Speakers at the event were Evelyn Portek, the Acting University Librarian Jenny Ellis, and the eminent musicologist Dr Kay Dreyfus. A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue, featuring an essay by Dr Peter Tregear on the history of the Music Library, forms a fitting memento of the long history of what is now known as the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library.

### **Medical history collections**

The Brownless Biomedical Library will be closed for refurbishment in the second half of 2009. This means the Medical History Museum will be temporarily unavailable to visitors, although research inquiries and other

behind-the-scenes work will continue (please telephone Ms Liza Taylor on 8344 4348 or via email [taylorl@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:taylorl@unimelb.edu.au)). The Medical Rare Books Collection is being relocated to Special Collections in the Baillieu Library. This latter project has been taking place in stages as the books are catalogued, thanks largely to a generous grant provided in 2007 by the Russell and Mab Grimwade Miegunyah Fund. The cataloguing and relocation are making these rare books more easily accessible to researchers, and also improving the security of their storage.

### **Intelligentsia**

The exhibition *Intelligentsia: Louis Kahan's portraits of writers* brought together a series of works created between 1955 and 1974 for the journal *Meanjin*. These drawings are now part of Special Collections in the Baillieu Library. The exhibition, curated by Dr Vivien Gaston, an honorary fellow in the School of Culture and Communication, was held at the Ian Potter Museum of Art from 22 January to 19 April 2009. As well as the drawings, the exhibition featured painted portraits from the University of Melbourne Art Collection, copies of *Meanjin*, and a documentary film from 1960.

The Viennese-born artist Louis

Kahan AO (1905–2002) trained originally as a tailor, moving to Paris in 1925 to work with the couturier Paul Poiret. He also designed theatre sets and costumes, served in the Foreign Legion, and between 1943 and 1945 drew thousands of portraits of wounded allied soldiers. After returning to Paris he went to the USA and then joined his family who had emigrated to Perth. Moving to Melbourne in 1950 he became friends with Clem Christesen, editor of *Meanjin Quarterly*. Kahan later donated to the University the complete series of drawings commissioned for the magazine.

### **Russell and Mab Grimwade Miegunyah Fund**

The Russell and Mab Grimwade Miegunyah Fund is the result of the generous bequest of the Melbourne chemist, industrialist, philanthropist and collector Sir Russell Grimwade (1879–1955) and his wife. Over the years it has provided substantial support to the University's collections. This year the Fund will help to preserve two of the University's scientific collections: archival packing and rehousing of the most fragile items in the School of Chemistry Collection, and purchase of a storage compactus (sliding shelf unit) for the School of Physics Museum. These

**Right:** Mundukul Marawili, Madarrpa clan, Eastern Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, *Mundukul* (Ancestral snake) and *Yirwarra* (Fish trap) at *Baraltja*, 1942, natural pigments on eucalyptus bark, 177 x 100 cm. The Donald Thomson Collection, University of Melbourne and Museum Victoria. © Courtesy Marrirra Marawili. Displayed in the exhibition *Ancestral power and the aesthetic*.

**Below:** Louis Kahan, *Clement B. Christesen*, 1960, pen and ink, sheet: 56.9 x 37.8 cm. Reg. no. 1980.2044, gift of the artist, 1980, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne. © Louis Kahan (estate)/Licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney 2008. Displayed in the exhibition *Intelligentsia*.

behind-the-scenes improvements to storage and safekeeping may be the less glamorous side of collections work, but they are critical to the long-term preservation of these physically fragile and highly significant items. Without this type of care, more high-profile activities such as exhibitions, publishing and display are not possible.

### **Ancestral power**

The exhibition *Ancestral power and the aesthetic: Arnhem Land paintings and objects from the Donald Thomson Collection*, to be held at the Ian Potter Museum of Art from 2 June to 29 August 2009, is a joint project of the Ian Potter Museum of Art and Museum Victoria. It is curated by Lindy Allen, Senior Curator, Anthropology (Northern Australia) at Museum Victoria. The Donald Thomson collection is housed at Museum Victoria but includes material owned by the University and by the Thomson family. In the 1940s the biologist and anthropologist Donald Thomson documented the sacred meanings of specific designs and patterns in the art of the Yolngu people. While undertaking fieldwork at Arnhem Land he described how artworks were created, the context for using specific designs, the classes of paintings and designs that moved from the sacred to the profane, and



the embodiment of the power of the ancestors in painting. The exhibition includes over 30 bark paintings and painted objects, many of which have never before been on public display.

### **Everybody loves a road trip!**

This exhibition in the Leigh Scott Gallery of the Baillieu Library runs until 7 August. It showcases the collection of the Shell Company of Australia, which the company donated to the University of Melbourne Archives (UMA) in 2008, in addition to other UMA collections and items on loan from the RACV Heritage Collection. From early in



the 20th century the Shell Company of Australia placed a great deal of emphasis on community relations and how the general public perceived its products and the company itself. In Australia there has been a long tradition of exploration of our environment and journeys over vast distances. After World War II this tradition was further reinforced by the growing popularity of motor vehicle ownership and the family road trip. The displays include project albums (to house collections of promotional cards) and other merchandise, posters, advertisements, photographs, documents, calendars, touring maps (including a Braille map of Australia) and tips for drivers. The exhibition is curated by Melinda Barrie, Senior Archivist, Rio Tinto and Business, University of Melbourne Archives.

### **Charles Darwin bicentenary**

The year 2009 marks two important anniversaries in the history of modern science: the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the origin of species*. To mark the occasion the University is staging three complementary exhibitions running from mid-August until November.

*Reframing Darwin: Evolution and art in Australia* to be held at the Ian Potter Museum of Art is curated by



Left: Photograph taken by a staff member of the Shell Touring Service and Mapping Unit, c.1947–1960. Shell Company Historical Collection, University of Melbourne Archives. Displayed in the exhibition *Everybody loves a road trip!*

Below: Augustus Earle, *HMS Beagle, January 1832, Porto Praya, Island of St Jago*, 1832, pencil, watercolour and pen wash on paper, 21.8 x 44.5 cm. Reg. no. 1995.0140, purchased 1995, the Russell and Mab Grimwade Miegunyah Fund, University of Melbourne Art Collection. To be displayed in the exhibition *Reframing Darwin*.

Professor Jeanette Hoorn of the School of Culture and Communication. The exhibition will trace Darwin's impact from the voyage of HMS *Beagle* to contemporary art, moving from historical depictions of Sydney and Bathurst as Darwin would have seen them, to an exploration of the impact of his theory of evolution on 19th century artists. Including works from many institutional lenders and the University's own collections, the show will be accompanied by a lavishly illustrated volume of essays published by the Miegunyah imprint of Melbourne University Publishing.

At the Baillieu Library, *Reframing Darwin: Evolution at the Baillieu and Darwin for kids* curated by Jeanette Hoorn and Amelia Scurry will make an important contribution to the festivities by revealing Darwinism through primary and secondary materials related to evolutionary theory. Displays will include his major published material: *The voyage of the Beagle*, *On the origin of species*, *The descent of man* and *The expression of the emotions*; the published work of Darwin's contemporaries such as Thomas Huxley, Joseph Hooker, Alfred Wallace and Charles Lyell as well as that of his opponents; and material relating to the Darwin debates taking place at the University of Melbourne.

*Darwin for kids* will present Darwinian ideas through artworks designed for young people through accessible and interesting media and will include two 'primate workshops' by artist Lisa Roet.

### Museums Australia national conference 2010

Museums Australia is the national organisation for the museums sector. It supports the conservation, continuation and communication of Australia's heritage. Many of the staff of the University's 33 cultural collections are members of the organisation, and in late September 2010 the University will host the Museums Australia annual national

conference. This will be an opportunity to showcase our collections to professional colleagues from across Australia and overseas, and to exchange ideas and develop partnerships.

### More news?

Would you like to receive email notices for events, new exhibitions and other activities relating to the cultural collections of the University? If so, please email Belinda Nemeč, Cultural Collections Coordinator, on [bnemeč@animelb.edu.au](mailto:bnemeč@animelb.edu.au) to join our email list.

