

News from the collections

Venom: Fear, fascination and discovery

Jacqueline Healy

The symbol of Western medicine is the snake-entwined staff of Asclepius, the ancient Greek god of medicine. The serpent was believed to possess benevolent properties that could cure a patient by touch. The Medical History Museum's latest exhibition, *Venom: Fear, fascination and discovery*, celebrates the history of the development of antivenom in Australia. Dr Ken Winkel, director of the Australian Venom Research Unit, explains that human fascination with the power of venom, and the quest for a universal antidote against this most feared of poisons, is deeply woven into the history of medicine. The University of Melbourne has always been part of the global debate on the nature of venom. Our first dean of medicine, George Britton Halford, attracted international attention in the 1860s for his 'germ theory' of snakebite poisoning, which was eventually debunked. After this controversial beginning, the university fostered a succession of internationally significant venom researchers and collaborations with major institutions such as the Royal Melbourne Zoological Garden, Museum Victoria, Healesville



Sanctuary, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories.

In the exhibition, cartoons, posters, photographs, research papers, specimens and snakebite kits from collections of the university and associated institutions tell the story of the development and use of antivenom in Australia from colonial times to now.

Venom: Fear, fascination and discovery, at the Medical History Museum (second floor, Brownless Biomedical Library, University of Melbourne) from 25 March to 20 July 2013, is sponsored by bioCSL, a CSL Limited company. See <http://museum.medicine.unimelb.edu.au> for exhibition details.

Sidelights and cross-references: 75 years of the Grainger Museum

Suzanne Bravery

When the Grainger Museum opened on 13 December 1938, it contained an intensely personal and largely unedited collection reflective of Percy Grainger's interests across time, place, disciplines, cultures and musical styles. Several years later, in a letter to fellow composer Balfour Gardiner, Grainger encapsulated his collecting tastes and principles in an observation that 'Most museums, most cultural endeavours, suffer from being subjected to TOO MUCH TASTE ... TOO MUCH SELECTION, TOO MUCH SPECIALISATION! What we want ... is ALL-SIDEDNESS,

Previous page: Felton, Grimwade & Co., *Chloride of lime antidote for snake bite*, c. 1895–1900, case: 3.1 × 12.7 × 9.2 cm. MHM 03933, gift of the Australian Medical Association Victoria, 2011, Medical History Museum, University of Melbourne.

Below: Gawler and Drummond Architects, *Grainger Museum amended ground plan*, 3 October 1938, pen and watercolour wash on paper, 32.7 × 48.0 cm. Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne.



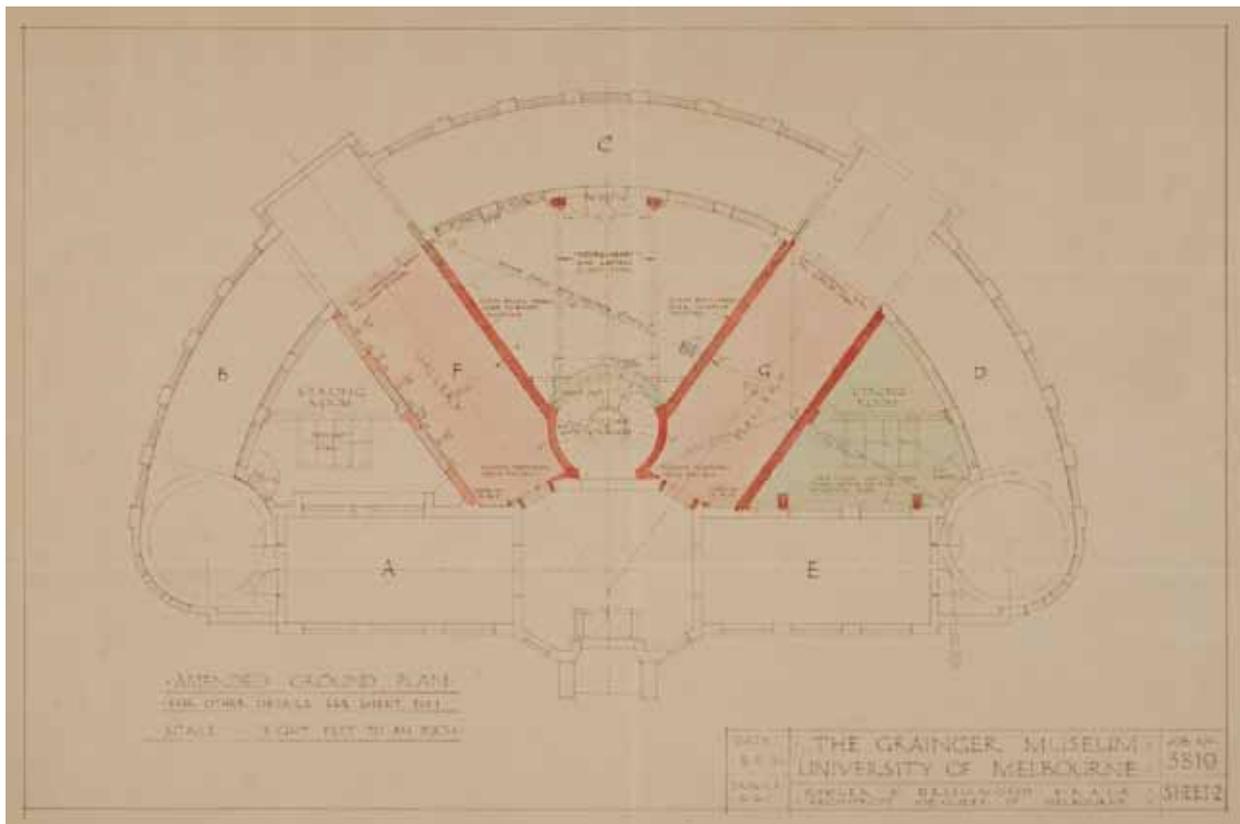
side-lights, cross-references'. The Grainger Museum Collection has continued to grow in ways consistent with its founder's legacy and, 75 years on, this 'all-sidedness' is celebrated in an eclectic selection of objects, each of which has a story to tell.

We have chosen to highlight 75 objects in the museum's temporary

exhibitions gallery and elsewhere in the building with the symbol of a turnip. Exasperated by the popularity of *Country gardens*, his arrangement of an English morris-dance tune, Grainger playfully instructed audiences that 'a country garden in the English sense is *not* a flower garden. It's a small vegetable garden.

So, you may think of turnips, if you like, as I play'.

The exhibition *Sidelights and cross-references: 75 years of the Grainger Museum* runs from 11 April to December 2013. For details see www.grainger.unimelb.edu.au.





Far-famed city of Melbourne

The new city of Melbourne excited global interest in the second half of the 19th century. Numerous authors, many writing for a curious audience in Europe, described the urban environment and settler society of the ‘far-famed city of Melbourne’ as the capital of a ‘British El Dorado’. Even before the discovery of gold, visions of Melbourne were coloured by ambition. To picture Melbourne’s present, or imagine its future, was to speak of the expansion of the British Empire, of commercial opportunity, of progress and modernity.

The exhibition *Far-famed city of Melbourne* includes paintings, prints, drawings and photographs by Louis Buvelot, Conrad Martens, Charles Nettleton, John Skinner Prout, John Shirlow, Napier Waller, John Brack, Howard Arkley, Tim Jones, Louise Hearman, Leah King-Smith and David Wadelton, among others. The story is told through historical works dating from the 1840s to the present day, drawn from the Russell and Mab Grimwade Collection and art on loan from other sources.

The exhibition *Far-famed city of Melbourne* is at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Swanston Street, University of Melbourne, from 5 March to 2 August 2013. See www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au for details.

Libri: Six centuries of Italian books

This exhibition of Italian books over the centuries has as its centrepiece the University of Melbourne Library’s exciting new purchase, Aldus Manutius’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* of 1499 (see article on pages 14–15). Other items on display include two leaves of an Italian musical manuscript, and books printed in Italy, many focusing on important figures or movements such as Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Vasari and Palladio. There are also modern-day books about the Italian experience in Australia and books by Italians now living in Australia, in particular, artists’ books.

The exhibition *Libri: Six centuries of Italian books* is in the Leigh Scott Gallery, first floor, Baillieu Library, from 17 June to 15 September 2013. A symposium will be held on 24 July.

The John Hugh Sutton Collection

On the evening of Friday 6 March 1925, 19-year-old law student John Hugh Sutton suffered a fatal injury while riding his motorcycle down the driveway of Trinity College at the University of Melbourne. The college’s sub-warden eulogised the following day:

I consider that by the death of John Sutton last night Australia has lost one of its most promising literary personalities ... Although young, he has already written some brilliant articles, and has dealt with topics in a masterly manner, unusual in a person of his age. I have had experience with many brilliant men who have passed through Trinity College, but I venture to say that none was so able as John Sutton. He had a remarkable scholastic career.

An avid classicist, at the end of his first year at Trinity Sutton had earned first-class honours in Latin and Greek, second-class in French, and the exhibition in Latin—successes that he repeated the following year. In his memory, his grieving parents provided funding to the University of Melbourne to establish the John Hugh Sutton Classical Museum, which would become the foundation of the university’s notable Classics and Archaeology Collection, now part of the University of Melbourne Art Collection managed by the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

An exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art reflects on the significant legacy of John Sutton’s

Previous page: De Gruchy and Leigh (publisher), *Panoramic view of Melbourne, Victoria*, 1863, lithograph and watercolour, image: 27.6 × 180.1 cm. Accession no. 1973.0257, gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest, 1973, University of Melbourne Art Collection. This view was based on photographs taken from the top of Parliament House in Spring Street.

Right: Ms Kelly Gellatly, the new director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art. Photograph by Richard Timbury.



short life but brilliant academic achievements. Curated by Dr Andrew Jamieson, lecturer in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, the exhibition showcases items from the Potter's John Hugh Sutton Collection, as well as photographs and memorabilia from Trinity College's collections.

The John Hugh Sutton Collection is on display at the Ian Potter Museum of Art from 17 April to 13 October 2013.

Protest! Archives from the University of Melbourne

From the 1960s and into the 1970s, the growth of social movements internationally and the public profile of student activism brought university campuses to the very centre of political protest and resistance.

In Melbourne, activism on immigration reform, draft resistance and the peace movement against the Vietnam War, Indigenous rights, women's rights, gay and lesbian liberation and environmental concerns were all invigorated by individuals and societies at the University of Melbourne. As an educator, the university was also an incubator of student activism and was itself challenged by new forms of debate and democracy. The exhibition

Protest!, held in the Leigh Scott Gallery in the Baillieu Library from 20 February to 2 June 2013, explored the acts, events and personalities of the University of Melbourne in a wider landscape of protest during this period.

The exhibition was curated by staff of University of Melbourne Archives and drew upon UMA's holdings of records from groups such as the Communist Party of Australia, the Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament, the Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives, and the papers of individuals involved in many of these movements. A substantial publication, with contributions by historians Verity Burgmann, Sean Scalmer and Graham Willett, as well as by UMA staff and student contributors, accompanied the displays.



New director for the Ian Potter Museum of Art

Ms Kelly Gellatly took up the role of director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne's art museum, in April.

Previously curator of contemporary art at the National Gallery of Victoria, Ms Gellatly worked across both NGV Australia at Federation Square and NGV International. She has produced exhibitions and publications on contemporary Australian and international art, as well as developing the gallery's collections of Australian and international art produced since 1980.

Ms Gellatly succeeds Dr Chris McAuliffe, who left to pursue research, writing and arts commentary.

Current practice in academic museums

Helen Arnoldi, cultural collections projects coordinator, has contributed a chapter to an international publication *A handbook for academic museums: Exhibitions and education*. Recently published by MuseumsEtc, an independent publishing house based in Edinburgh and Boston, this substantial 750-page book is one of two companion volumes that explore current thinking about issues unique to academic museums. The contributors are leaders in their fields, based mostly

Right: Louis Le Quoynte, *Bouquet de fleurs*, Paris: J.-B.-Christophe Ballard, 1722. Purchased 2012, Rare Collections, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne.

Below: Album of prints by Jean-Pierre Norblin de la Gourdain, open at *Gueux* (Beggars), 1787, etching, plate: 8.1 × 5.2 cm. Reg. no. 2013.0001.019, purchased 2013, Baillieu Library Print Collection, University of Melbourne.



in the United Kingdom and North America. Arnoldi's chapter, 'A mutually beneficial exchange: The University of Melbourne's Cultural Collections Projects Program', looks at the interaction of students and volunteers with the university's cultural collections.

Acquisitions: A tiny champion

Kerriane Stone

The Baillieu Library Print Collection has acquired a very small but fascinating album comprising 65 prints by Jean-Pierre Norblin de la Gourdain (1745–1830), a French artist who worked in Poland from 1774 to 1804. Norblin worked for the last Polish king, Stanisław August Poniatowski, and is regarded as one of the most important artists of that country. He witnessed uprisings against Russia in 1794 and it may have been those fraught events that made him something of a champion of the Polish people—his empathy is reflected in the portrayals in the album. Although Norblin is best known for paintings of Polish conflicts, many of the images in the album show oppressed individuals, such as beggars. Some as tiny as postage stamps, these prints are now some of the smallest in the collection.

The album formerly belonged to Ronald and Pamela Walker, who have a passion for prints and maps. The university's Map Collection has greatly benefited from their generous gifts. The volume of Norblin etchings is accompanied by four larger prints which, like those in the album, show the unmistakable influence of Rembrandt. The album enriches the Baillieu Library's examples of rare print albums, including the renowned Sadeler volumes, which also provide us with insights into how prints were collected in earlier centuries.



Acquisitions: Music from the André Meyer Collection Richard Excell

Over three days in October 2012, Sotheby's in Paris auctioned a substantial portion of the prodigious collection built up by the French industrialist and musicologist André Meyer (1884–1974). Through the agency of leading English antiquarian music dealer Lisa Cox (who had alerted us well in advance), the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library bid successfully on ten lots, comprising about 40 separate volumes, some of which contain several musical works.

Among the highlights are an outstanding rare manuscript of the 1691 French opera *Coronis* by Gatti (purchased with the generous assistance of the Friends of the Baillieu Library) and a manuscript of excerpts from operas by Gatti's mentor Lully. The printed volumes are mostly first and rare editions: three are unique known copies (works by Le Quoynte, Tissier and Zarth) and a set of Telemann duos is one of just two known prints. These volumes from the Meyer Collection make an impressive addition to the Music Rare Collections in such areas as early French and English opera, and Baroque flute music.

Right: Bruno Leti, *Temples in the forests* (four monotypes by Bruno Leti, verse by Anne Wells), Carlton, Vic.: Bruno Leti, 1992, unique copy, signed by the artist. Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.

Below and opposite: Francis J. Broadhurst, Proof print of five wood engraving illustrations for *The Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio*, translated by J.M. Rigg, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941. Purchased 2013, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.



Acquisitions: *The Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio*

Susan Millard

The Baillieu Library recently acquired a copy of J.M. Rigg's translation of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, illustrated by Francis J. Broadhurst, which is from a beautiful, deluxe, larger-format edition of only 200 copies. This copy has a long and affectionate inscription by Broadhurst to Angus & Robertson director W.G. Cousins, expressing gratitude for his help in publishing this, Broadhurst's first book. Inserted loosely are two strikes of a proof of a plate (one a block-making proof) that was intended for this limited edition but not included in it, one strike bearing a signed ink note by Cousins explaining this. This copy also has 46 proof plates together with the original artwork for twelve illustrations, which makes it an important acquisition, complementing the Baillieu Library's already remarkable collection of fine-press material.

This edition shows the high quality of work being produced by bigger companies, such as Angus & Robertson, in the early- to mid-20th century, and the virtual lack of distinction at the time between high-end trade publications and fine-press books.



Temples in the forests by Bruno Leti and Anne Wells

This recent purchase by Baillieu Library Special Collections is a unique artist's book handmade by Bruno Leti in 1992. The poetry is by Anne Wells, an English-born Queensland poet married to the Reverend Edgar Wells, a missionary. Anne Wells lived closely for many years with the Indigenous communities in Milingimbi and Yirrkala in Arnhem Land. She felt

that she identified with the Aboriginal people there and she learnt some of their dialects and traditions.

This book is a one-off, and is signed by the artist. Leti's monotypes were printed from brass plates painted with oils. Postage stamps were stuck onto the images during the printing process. These accomplished illustrations demonstrate Leti's skill in printmaking. The poems and pictures come together to form a superb whole.

The library also purchased several other books from Leti: Fernando Pessoa, *Tobacco shop* (text by Fernando Pessoa, with eight etchings by Bruno Leti), Woodmere, NY: Raphael Fodde Editions, 1994; Bruno Leti, *Clunes*, Carlton, Vic.: Bruno Leti, n.d.; Bruno Leti and Daniele Crepaldi: *Found* (text by Bruno Leti and Daniele Crepaldi; etchings and aquatints by Bruno Leti), Milan: B. Leti, 1991; Bruno Leti, *The lotus cycle: 100 small oil paintings* (text by Des Cowley), Carlton, Vic.: Bruno Leti, 2008. In addition to these purchases, Bruno kindly donated three items to the collection: Bruno Leti and Petr Herel, *The sign*, 2003; Bruno Leti (with an introduction by Jenny Zimmer), *Studio emblems: Twenty lithographs*, Carlton, Vic.: Bruno Leti, 1994; and Bruno Leti, *True trunk*, 2012.