

# News from the collections

## Preserving heritage movie film in the School of Chemistry Collection

The School of Chemistry Collection contains reels of two historical cinematic films. Ernst Hartung and Leonard Weickhardt (the latter also served as chancellor of the university from 1972 to 1978) made the film *Colloids* in the School of Chemistry in 1934.<sup>1</sup> It is known that as films age they slowly deteriorate. As part of a research project with the School of Chemistry (in collaboration with the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation), third-year chemistry student Naufal Shukri used modern infra-red spectroscopy methods to investigate the chemical composition of the film. Environmental factors that can hasten or delay the deterioration of cinematic film were also examined. Naufal's research demonstrated that high humidity and light are significant factors leading to film degradation. The heritage *Colloids* film was found to be cellulose acetate-based. Fortunately, while some chemical deterioration was detected, in the form of 'vinegar syndrome' (the production of acetic acid), the film is in good condition overall. Knowledge gained from the project will inform the safe storage of this important heritage film for the future.



This research was supported fully by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme (project LP160100160): A National Framework for Managing Malignant Plastics in Museum Collections, led by Dr Petronella Nel.

## New exhibition at Creswick Campus

The exhibition *The school on the hill* at the University of Melbourne's Creswick campus was launched on 26 October. This exhibition, drawn from the Creswick Campus Historical Collection, tells some of the stories of students and staff who have passed through the Victorian School of Forestry over its more

than 100 years of providing forest education, and which is now part of the School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences in the Faculty of Science.<sup>2</sup> The exhibition was curated by Tahney Fosdike, a first-year Master of Art Curatorship student at the university. Tahney was keen to complement and strengthen her study program by undertaking an exhibition curatorship project offered through the Museums and Collections Projects Program, which offers participants the opportunity to work behind the scenes with the university's cultural collections on a range of collection management projects. Under guidance from Creswick campus staff and the Cultural Collections Unit, Tahney developed her curatorial, collection management and research skills by curating this captivating exhibition.

An online version of the exhibition *The school on the hill* is available through the Creswick Campus Historical Collection's Omeka website: <https://omeka.cloud.unimelb.edu.au/cchc/exhibits/show/soth>.





Previous page, top: Naufal Shukri (third-year chemistry student) and Dr Petronella Nel (Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation) using infra-red spectroscopy to analyse the composition and degradation of movie film.

Previous page, below: Student-curator Tahney Fosdike in the Creswick campus exhibition *The school on the hill*.

Left: Judith Pungkarta Inkamala, *Bush medicine*, 2017, terracotta and underglaze, 43.0 × 31.0 cm diameter (variable). MHM2017.17, commissioned 2017, Medical History Museum, University of Melbourne. (see also back cover of magazine)

### *The art of healing*

The exhibition *The art of healing: Australian Indigenous bush medicine* will open at the Medical History Museum in April 2018. One of the works on display will be this ceramic pot (see above and back cover) by Judith Pungkarta Inkamala from Hermannsburg Potters, which was specially commissioned for the exhibition. As the artist explains, the work depicts many examples of bush medicine: 'On this pot you can see the old brother walking, the eldest one, the sister in law going to visit the Ngangkara One (bush medicine doctor). They are the eldest and are there to prepare the bush medicine and teach the young ones. The old lady and the old brother will sing, sing, sing and spit into the bush medicine as they mix it. Singing and medicine into the mixture, over the big pot then sing that medicine into the jars. That's why everyone will get better and everyone will become strong.'

The Medical History Museum is located on level 2 of the Brownless Biomedical Library on the Parkville campus. The current exhibition, *The cancer puzzle: Patterns, paradoxes and personalities*, runs until 24 February 2018.



**Right:** Ms Alisa Bunbury, the new Grimwade Collection curator at the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

**Opposite, below:** Elizabeth Turnbull, *My ancestors & me*, 2010, acrylic on paper, 56.3 × 38.2 cm. Cunningham Dax Collection, University of Melbourne.

### **Disquiet minds of Victoria**

In 1947 Dr Eric Cunningham Dax AO (1908–2008) first exhibited artworks created by people with an experience of mental illness, thus gaining acceptance for art in psychiatry practice in the UK. In October 2017 the Dax Centre celebrated 70 years of art in mental health, with the launch of the exhibition *Disquiet minds of Victoria*. This exhibition highlights the visionary work of Dr Dax in psychiatry and the arts, his explorations aimed at understanding the mind through art, changes in mental health care from institutional to community care, and the advancement of patients' rights and biopsychosocial treatments. The artworks date from 1933 to the present day; some have never been exhibited before.

During his lifetime, Dr Dax tirelessly promoted these artworks that now have a permanent home at the Dax Centre at the University of Melbourne. The Cunningham Dax Collection is recognised as unique among international collections of psychiatric art. It is a heritage-listed art collection comprising more than 15,500 works made by people with an experience of mental illness or trauma.

### **Dax Centre is finalist in Victorian Health Awards**

A program developed at the Dax Centre has been selected as a finalist in the 2018 Victorian Health Awards. The Emotional Literacy Through Visual Arts (ELVA) program was created for primary school children, to encourage self-expression, resilience and mental wellbeing. Final selection for the awards is in December.

The ELVA program is bringing profound benefits to children in those schools where it has been taken up. It is proving particularly helpful in regions affected by the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, where children are still feeling the long-term effects of that disaster.

The Dax Centre is open to the public from 12 noon to 5 pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. For more information, see [www.daxcentre.org](http://www.daxcentre.org).

### **New Grimwade Collection curator at the Ian Potter Museum of Art**

Alisa Bunbury has been appointed as the new Grimwade Collection curator at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, commencing in mid-November 2017. Ms Bunbury has been curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery of Victoria since 2002 and before that was associate curator of



prints, drawings and photographs at the Art Gallery of South Australia. In 1998 she was the Harold Wright Scholar at the British Museum, after completing a master's degree and a postgraduate diploma in art curatorial studies, both at the University of Melbourne. She has curated many exhibitions, presenting art ranging from the Renaissance to contemporary Australian works on paper, and has written and presented on a wide range of topics. In the last decade she has specialised in early colonial Australian art, co-curating the exhibition *This wondrous land: Colonial art on paper* (NGV, 2011) and the forthcoming survey *Colony: Australia 1788–1861* (NGV, 2018). Through her expertise, in recent years the NGV has significantly increased its representation of Australian art from this period.

Upon her appointment, Ms Bunbury said: 'I have known of the Grimwades' rich collection for many years and am delighted to be able to now work closely with it, and with staff at the Ian Potter Museum of Art. The many facets of this collection, and Russell Grimwade's keen interest in the history of early Melbourne, will be fascinating to explore, and I look forward to sharing my discoveries within the university and with the broader Melbourne community.'

'Incredible prophecy!', *Smudges* (edited by Penleigh Boyd), vol. 2, no. 21, December 1940. Architecture, Building and Planning Library Rare Materials Collection, University of Melbourne.

### New curator of academic programs joins the Ian Potter Museum of Art

Dr Kyla McFarlane recently joined the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne as curator of academic programs (research). Before joining the Potter, Dr McFarlane was acting curatorial manager of Australian art at Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane. She has worked independently and held curatorial positions at the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne and at Monash University Museum of Art. Originally from Auckland, Kyla has written and curated extensively on visual art in Australasia, with a particular emphasis on lens-based and feminist practice. She holds a PhD in visual culture from Monash University, focusing on the relationship between photography, feminism and psychoanalysis. In 2014 she was an Asialink arts resident in Singapore. She has also taught at tertiary level at the University of Auckland and Monash University.

### Early architecture student journals go online

The Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning is collaborating with the Architecture Library to digitise early

architecture student journals. These journals are very rare and each had a fractured publication run. In order to build the most comprehensive digital collection possible, we are working with cultural institutions to locate copies where available. Once digitised, these journals will be available on open access.

The library is seeking out any additional copies that may exist in private hands. If you hold any issues of the following, we would love to hear from you! Please email Naomi Mullumby on [naomim@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:naomim@unimelb.edu.au):

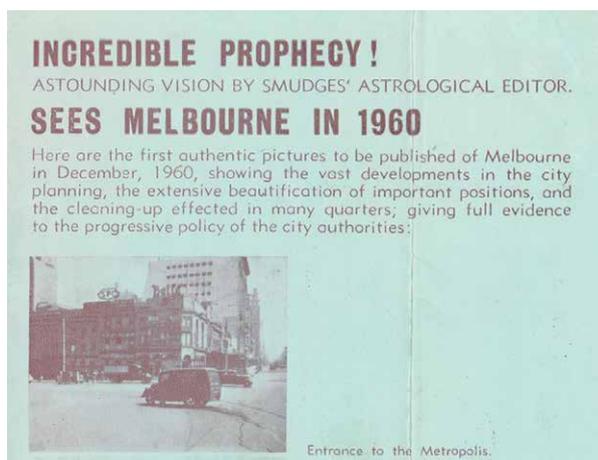
- *Lines: A Journal of Architecture and Allied Interests*
- *Angle: Viewpoint of MARS* [Modern Architectural Research Society]
- *Smudges: Journal of the Architectural Students' Society of the R.V.I.A.* [Royal Victorian Institute of Architects]

### Grainger Museum earns Museums Australia accreditation

The Museum Accreditation Program (MAP) is a peer review program operated by Museums Australia (Victoria) since 1993. This framework used by museums, galleries, historical societies,

heritage sites and archives to improve their operations and raise their organisation's profile has three priorities: museum management, collection care, and community engagement, and links closely to the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries. The Grainger Museum worked towards MAP accreditation over the past 18 months, and in 2017 achieved its Certificate of Accreditation, joining 71 other MAP-accredited organisations in Victoria.

The Grainger Museum is the third of the University of Melbourne's cultural collections to achieve accreditation, the other two being the Dax Centre and the Medical History Museum.<sup>3</sup> Once accredited, a museum is expected to continually improve its operations, and undergo a reaccreditation assessment every five years.



1 For more information on the films, see Petronella Nel, 'Rediscovered: An introduction to the School of Chemistry Collection', *University of Melbourne Collections*, issue 4, June 2009, pp. 28–33.

2 For more on the Creswick Campus Collection, see Anne Faithfull, 'The Creswick Campus Historical Collection: An introduction', *University of Melbourne Collections*, issue 15, December 2014, pp. 24–9; and Ron Hateley, 'Jim Wills's Gladstone bag', *University of Melbourne Collections*, issue 7, December 2010, pp. 24–5.

3 'News from the collections', *University of Melbourne Collections*, issue 18, June 2016, p. 53.