

Editors' preface

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This issue of *University of Melbourne Collections* is a special one in several ways. It arose from a particular event, The Future of the Object symposium, which was held in October 2016 in two important new buildings on the Parkville campus: Arts West and the Melbourne School of Design. The three-day symposium, which was open to the public, was a significant element of the programming for Cultural Collisions: Grainger | Griffins, curated and devised by Professor Jonathan Mills as the University of Melbourne's contribution to the 2016 Melbourne Festival. Presenters came from Australia, Canada, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States; for this reason the selection of papers published here looks beyond the cultural collections of the University of Melbourne, which are the usual focus of this journal. A number of the longer papers have been independently peer-reviewed. These are complemented by several shorter articles and opinion pieces.

The Future of the Object symposium considered the changing dynamics between the material and the digital, and a renewed academic involvement with objects and their stories. Presenters considered topics such as the rise of the digital humanities, a return of emphasis on

the materiality of objects, and the dialogues between different academic disciplines and media that these subjects have opened up. Through a series of keynote addresses, panels and case studies, this gathering of researchers and other professionals in the fields of history, art history, conservation, cultural heritage studies, screen studies, sculpture, museology, biology, architecture, Indigenous studies, anthropology, virtual reality and music explored the future of cultural memory as it relates to objects and archives, and the contribution of universities and their collections to heritage through research and teaching.

The symposium was hosted by three faculties of the University of Melbourne: Arts; Architecture, Building and Planning; and Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. Developed by Chancellery Engagement in collaboration with the Culture

Academy Singapore's Digital Media in Cultural Spaces conference at the National Museum Singapore, it was generously supported by Kerry Gardner and the Australian Institute of Art History, and AARnet (Australia's Academic and Research Network). We thank in particular the authors of those contributions published here, and the anonymous expert reviewers who commented so thoughtfully on the longer articles in this volume.

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Below: Opening session of symposium The Future of the Object, Arts West building, University of Melbourne, 12 October 2016. Photograph by Sharon Walker.

