Position Title: Collection Management - Significance Assessment, International House Collection

Supervisor: Dr Caitlin Stone, Librarian and Archivist, International House
Helen Arnoldi, Cultural Collections Projects Coordinator

Position Goal: The primary goal of this position will be to complete a significance assessment on the archives and heritage collection that collectively are known as the International House (IH) Collection. The significance assessment will be used to inform the status of the IH Collection and future collection management decisions in areas such as conservation, acquisition/de-accession, valuation and access.

Background: International House is a hall of residence owned by the University of Melbourne and houses 350 graduate and undergraduate students from Australia and overseas. International House was born from efforts by students and community members to ease housing problems faced by international students in the late 1940s and early 1950s. IH’s first residents (all male) moved in in 1957. The official opening was in 1958. The first female residents arrived in 1972, making International House the University of Melbourne’s first residential college to admit women. In 2017 International House will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary.

The International House Collection incorporates the IH archives and heritage collections and comprises of several hundred items which in addition to archival materials includes paintings, photographs, furniture, objects and building fragments eg. stained glass windows. The collection has materials that relate to many important historical themes and events including: The Colombo Plan; Asia-Australia relations in the post-World War 2 period; experiences of international students in the post-World War 2 period and the history of the University of Melbourne. Materials in the IH Collection also relate to broader social themes including: women’s education; student housing and the ‘internationalisation’ of higher education.

For more information on International House see their website at: https://ihouse.unimelb.edu.au/about/history

Responsibilities: After training, the student/volunteer will use the established significance assessment methodology to provide the intellectual framework to complete a significance assessment on the International House Collection. Using the criteria outlined in Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections (Russell, R & Winkworth, K, Canberra, Collections Council of Australia Ltd, 2009), see http://significance.collectionscouncil.com.au/home the student will be able to assess the significance of this collection against a set of criteria being applied University-wide.
Qualifications: A basic understanding of collection management principles specific to the documentation of collections would be ideal, although the student will be trained in the *Significance* 2.0 methodology.

Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of museum artefacts and archival materials is desirable as this position requires the handling and close inspection of these materials. However, an appropriate candidate with no experience in this area may be eligible, subject to receiving training in object handling.

A methodical, prudent approach with a keen eye for detail is required, as is the ability to work both independently and as part of a small team.

Training and Supervision: On-the-job training specific to the task of completing a significance assessment will be provided. The International House Librarian and Archivist will provide ongoing support for this project and facilitate access to the collection for the student/volunteer. The Cultural Collections Projects Coordinator will provide training in the significance assessment methodology and ongoing guidance during the research and writing stages of the project.

Benefits: Opportunity to work at close hand with the unique IH Collection and help ascertain the status of this collection.

The opportunity for professional development through experience gained in the application of collection management procedures and practice.

Satisfaction gained from completing a significance assessment on the International House Collection of the University. This assessment will lay the foundation for future collection management decisions regarding the collection and thus increase our long term understanding, management and appreciation of the collection.

For more information on this position please contact:
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