

Curating Futures

Volume 1 Issue 2

OPINION

Lisa Bailey: *Why don't museums include things from the future?*

ARTICLES

Colonial Foundations of Modern Museums

SA Museum's Ancient Egyptian Room

by Anna Rae Simpson

Refurbishment Proposal by Faith Gerhard

Museum Proposal:

National Museum of Water by Maeve Mc Neilage

Ethics of intentional remembering and forgetting when applied to the lives of transgender individuals in the archive by Kansas Bird

The Student Exhibition 2025

Douglas Mawson: Polarities by Ziyang Geng, Yanchong Su, Wendy Rushbrook & Cherrie De Leiuon

REVIEWS

Textiles. But Make it Radical.

Radical Textiles at AGSA by Edith Christie

'FOREVER' at MOD. by Thanh Tran

Crafting Futures: Glass the Value of Making and the Jam Factory by Wing Sze Tang





Adelaide Journal
of Curatorial and
Heritage Practice

CURIO Volume 1 Issue 2 December 2025 Adelaide University

<https://able.adelaide.edu.au/humanities/research/curio-adelaide-journal-of-curatorial-and-heritage-practice>

Contact susan.millbank@student.adelaide.edu.au

CURIO is an open access journal. The Journal and individual articles can be freely distributed; however, individual authors and CURIO must be cited and acknowledged correctly.

Articles, reviews, images and all other content cannot be altered without the prior permission of the author.

Front Cover image: Jessica Murtagh: Glass Vase from 'Modern Relic' series

Back Cover image: Sonya Rankine and contributing artists. 'Weaving Futures', a collaborative artwork. MOD.

Logo design: Kelsey Venter
Graphic Design: Kelsey Venter, Sue Millbank & Cherrie De Leiuon

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kurna people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we research, write, and engage with curatorial and heritage practices. We recognise the Kurna people's enduring connection to Country and the rich cultural heritage that has been preserved and passed down through generations. As a journal dedicated to curatorial and heritage practice, we value Indigenous knowledge systems and the importance of First Nations perspectives in shaping how histories, objects, and places are cared for and interpreted. We pay our respects to Kurna Elders past, present, and emerging.

CONTENTS

9 OPINION

Why don't museums include things from the future by **Dr Lisa Bailey**

12

Museum and Curatorial Studies Futures. Adelaide University by **Dr Cherrie De Leiu**

15 ARTICLES

Colonial Foundations of modern museums. An analysis of the SA Museum's Ancient Egyptian Display by **Anna Rae Simpson**

SAM The Egyptian Room. Refurbishment Proposal by **Faith Gerhard**

Proposal for a National Museum of Water by **Maeve McNeilage**

Ethics of intentional remembering and forgetting to the lives of transgender individuals in the archive by **Kansas Bird**

Student Exhibition 2025: Douglas Mawson: Polarities by **Ziyang Geng, Yanchong Su, Wendy Rushbrook, Cherrie De Leiu**

82 REVIEWS

Textiles, But Make it Radical - Radical Textiles at AGSA by **Edith Christie**

Redefining museum boundaries in 'FOREVER' by **Thanh Tran**

Crafting Futures. Glass, the Value of Making and Jam Factory by **Wing Sze Tang**

94 MASTERS THESES ABSTRACTS

On the Periphery: Evaluating the representations of diverse people groups within South Australian historic house museums by **Nicola Butler**

How Do Female Descendants of Peranakan Chinese in Singapore Construct their Identity? The Peranakan Museum in Singapore as a Case Study by **Catherine Poh Lin Khoo**

The Shape of Water-Heritage: Developing a Water-Heritage Framework by **Maeve McNeilage**

Master theses abstracts (cont)

One dimension from three. The martyr, The bloody, and The virgin. Does the portrayal of Lady Jane Grey, Mary I and Elizabeth I in museums and art galleries reinforce the stereotype that these women were one-dimensional? by **Rebekah Morgan**

The Representation of Female Athletes in Sports Museums by **Grace Turpin**

100 CURRENT PhDs

Repatriation at the South Australian Museum and Beyond: analysing a cultural model of governance with sector-wide significance by **Annamaria Russo**

Keeping House: Authenticity, Domestic Heritage and Museological Practice in South Australian House Museums by **Lauren Elizabeth Wallis**

109 NEWS

What's on around museums and galleries in Adelaide

WELCOME

...to the second issue of CURIO: Adelaide Journal of Curatorial and Heritage Practice, presented by post graduate students in Museum and Curatorial Studies at the University of Adelaide (Adelaide University in 2026). While we continue to look at the past and how it is curated, this issue also dips into the future and showcases some thoughts on how post graduate students consider museums and galleries can adapt to engage with future challenges and future audiences.

This issue is the second in the publications first year, and the Editorial Board particularly want to thank Kelsey Venter for her assistance with graphic design work and layout. While completing her third year studies in graphic design, Kelsey stepped in and volunteered to assist with graphic design. Her skills and commitment to this task were both timely and invaluable to the Editorial Board.

The Editorial Board also want to thank Jessica Murtagh for giving approval for the image of a piece from her 'Modern Relic' series on the cover of this issue. While taking inspiration from well known classical vases, the glass blown object is a contemporary representation which speaks to modern day life, and the Editorial Board believe it is well placed on the cover as it captures the spirit of this Issue. Jessica is an Adelaide based emerging artist working with blown glass. She has recently completed a Master's in Design (Contemporary Art) from the University of South Australia, and her practice is based out of Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design.

Thank you also to the Program Director for Museum and Curatorial Studies, Dr Cherrie De Leiu. Without her advice on editorial decisions and content, this issue could still be on the cutting table. Her unwavering support was invaluable to the Editorial Board. And finally, thank you to the Adelaide University, College of Creative Arts, Design and Humanities for publishing this Issue and sourcing the funds to print copies. We hope the Issue piques your curiosity and you enjoy it, whether in hard copy or the online version.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Maeve McNeilage

completed the Masters of Curatorial and Museum Studies program in November 2025. She has an academic background in history and international relations, and across all these disciplines she has followed an interest in human-water relationships. She completed her Masters thesis on water-heritage. She has previously been an editor for *Illustration: International Relations Student Academic Journal* and for the Organisation for World Peace as an undergraduate student. Maeve currently works in the government sector, recently completed an internship with MOD, and is passionate about heritage in its tangible and intangible forms.

Lauren Wallis

is a Museum Collections Officer with the Sisters of Saint Joseph. She has a background in secondary education, having completed a Bachelor of Teaching/Arts double degree at the University of Adelaide. In 2024, she earned a Master's degree in Curatorial and Museum Studies and is now undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Human Society. Lauren's PhD research explores how historical house museums in Australia bridge domestic history and museological practice, using three South Australian case studies. Lauren is the recipient of the Decie Denholm Postgraduate Research Scholarship in History, awarded for academic excellence and research potential in historical studies.

Sue Millbank

completed a Graduate Diploma in Curatorial and Museum Studies at the University of Adelaide in November 2024 and plans to complete her Masters in 2026. After graduating with a B.Arts (Hons) in History in 1982, she spent over 40 years in the public sector. Working through the technological explosion of fax machines, word processors, emails, internet, mobile phones (and the list goes on) Sue thinks she has come to grips with a good slice of modern life but acknowledges that for her, social media with their "opaque algorithms" will always be a no-go zone.



Anna Simpson

completed the Curatorial and Museum Study program in its Graduate Diploma form at the University of Adelaide, atop an academic background in History and Classics through a Bachelor of Arts. In early 2025, Anna completed an internship with the Art Gallery of South Australia, assisting the curatorial team with research and provenance enquiries with a focus on the impact of the Second World War and the consequential displacement of cultural material. This internship provided an opportunity to engage with her passion for the deep intertwinement of cultural material with social and personal identity.

Wendy Wendy Rushbrook

is a final year student of the Master of Curatorial and Museum Studies program. The focus of her thesis is Nharangga language and culture in Yorke Peninsula community museums. Wendy lives in a small seaside town, has retired as a teacher and loves all things to do with books, libraries and museums.

Wendy tries to live a sustainable, home-based economy life and the family's permaculture designed garden is full of fruit trees, vegetables and poultry. She has a varied work history including builder's labourer, camel safari cook and was once charged by a water buffalo.

Dr Cherrie De Leiu

is a Senior Lecturer and the Program Director of the Curatorial and Museum Studies programs at the University of Adelaide. She is an archaeologist with a career bridging public and private sectors, university and museums. Her research interests reflect a diverse career working across cultural heritage management, with a focus on First Nations archaeology, museums, social archaeology and frontier studies, all underpinned by themes of social justice and community based and led heritage management. She has extensive field experience across all regions of Australia, examining cultural landscapes, with documenting women's sites and objects, and the issues around the protection of Aboriginal heritage, including within the context of natural disasters, and has assisted with repatriations. She has worked with diverse collections and objects, heritage legislation and significance assessments. Cherrie loves museums and is committed to advancing emerging scholars and critical museum practice. Cherrie represents University Staff as a member of CURIO's Editorial Board.



EDITORIAL

MESSAGE

As the arts sector continues to see funding cuts here in Australia and abroad, and division around 'culture' becomes more contested, important questions arise that need to be considered. Do we value all cultural material (including the intangible) equally; what is the future role of museums and other cultural institutions – in preserving, educating and fostering cohesiveness; how can meaning be bestowed to diverse audiences; who, or where, are the cultural 'champions' in political and leadership positions?

Our second issue of CURIO is host to some of these questions through the broad theme of 'Curating Futures'. We particularly thank Dr Lisa Bailey, Director of MOD, for her thought provoking and scene setting opinion piece titled 'Why don't museums include things from the future?'. It asks engaging questions about museums, where they have come from and how to consider their role into the future.

Articles by post graduate students in the University of Adelaide Museum and Curatorial Studies program have been curated to shine a beam of light on some of these questions. The South Australian Museum's Ancient Egyptian Gallery is considered through the lens of the museums' colonial foundations, decolonisation and current debates around representation of artefacts and human remains. A further article reimagines the Gallery, considering the possibilities for modern display techniques to bring new meaning to the Gallery, and enhancing intellectual engagement with the Egyptian past.

The Exhibition article on 'Douglas Mawson: Polarities' speaks not only to his life of enquiry, exploration and family, it also catalogues the real experiences and challenges curators and designers face when mounting an exhibition.

Water is a fundamental human need, and another article envisions the establishment a National Museum of Water. It will whet your spirit of inquiry about how to reinvent a relationship with this essential element at a challenging time for planet Earth. A thought provoking article on the role of archives highlights the contemporary challenges when working with identities of individuals of the LGBTQ community rounds out our articles.

Reviews of exhibitions include 'Gathering Light', the Jam Factory exhibition showcasing innovation in glassworks, and MOD.'s 2025 exhibition 'FOREVER', redefining the boundaries of museum exhibition. A Review of the Art Gallery of South Australia's exhibition, 'Radical Textiles' discusses the history of textile art and tells stories of how it weaves activism with artistic expression, providing commentary on contemporary social challenges.

Abstracts of Master theses from 2025 Master students are varied and include shifting meanings of what it is to be a Peranakan woman; considering inclusive curation in SA house museums; the portrayal of three Tudor women in museums; a water heritage framework; and representation of female athletes in Sports Museums. Two PhD candidates have also contributed summaries of their recent research – one into museological practice in South Australian House Museums, and another on Repatriation at the SA Museum, analysing a cultural model of governance.

As the University of Adelaide transitions to the Adelaide University in 2026, we trust this Issue of CURIO encourages more creative thinking about the future, in part because, in the prescient words of Dr Lisa Bailey, it encourages 'more thoughtful decisions in the present'.



Students experimenting with interactive LED wall at the Australian Laboratory for Immersive Technologies. Image: Cherrie De Leiuem

WHY DON'T MUSEUMS INCLUDE THINGS FROM THE FUTURE?

Dr Lisa Bailey, Director MOD.

Why are museums filled with artefacts from the past? Why don't they include things from the future? These are the questions posed by writer Alexandra Petri in a recent piece for *The Atlantic*. The article is a satirical critique of President Donald Trump's approach to the US museum sector, which he's accused of spreading "anti-American ideology". But the butt of the joke is that the idea of a museum of the future is, on its face, a contradiction, a ridiculous concept.

For hundreds of years, museums have held vast collections of cultural heritage and natural history objects that hold our collective memory and give us a way to explore, critique, celebrate, or reckon with stories from our past.

So what does it mean to be a museum that helps people think about the future?

MOD. is a future-focussed museum. This does not mean we are making predictions for the future, gazing into a crystal ball to present a set vision fuelled by technological advances. It's not all flying cars and hoverboards.

No one knows what the future holds. We live in a very uncertain world. Because the future is not set, it means that the actions that we make today will alter our pathways for tomorrow. The purpose of helping people think about the future is not to make better predictions, but to make more thoughtful decisions in the present. Our exhibition theme for 2026, BEGINNINGS, will explore this exact theme, asking how do we begin to make change in the present to shape the future we desire?

If a future-focussed museum is not predicting the future, then what are we doing? We are creating public spaces that allow people to build their future thinking skills and capabilities. This is especially true for young people, who increasingly are feeling anxious and uncertain about the future as we deal with technological upheaval, geopolitical unrest and climate impacts.

To translate this into visitor experience, MOD. uses six principles drawn from experiential learning theory and STEM education research:

1. Considering the cognitive-developmental phase of our audience.

MOD. is designed for young people 15-25. This is a critical time for identity formation, and so a key principle is to design MOD. to be a place where young people feel they belong.



Figure 1: Future Themes Forum 2024. Image Sia Duff



Figure 2: MOD. Youth Board designed event Quiz Night Gone Wrong, October 2025. Image Saige Prime.

This means giving them agency as co-designers through our Future Themes Forum and Youth Board, and creating experiences that are intuitive, accessible and inclusive, even as they may grapple with difficult concepts.

2. Creating spaces for dialogue and learning through collaborative futures exploration.

The future is negotiated through dialogue. To navigate to a future you desire, you first need to know where you're going.

Developing a shared vision is something that we need to do through conversation and compromise. MOD. creates spaces and opportunities to explore multiple futures, with open-minded curiosity.

3. Embedding two-way minded perspectives incorporating Aboriginal knowledges.

As well as showcasing the work of Aboriginal creators and researchers, this principle considers how we create and share knowledge. At MOD. two-way minded, an integration of Aboriginal and Western knowledge systems, means that alongside Western scientific ways of understanding the world, Aboriginal knowledges are incorporated into exhibition and program design, including connection to place and the practice of deep listening.

4. Creating experiences that bring visitors on a journey of “productive struggle” through open-ended provocations.

The concept of productive struggle comes from educational pedagogy and refers to the discomfort of encountering unknown ideas or uncertainty. This discomfort is by design, it is a deliberate pathway to deeper learning and transformation.

5. Using experiential futures methods to create embodied, immersive scenarios for exploration.

Experiential futures gives visitors a felt sense of what it is like to inhabit a particular scenario. In our 2025 exhibition FOREVER, for example, we presented a speculative scenario set 100 years into the future, where a large corporation existed to provide new services around life-extension technologies.

Visitors played the role of new recruits going for a job interview to determine their suitability for the role. The purpose was not to suggest this is a future we want, or even expect, but to encourage dialogue about ethical stances on a range of emerging ideas and technologies.

6. Cultivating hope and agency.

It's easy to imagine dystopian futures; simply take everything that is going wrong now and extrapolate it. Imagining hopeful futures takes much more work, it requires envisioning entirely different systems. This was the focus of our award-winning 2024 exhibition BROKEN, built using Snyder's Hope Theory to help people imagine new systems for complex issues like housing, democracy and environmental degradation.

The interconnected nature of the six principles is key - experiential futures spark curiosity, productive struggle encourages conversations, conversations build belonging, and belonging evokes hope. In an age of algorithmic predictions and climate anxiety, people want certainty. Futures thinking isn't about certainty - its about capability. ***Museums that help widen access to imagining and shaping futures aren't abandoning their role as holders of community stories, they are fulfilling it.***

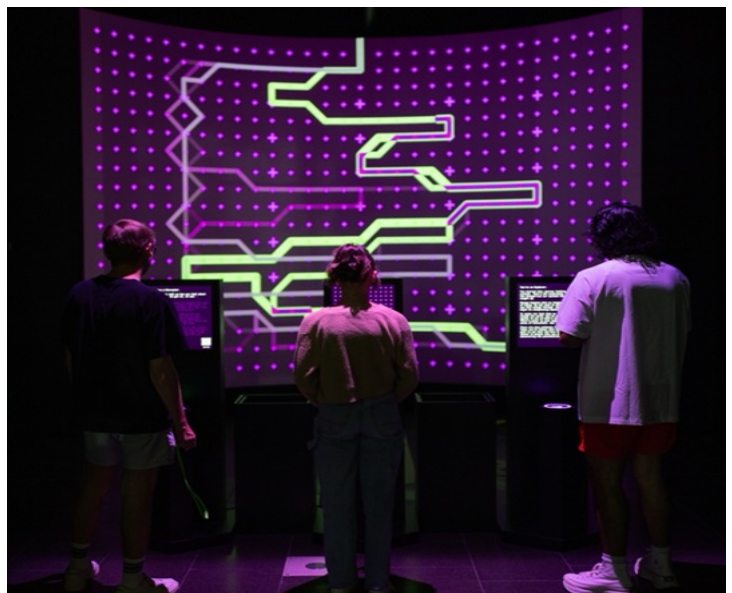


Figure 3: BROKEN Image Sia Duff

Museum and Curatorial Studies Futures: Adelaide University

Dr Cherrie De Leiuen: Program Director, Senior Lecturer

I am immensely proud to be part of the small but mighty team that brings you the second issue of *Curio*, the journal for Curatorial and Museum Studies and to be the Program Director for The University of Adelaide (Adelaide University in 2026) Graduate Program in Curatorial and Museum Studies. This cohort of students, also small but mighty, are from diverse backgrounds, from engineering and sciences to history and creative practices, and are both local and international. In this way, our student cohort mirrors the diversity of the Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums (GLAM) sector. Their achievements, and the achievements of the program, are well demonstrated by the outstanding articles in this issue of *Curio*, including the student exhibition *Polarities*, the research theses abstracts, and through successful employment outcomes for a number of our graduates in 2025.

Established in 2021, Curatorial and Museum Studies is one of Australia's newest museum-based programs and continues to be offered in the new Adelaide University. The curriculum receives positive feedback from students and enrolments have shown strong growth since its establishment. This is because the program is designed to reflect cutting-edge museum practice and to ensure graduates can engage, personally, with museum theory, ethics, objects and exhibitions in a meaningful way. Both Professor John Carty, who is instrumental to the program and I, believe that museums are dynamic institutions that play an important role in shaping society's understanding of itself and we take a humanist philosophy in teaching museum studies.

This philosophy not only focuses on creating a culturally aware and job-ready graduate but also emphasises the importance of teaching the 'whole' student and focuses on their academic, as well as social and emotional well-being.



Figure 1: Taking a look behind the scenes at the South Australian museum science collection. Image Cherrie De Leiuen

The editorial in this issue points out the arts sector continues to see funding cuts here in Australia and abroad, we also see continuing culture wars and the 'War on Woke' being the latest form of populist anti-elitist discourse in Australia. In this context, I believe museums are the cultural 'champions', and in the online space they are sites where people feel they can learn the 'truth'; indeed they are sites for truth-telling. Universities more broadly, remain important spaces for the exploration of ideas, debate and critical reflection.

By developing students' analytical skills and encouraging a practice of self-critique and reflection, the program aims to provide students with the intellectual and social tools they need to meaningfully engage with the challenges facing museums and wider society today.

This program balances the theoretical and the practical, developing skills that are highly relevant to the needs of the sector, particularly in the context of the digital divide, decolonisation, and the climate crisis. The growth in the program may, in part, be attributed to the direct engagement with many salient issues that resonate with our students, including social justice, the democratisation of culture, repatriation, identity and representation, the climate crisis, the role of museums in supporting wellbeing and mental health and the impact of digital technologies.

While students studying humanities consider notions of employability, value for money, and the cost of higher education, this has also led to my questioning what these considerations mean in relation to the program. The answer may be in both how we might make our students more attractive to employers *and* in how might we support their development as culturally adept professionals. We therefore aim to explore new ideas, provide space for reflection and for challenging established practices. The museum studies programs thus offer continued value to both students and the GLAM sector by developing students' potential as both critical thinkers and critical doers.

Our program's strength lies in the experience of staff such as Professor Carty, as well as drawing on several specialist guest lecturers, and the development of partnerships with cultural institutions such as the South Australian Museum, History Trust of South Australia and the Art Gallery of South Australia. These partnerships provide our students with important behind-the-scenes opportunities to learn about museum practice from the best practitioners in South Australia.

Our Work Integrated Learning (WIL) program allows students to learn by 'doing' and developing practical hands-on skills essential for future employment. The emphasis on object-based learning, provided in *The Secret Life of Objects* and *Collection Management* topics, has long been an exemplar of active learning pedagogies.



Figure 2: Students on a tour at the South Australian Drill Core Library, Tonsley. Image Cherrie De Leiu.

Research has shown that museum objects can be used to support experiential, inquiry and problem-based learning, while also providing opportunities for developing transferable skills such as teamwork and communication skills, which all map onto sector discussions of graduate 'employability'. An emphasis on authentic assessment is present across the Museum Studies program, through all topics including *The Exhibition*.

Students learn by doing, seeing, and experiencing. A core part of the program is weekly in person visits to our museums, or to specialist studios, to purpose-built production facilities, working with the latest technology, to see interactive exhibitions and contemporary works by artists, researchers, storytellers and designers, both local and international, to visit sites of repatriation for First Nations ancestors and historic collections.

As such the program offers a variety of experiences all delivered in-person. Our research themes, like our students and our museums, explores the complexities of the world around us – they are future-focused, cross-disciplinary, human-centred and sustainable. We do not shy away from debating complexities around ethics, cultural ownership, particularly Australian Indigenous Cultural Heritage, colonial appropriation and the antiquities trade, as well as strategies for access.

Museum Studies sits at the convergence of higher education and cultural heritage, two sectors where engagement with the subject of empire and its legacies has been particularly active. The program and staff occupy a distinctive position relative to these parallel discussions and engage with movements for change centred on equalities, repatriation and decolonisation.

The merger with The University of South Australia (UniSA) in January brings forth unparalleled opportunity for further collaboration and streamlined connections between undergraduate and postgraduate programs. UniSA Creative, with disciplines including architecture, planning, information management and the creative industries form part of the new Adelaide University. Given the strong engagement with the arts sector at UniSA, there are important synergies that could allow the program to develop in new directions.

Additionally, Adelaide University will provide access to a potential platform for emerging and established curators, collection managers and creatives in its major museums: the Samstag Museum, SASA Gallery, Hawke Centre, MOD, Tate Museum, Classical Archaeology Museum, Architecture Museum, Urrbrae and Waite historic precincts, even the Adelaide Planetarium! Curatorial and Museum Studies programs aim to provide students with the theoretical and practical skills necessary to work in the GLAM sector and beyond. But most importantly it aims to be fun, to be a place to form friendships and networks and share and instill a love for museums and all cultural institutions. *Museum futures seem bright.*

Addressing the colonial foundations of modern museums

An analysis of the South Australian Museum's Ancient Egyptian Display



Anna Rae Simpson

Figure 1: SA Museum Egyptian Room:
Image Anna Rae Simpson

The Ancient Egyptian Gallery at the South Australian Museum (SAM) is one of the museums most historic rooms, seemingly frozen in time from the 1930s. While the aesthetic and ideologies represented are nostalgic for much of the South Australian public, the room is a representation of colonial collecting techniques and outdated western interpretations. As such, the Gallery is critiqued in relation to current and past discourses surrounding the representation of ancient Egyptian cultures in museum spaces. The key findings identify misalignment between the Ancient Egyptian Gallery and existing policies within the Museum. Recommendations surrounding the diversity, accuracy and aesthetics of the current display are provided.

Historical Context

The International Council of Museums (ICOM 2022, p.3) currently defines a museum as “a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.” However, this has not always been the case.

The practice of collecting is not uniquely human, nor a recent development. The desire to collect has been an instinctual behaviour for many animal groups (Kreps 2003, p.46). In 1849, James Silk Buckingham recognised the largely unrivalled educational capacity of museum collections, proposing that museums, alongside

libraries, public lectures and art galleries, were essential tools to advance society (Bennett 1995, p18). Buckingham’s proposal inferred that intellectual stimulation and cultural engagement deterred members of society from engaging with harmful social activities (Bennett 1995, p.18). While the associated view of a superior intellectual European society is harmful and inaccurate, it was foundational for much of the collection-driven museum programs of the British Empire.

As museums and galleries had spread across the developing Australian colonies, there was an increasing desire for Australia to represent itself to the same standard as British institutions and rival their progressions in the international academic sphere (Richard et al. 2021, p. 5).

Consequently, the foundational principles of British collecting in the 19th century became adjacently foundational to Australian institutions, evidenced by the application of Darwinism and the consequential ‘Great Chain of Being’ concept which was particularly prevalent in the collecting priorities of the South Australian Museum (SAM) and led to the historic and ongoing mistreatment and dehumanisation of the non-European cultures’ objects and remains.

Egypt and Western Collections

Between Napoleon’s ‘rediscovery’ in 1798 and the later booms of inquest in the mid 1900s, there has been an obsession and fascination with owning and exploring Egypt’s ancient history. While the collection of cultural material and human remains from Egypt by thieves and grave robbers occurred for centuries prior, the exposure provided by Napoleon shifted this interest to European archaeologists, academics and governments.

Napoleon’s publication of the 21 volumes of the *Description de l’Egypte*, each containing detailed paintings, engravings and etchings of Egypt, had reached Europe by 1809 (Richards 2021, p.5).

Similarly, Orientalism, as detailed by Edward Said in 1977, is the study and interest in Eastern culture as understood by the West. The concept, which rose in popularity in the 1800s, aligns with the notion of the 'Great Chain of Being', as the geographical, cultural and ethnic area labelled as 'The Orient' is an explicit example of 'othering' (Said 1977, p. 166). Largely founded on the concepts of the Christianised Europe, Orientalism was derived from a contrast in culture and based on existing popular prejudice. Often surrounding mythologies, cultural dress and religious practices, the 'Oriental Fantasy' was deeply exotic and taboo to western engagers (Said, 1977, 165). Due to its geographic location and ancient history, Egypt was impacted by this increased interest, and congruently, the Western perception of Egypt was shaped by knowledge and exposure to the country. As these oriental ideals were prevalent within scholarship, they were portrayed within the presentation of Egyptian culture and consequently disseminated to the public.

Alongside the interest in foreign culture, there was a distinct curiosity in the funerary practices of Ancient Egypt. An engagement with death has always been prevalent in human behaviour, with an existing morbid curiosity interlinking the macabre through forms of tourism and displays (Stone 2006, p.147). Cases such as early gladiatorial performances, public executions and even morgue tours have historically allowed people to interact with death within a controlled environment (Stone 2006, p.147). This extends to the portions of Egyptomania focused on mummified remains. Particularly, the nineteenth century held an overwhelming interest in unwrapping mummified human remains. Sought often by wealthy individuals, anatomy professors and antiquarians, Egyptian mummified remains were unwrapped in homes,

theatres, hospitals and universities (Moshenska 2013, p. 452). Conducted both for scientific purposes and entertainment, this created an association of the culture with death. This was another separation of European culture with the Orient and was foundational in the ongoing treatment of Egyptian remains within Western museums.

It was these Eurocentric concepts that prompted the international collection effort conducted by the South Australian Museum, and the consequential representations of Egypt within the institution. Included in this collection effort was Reverend William Roby Fletcher, an associate of the University of Adelaide and the SAM, who was sent abroad with the task of "procuring objects of archaeological interest, illustrative of ancient Egyptian or Babylonian civilization" (SAM 2025). Fletcher returned with the mummified body of Renpit-Nefert, a 40-year-old woman whose remains he purchased in Cairo in 1890. The collecting continued in the subsequent years until the SAM paused development of the Egyptian Gallery around 1939. Consequently, the retained material is saturated in colonial collecting ideologies.

Policies

As summarised by Hooper-Greenhill (1992, p.1), museums have never been stationary or impartial institutions, instead, consistently modifying their approaches regarding the developing social, political and economic structures around them. Museums are at a unique intersection wherein history, material culture, politics, education and societal trends overlap, and thus should be continuously changing to adapt to these moving expectations. Consequently, international bodies such as ICOM alongside individual institutions are regularly creating and updating policies to ensure that their collections and displays are to highest academic and ethical standards.

The ICOM's code of ethics acknowledges that each museum is responsible for their own governing policies (1.1), but should: display material in a manner which is accurate and appropriately represents the group of beliefs (4.2), and should display human remains and material of sacred significance in alignment with respect for the feelings of human dignity held by all peoples (4.3) (ICOM, 2004).

The SAM's 2023-2025 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) addresses the complexities surrounding a modern-day museum's ability to engage with its colonial past, while also working to deconstruct it. Referencing an intention of "accountability and fearless truth telling" (SAM RAP 2023, p.10), the SAM has been working to acknowledge and repatriate the extensive collection of human remains held by the institution.

Overdue for review in 2023, the museum's 'Restitution of Cultural Heritage' (RCH) policy refers to "cultural property that may have been collected illegally or unethically" (SAM RCH 2020, p.3), specifically referencing the museum's relationship with foreign cultural objects, and the intentions to return such objects via specific requests.

The museum's 'Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Burial Goods' (RARBG) policy addresses the inhumane collection of remains by stating that "these people did not consent to donate their bodies to science" (SAM RARBG 2021, p.2). Under section 5.5, the RARBG policy states that the Board, and by extension the museum, will not display, or lend for display, any Australian Aboriginal ancestral remains or Aboriginal burial goods.

Collectively, these recent South Australian Museum policies address the museum's stance on the display, treatment and repatriation of

unethically or inhumanly collected cultural items. Despite these policies being reflective of important ethical progressions in the museum sector, within the SAM they are applied exclusively to the Australian Indigenous collections. Therefore, this respect and dignity is not extended to the people whose remains are categorised in the 'foreign' collections. While the ICOM code of ethics acknowledges that each institution is responsible for its own approaches, this discrepancy between the improving treatment of Indigenous remains and the continuing display of foreign remains reveals an inconsistency at the SAM.

Western Perceptions

Kreps (2003) proposes that Eurocentric museology is founded on the systematic collecting methods focused on scientific study and aesthetic purposes. Due to these influences, museums, as articulated by Carty (2019, p.388), are "places where things are out of place". Museums display collated groups of materials removed from their existing material and cultural surroundings, placed in a sterile location where curators attempt to reform the importance through an interpretation of their past contextualisation (Carty 2019, p.388).

Ancient Egyptian displays are a prime example of this western collection method, in which cultural artefacts and mummified remains were collected for the aesthetic (cultural materials), or scientific (mummified remains) benefits. Much of the material from Ancient Egypt around the world was collected or replicated from tombs of the wealthy or royal.

It is in two specific areas, 'truth telling' and the display of remains, that the SAM is misaligned with its efforts elsewhere in the museum, and rather, distinctly aligns with these early western collecting techniques.

While claiming on the website to be “an insight into the religion, burial practices and everyday life of Ancient Egypt” (SAM 2025), the SAM gallery is only a reflection of higher class and Pharaonic lifestyles, with very little representation of the general population through the approximately 8000 years of Ancient Egypt. Through the climactic and political developments from the Early Dynastic Period until the Roman Era, Egypt was home to essential technological advancements and displays of human development, from early irrigation and farming techniques to forms of political resistance (Lloyd 2010, p.3-15). It is a devastating loss to the extensive breadth of Egypt’s history that the majority of common interest, collections and museum displays, as demonstrated by the SAM, are driven by the aesthetic and morbid curiosity of Pharaonic tombs, rather than accurate representation of Ancient Egypt. It is to this point that the curatorial choices of the Ancient Egyptian Gallery at the SAM can only exist to the extent the museum’s collecting behaviours allow.

The alignment with these colonial and restrictive interpretations of foreign culture makes the Ancient Egyptian Gallery room itself a carefully preserved time capsule for outdated westernised ideologies. While there has been a distinct effort to rectify the lasting effects of colonial collections within the SAM, as seen through the develop of the RAP, RCH and RARBG policies, it is questionable that the Ancient Egyptian room has been intentionally chosen to remain within this period. Although the SAM promotes “accountability and truth telling” (SAM RAP 2023, p.10), the captions of the display still reflect colonial mindsets, and promote the early collection techniques, with no wider societal information gained from the inclusions.

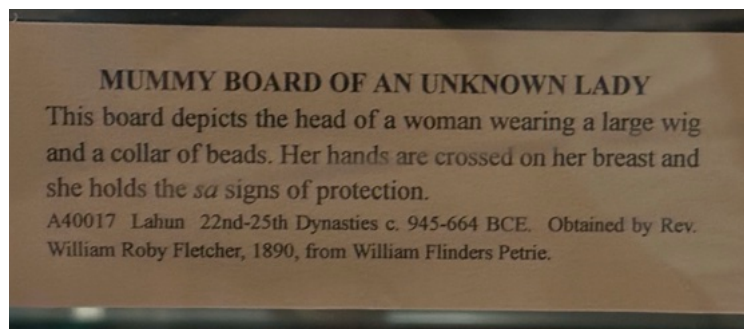


Figure 2: Example of a caption board in the Ancient Egyptian Room, SAM. Image Anna Rae Simpson.

As seen in Figure 2, the caption could be used to teach what these characteristics inferred about various changes in Egyptian society, through potential commentary on the inclusion of a large wig painted on the ‘Mummy Board’. The caption could disclose the commonality of such an item or the consequential implications of fashions or class. Even information about the painting pigment or techniques used could be educational, a reference to specific sites in which such funerary portraits were created, or any known artists who created such funerary items. Unfortunately, the captions have been used to merely state what the artefacts are, with no context, educational benefit, or alignment with the original religious practice, failing meet both the SAM policies and ICOM code of ethics.

By keeping the mummified remains of Renpit-Nefert, and other unnamed male remains on display, the SAM has made the choice to engage with audiences’ potential macabre interests, outweighing the moral obligations demonstrated elsewhere within other collections. As the ancient religion and cultural customs are no longer practiced, there is a lack of community with whom curators could engage and learn appropriate behaviours from. Despite these challenges, the Gallery remains misaligned with much of the ongoing contemporary academic and ethical discussions internationally.

As the people whose remains and funerary items are on display in Adelaide were buried in alignment with their religious beliefs, it raises the question:

what authority does a cultural institution have to override these cultural practices, but not others?

Additionally, why does the SAM overlook the cultural practices and wishes of foreign cultures, while making progress surrounding the display of Indigenous Australian remains? This is especially worth considering as these people also did not give their bodies to science, as stated in the South Australian Museums RARBG policy (SAM 2021, p.2) nor are their interests and beliefs being accounted for, as required to meet the ICOM code of ethics (ICOM 2004, 4.3).

International Discourse

Despite having a progressive approach to Australian history, the South Australian Museum is interestingly behind in the international discussion surrounding Ancient Egyptian displays. Led by the University College London in 2020, a research project funded by United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) revealed that over 350 museums across five continents hold the material legacy of British political and archaeological inquests in Egypt (UKRI 2020, p.1).

While there are no official government publications regarding the Egyptian public's opinions on international Egyptian displays, there are ongoing legislative decisions which provide autonomy of Egyptian objects to the

Egyptian people. In 1983, the Egyptian Government banned the export of Ancient Egyptian materials, meaning any permanent display of Ancient Egyptian culture is curated from a collection predating this decision (Hubschmann 2018, p.77). Earlier, in 1981, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat ordered the closure of the Royal Mummy Room at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, on the grounds that the excavation, display and monetisation of the dead explicitly contradicted with the nations Islamic beliefs. While the collection did not remain closed, it does reflect an ongoing effort by Egyptian authorities and academics to change the behaviours surrounding Egyptian artefacts. Similarly to the previous actions of the government to restrict the export of artefacts, 2021 saw the return of over 5000 smuggled artefacts to Egypt through efforts of the nation's Supreme Council of Antiquities, who have been working since 1994 to advocate for the conservation, protection and regulation of Egyptian artefacts.

These efforts are ongoing, with recent returns including the United States of America and Australia, as seen in Figure 3. Congruently, academic journals such as the Egypt Exploration Society are regularly publishing papers from Egyptian authors and researchers that have criticised the ongoing international presentation of culture, in an attempt to bring awareness to the shifting ideas surrounding Egyptian cultural heritage.

The National Museum of Scotland (NMS) in Edinburgh has recently renovated their Ancient Egyptian gallery, and has made available the variety of research, discussions and intentions behind the changes.

The NMS explains the sharing system (partage) used between Egyptian and foreign archaeological projects between the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, in which excavated sites were evaluated and items were selected to remain in Egypt while others were approved to be dispersed (NMS 2019, p.10). While this system was used to approve the export of artefacts, the display of objects and remains were unregulated, and often represented a western interpretation of the culture. It is in two areas that the NMS's review identified areas to improve: 1) the unethical display of human remains, and 2) the unacknowledged, outdated, and westernised biases present in the collections display. These findings align with much international discussion and are widely applicable to many western museums.

Similarly, within the United Kingdom, an earlier 2003 research project analysed the visitor perception of Ancient Egyptian remains in public museums. 81% of respondents selected that, while museums should be allowed to display the remains within their collection, they should be exclusively within context and only when "respectful and informative" (Kilmister 2003, p.59).

Within Australia, museums across the nation have been removing mummified remains due to these changing attitudes. In an interview for the University of Sydney's online newsletter Dr Melanie Pitkin, a senior curator at Sydney's antiquities Chau Chak Wing Museum shared that 'we have become so



Figure 3: Photograph of Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, centre right, and Mostafa Waziri, the top official at the Supreme Council of Antiquities, talk in front of an ancient wooden sarcophagus during a handover ceremony at the foreign ministry in Cairo, Egypt. AP: Mohamed Salah via ABC News, 3 January 2023.

accustomed to seeing [mummified remains] on show that we often forget they once belonged to living people” (Pitkin 2024). This idea is supported by the findings of the NMS, as a result of the dehumanising implications of terminology such as ‘mummies’, and the westernised association of foreign stereotypes which result in a perceived degree of separation from the human remains on display (NMS 2020). When more accurate terminology is used, the perception of the human remains often adjusts accordingly, substantiating the prioritisation of formal terminology across the variety of internal and international reviews continuously being conducted in museums across the United Kingdom.

This international discussion, research and internal reflection is largely resulting in the realisation of colonial influence in the interpretation and representation of non-Western cultures across the board. It is thus a responsibility of the museums themselves to adjust their approaches to foreign cultures in an attempt shift from the foundational westernised ideologies.

Local Discourse

Through the leadership changes in 2023, the South Australian Museum received an overwhelming display of feedback from the public. While the protest on the steps of the Adelaide’s Parliament House was largely focused on the removal of scientific research roles and curatorship positions within the museum, this awareness towards the proposed ‘re-imagining’ of the museum spread into concerns for other areas (Litjens 2024). In a 2024 interview with *InDailySA*, then CEO David Gaimster briefly mentioned the Egyptian Gallery in his overall address to the ‘re-imagining’ of the museum, sharing “if we are going to keep it, we would have to consciously present it as a 1940s interpretation of the past” (Gilchrist 2024).

Although the representation of the Ancient Egyptian collection within display cabinets and techniques from the 1930s is theoretically unique and engaging, it is just as problematic. As many people were exposed to ancient cultures, specifically Egypt, through film and media set in the mid-1900s, such as ‘Indiana Jones’ or ‘The Mummy’, the gallery provides the opportunity for visitors to enter that period and interact with aligning methods of history now largely preserved for the screen. As seen through the intense public reaction to the possibility of removing or changing the Ancient Egyptian Gallery, it is evident certain demographics within the Adelaide and wider South Australian community feel connected to the museum’s existing displays.

Conversely, other members of the South Australian public disagree. Upon a recent visit in May, a small group of children were conversing in the room, the topic surrounding Renpit-Nefert. One child asked, “is that a real person?”, to which another replied, “of course not, that would be so weird” (2025). It is to this point, with the updated empathy and ethics of Adelaide’s children, that younger members of the public, alongside people exposed to broader cultural experiences and education, are not as accepting of the Ancient Egyptian Gallery. Some members of the public refuse to visit the Egyptian Gallery out of discomfort with the display, alongside spiritual, religious or cultural discomfort with viewing the deceased. Others visit but cannot justify having Renpit-Nefert’s body on display, as a replica or alternative for communicating the mummification process would be just as informative and less disrespectful of the deceased.

The manner in which a museum utilises and displays a collection can be viewed as a “statement of intent” (Carty 2019, p.395). The SAM’s application of ideologies and artefacts in the Ancient Egyptian Gallery reveals specific priorities and limitations to the museums otherwise progressive approach. For a museum interested in decolonising the institution, proudly maintaining the layout, artefacts, and mindsets from 1939 is an ineffective way to achieve such goals. It raises the question, who does the South Australian Museum prioritise: the childhood nostalgia of Adelaideans, or respecting international cultures, whose ancestors and artefacts are sitting in twentieth century cabinets and labelled with outdated westernised manifestations?

Recommendations

In order to more accurately align with the SAM’s own mission, policies and broader discussions, there are a variety of adjustments that could be made to the Egyptian Gallery.

It would be ideal to include broader ranges of Ancient Egyptian history, discussing the agricultural advancements, climate shifts, everyday experiences and interactions as claimed on the website.

The renovated National Museum of Scotland gallery contains displays showcasing farming tools, chronological societal progression and information about the everyday lives of Ancient Egyptians. If physical objects are incompatible with the space, many of these aspects could be included by utilising similar touch screens to those available in other areas of the SAM. By providing human aspects to connect with, instead of purely presenting the high-class Pharaonic lifestyles, mythology and funerary practices, visitors would be introduced to a holistic representation Egypt’s ancient history.

The room could additionally be improved by removing the mummified remains of Renpit-Nefert’s body, and the other unnamed remains from display.

Replacing the body with a replica or including an alternative means of representing the mummification process would ensure the museum is a safe space for visitors of all beliefs and spiritualities without disrupting the educational experience. A display case representing the steps of the mummification process, the integration of amulets and the purposes for their inclusion could introduce the intricate burial and wider tomb aspects, where visitors can engage and learn about the past without intruding on Ancient Egyptian burial beliefs.

Finally, by incorporating accurate terminology, visitors would gain a better understanding of the histories they are learning about.

Using the term ‘mummified person’ in its various forms prompts readers to acknowledge the culture and practices they are consuming, as opposed to the degree of separation that ‘mummy’ allows. An additional acknowledgement of outdated collecting techniques and ideologies present within the room should also be included to recognise the museum’s role in harmful practices.

Many of these recommendations were enacted by the National Museum of Scotland after much conversation surrounding their gallery update. The National Museum of Scotland’s 2019 opening of ‘Ancient Egypt Rediscovered’ takes many of these criticisms alongside public and academic discourse into account. (Fig 4).

The new permanent display is an informative chronological and thematic progression of Egypt's ancient history, inclusive of insightful commentary inviting audiences to question their relationship with Egypt's history. The display moves from early establishments of civilisation along the Nile, through political turbulence, trade relations and cultural developments until the conclusion in Roman Egypt 4600 years later. Additionally, the museum has a multitude of thought-provoking signage discussing the harmful collective behaviours of archaeologists during the period and acknowledges the museums' role in disruptive and unethical histories.

While the 1939 aesthetic utilised by the South Australian Museum is not wholly harmful, the implications and associated westernisation of Egyptian culture and integrated colonial practices are.

The decision to upkeep a 1940s façade alongside the conclusion of inter-institutional collecting limits curators from sharing new research, progressing within the field and prevents the museum from keeping to its 'truth telling' and educational mission. By prioritising the nostalgia of locals rather than respecting the funerary practices of non-western cultures, the South Australian Museum's restrictive interpretations of the extensive Ancient Egyptian history is directly misaligned with the policies in place to honour Australian First Nation's culture. A distinctive focus on traditional aesthetic ideologies has consequently led the South Australian Museum to enhance the version of Ancient Egypt that exists within the popular historical imagination, not as a holistic agricultural, political and intellectual society, but as a culture of morbid funerary practices and bedazzled tombs.



Figure 4: Screenshot of National Museum of Scotland online tour, Google Arts & Culture, taken by author 5 June 2025.

Bibliography

Photographic Sources:

Figure 1: *Photograph of Iconographic wall painting in the Ancient Egyptian Gallery*, South Australian Museum, Adelaide, held by author, taken 8 April 2025.

Figure 2: *Photograph of 'Mummy board of an unknown woman'*, South Australian Museum, Adelaide, held by author, taken 8 April 2025.

Figure 3. *Figure in Egyptian Room*, South Australian Museum.

Figure 4: *Photograph of Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, centre right, and Mostafa Waziri, the top official at the Supreme Council of Antiquities, talk in front of an ancient wooden sarcophagus during a handover ceremony at the foreign ministry in Cairo, Egypt*. AP: Mohamed Salah via ABC News, 3 January 2023.

Figure 5: *Screenshot of National Museum of Scotland online tour*, Google Arts & Culture, taken 5 June, 2025, available online at: https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/exploring-east-asia/igFKF-vbt_BHwQ?sv_lng=-3.1895596131930124&sv_lat=55.947008755998425&sv_h=259.48689404891314&sv_p=0.3395506033096751&sv_pid=PwYJ2Q0KWr0AAARDz-M04w&sv_z=1.3449888378560675

Secondary Sources:

Ancient Egyptian Collections in Scottish Museums 2021, National Museums Scotland, viewed 24 May 2025.

Australian Broadcasting Company News 2023, 'Ancient sarcophagus returns to Egypt amidst wider repatriation efforts for looted artefacts', viewed 23 May 2025. Available online: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-03/looted-sarcophagus-returned-to-egypt/101822796>

Bennett, T 1995, 'The Formation of the Museum', in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, Routledge: London, pp. 17-58.

Carty, J 2019, 'To Imagine an Australian Museum', *Anthropological Forum: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology*, vol.29 no.4, pp. 384-396.

Egypt's Dispersed Heritage: Views from Egypt 2020, United Kingdom Research and Innovation, viewed 24 May 2025.

Extraordinary General Assembly 2022, International Council of Museums. Prague, Czech Republic.

Egypt's Dispersed Heritage: Views from Egypt 2020, United Kingdom Research and Innovation, viewed 24 May 2025.

Extraordinary General Assembly 2022, International Council of Museums. Prague, Czech Republic.

Gilchrist, C 2024, 'A Shake-up is planned for the South Australian Museum', *InDaily SA*, 19 February.

Hooper-Greenhill, E 1992, 'What is a Museum?' in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, Routledge: London, pp. 1-22.

Hubschuman, C 2018, 'The curation of Ancient Egypt in the twenty-first century: How should the present engage with the past?', in *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 7 no. 1, pp. 75-91.

Kilmister, H 2003, 'Visitor Perceptions of Ancient Egyptian Human Remains in Three United Kingdom Museums', in *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, vol.14, pp. 57-69.

Kreps, C 2003, 'Indigenous models of museums, curation, and concepts of cultural heritage preservation' in *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation and Heritage Preservation*, Routledge: London, pp. 46-78.

Kudrycz, W 2019, 'The Relevance of Rome. Reflection on the Rome: City and Empire Exhibition', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 50 no.4, pp. 527-529.

Litjens, D 2024, 'Union lodges dispute in employment tribunal, as protesters rally against proposed SA Museum changes', *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 14 April.

Moshenska, G 2013, 'Unrolling Egyptian Mummies in nineteenth century Britain' in *British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. 47 no.3, pp. 451 – 477.

Prasad, J 2024, 'Museum removes Egyptian body parts from galleries', *The University of Sydney*, 4 April 2024, available online at: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2024/04/04/museum-removes-ancient-body-parts-from-display.html>

Richards, C, Vokes, R, Inall, Y, Lowry, V & Oreskovich, J 2021, *Egypt in Australia*, University of Western Australia: Perth.

Richards, C 2021, *Pharaonic Obsessions: Ancient Egypt, An Australian Story*. Chau Chak Wing Museums & University of Western Australia: Perth.

Richards, C, Vokes, R, Inall, Y, Lowry, V & Oreskovich, J 2021, *Egypt in Australia*, University of Western Australia: Perth.

Russo, A 2024, 'Shifting Organisational Culture through repatriation policy', in C Krmpotich & A Stevenson (eds), *Collections Management as Critical Museum Practice*, UCL Press: London, pp. 251-269.

Said, E 1977, 'Orientalism', in *The Georgia Review*, vol. 31 no.1, pp. 162-206.

Stone, P 2006, 'A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions', in *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal*, vol. 54 no.2, pp. 145-160.

Witcomb, A 2002, 'From Batavia to Australia II: negotiating changes in curatorial practices', in *Reimagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum*, Routledge: London, pp. 51-78.

Policies:

International Council of Museums, *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2004.

South Australia Museum, *Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Burial Good Policy*, 2021-2024.

South Australian Museum, *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan*, 2023-2025.

South Australian Museum, *Reconstitution of Cultural Heritage Policy*, 2020-2023.



**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
MUSEUM:
The Egyptian
Room
Refurbishment**

Faith Gerhard

Figure 1. The lid for Renpit-Nefert's Sarcophagus, South Australian Museum. Image Faith Gerhard.

Introduction - Undercurrents

Located in Adelaide, the South Australian Museum (SAM) at 168 years old, is the second oldest in Australia and despite its significance, quite small. At the time of construction, the state of South Australia had then been established for only two decades (Carroll 2021). In its present incarnation, the vastness of its collection far outstrips the display footprint; of over four million objects, scarcely 5% can be shown (McGuire 2016). The original planning for SAM intended that the lawn area between the wings be filled. The museum was intended to open directly onto North Terrace, completing the 1877 'cultural boulevard' vision, with the benefit of an additional 1000m² of exhibition area (Carroll 2021 and McGuire 2016).

In its 168 years of dedicated service to the public, little has been accomplished in terms of uniform expansion or refurbishment. Although improvement planning and works have been continuously instigated by resourceful museum staff, ongoing funding scarcity has created an unintended 'Frankenstein'; a patchwork of rehomed collections in atmospherically lit modern display units, juxtaposed against exhibitions that have been left to languish both deliberately and unintentionally. Amongst the faded grandeur of 19th century stylings, or outdated early 20th century reimaginings, the Egyptian Room is one such jewel.

Historical Context

As the 'Egyptomania' that the 1922 discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb fomented across the nation, Adelaide's Egyptian collection found itself in increasing demand. Classed within a grey area between art and ethnography, the collection had been housed in the Art Gallery of South Australia (Merrillees 1990, p.26). It was subsequently decided to create a permanent

gallery within the museum, both accommodating the public's ongoing obsession, and to cement changing attitudes towards archaeology as a recognised science (Richards et al. 2021, p.35; and Merrillees 1990, p.26). It was 1939 when the Egyptian Room first opened to the public. Tucked discretely into a third-floor corner, the exhibit occupied a moderately sized tower room. The room's true dimensions had been obfuscated by the sheer volume of its contents. Crammed to capacity, the first visitors would have been confronted with vistas of gleaming cabinets, stuffed with exotic wonders, colourful plaster casts, and lavish wall murals vying in hard competition for visual real estate. As the collection itself is primarily comprised of funerary goods (Figure 1), the room design had been based upon capturing the 'ambience of a New Kingdom Tomb chamber' (Merrillees 1990, p.24, Figure 2). For many, it would have been their first encounter with objects of such rare antiquity.

Over the following 85 years, the Egyptian Room has remained virtually frozen in time (Figures 3 and 4). Protected by its own uniqueness and a National Trust preservation order, the room serves as a nostalgic time capsule, visited by at least three generations of South Australian families (Merrillees 1990, p.28). Meanwhile, beyond its walls, technological, industrial, and societal advancement have altered the fabric of people's lives. It is unsurprising that this small, unchanging oasis has unintentionally garnered the protection of collective memory.

Over eighty years of exploration and scholarship have revealed a different kind of Ancient Egypt, one distinct from the tomb.

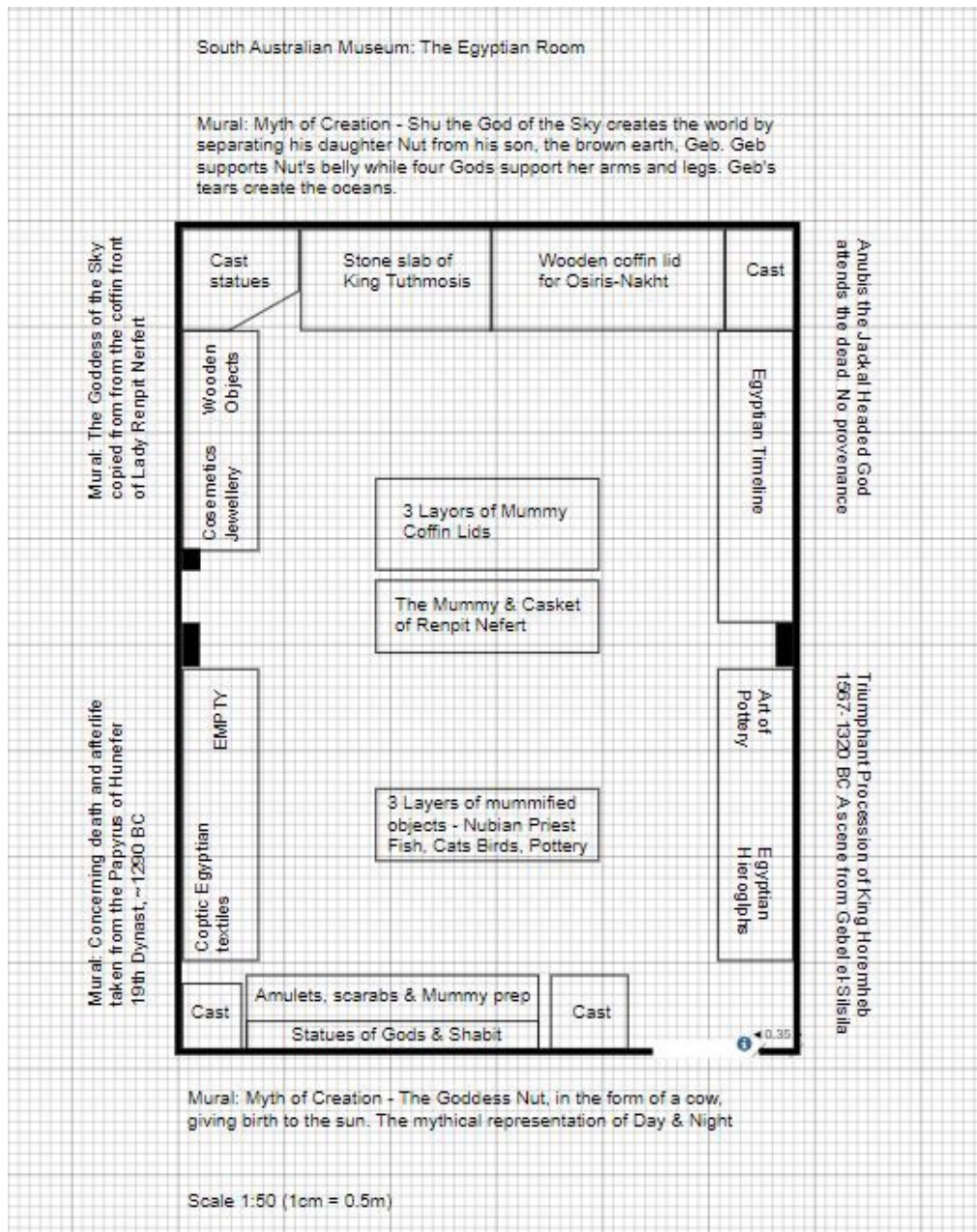


Figure 2: Layout of the current SA Museum's Egyptian Room. Room dimensions are 5.83m wide x 7.80 long with an area of 45.5 sq.m. Produced by Faith Gerhard

Stepping into the Egyptian Room now, one is presented with a stasic chamber. Surrounded by stilled objects and their silent, mummified counterparts; everything arrested by death. Egypt then, as now, teemed with an exuberance of life, expressed as we now understand it, through survivals from the spheres of domesticity, religion, agriculture, commerce, and conquest. As the inheritors of this archaeological legacy, the public have been gifted a veritable trove of recorded art, literature, and monumental inscription.

We know what people looked like, what they wore, ate, and believed in. What illnesses they suffered, how they smelled, and games they played.

While much of what we know has been derived from the chattels of death, it is the distant sounds of that life that we must try to recapture. Left as is, the room presses further inward on its occupants, filling intangibly with a tension of untold stories.



Figures 3 and 4: Views of the South Australian Museums Egyptian Room. Images by Faith Gerhard

An Invitation for Renewal

Digital Expansion

Museums rely heavily upon the interpretive potentials of sight. However, their traditional reliance upon supplementary texts often detracts from the visual connections a viewer might establish with an object. This reliance on words often omits the observational senses we use to analyse our surroundings; smell, touch, sound, sight (Monti and Keene 2013, p.39). Archaeological displays furnished with enormous quantities of material culture are at a particular disadvantage. Engaging multi-sensory alternatives that are specifically designed to trigger cognitive function has led to marked improvements in the emotional responses and experiences of the viewer (Monti and Keene 2013, p.39). The addition of digital technology to SAM has been long discussed. A former museum director had

suggested Augmented Reality (AR) technology as a component for the Egyptian Room upgrade (McGuire 2016). As museums globally work to remain relevant, the inclusion of digital technologies has become essential to visitor experience. It is a means by which museums can sustainably tap into new audiences. Benefits include:

- Enhances museum reputation as an effective purveyor of cultural knowledge rather than being just a storehouse for it.
- Satisfies the demands of the younger generations for technology
- Removes the visitor experience from one of pure observation to that of active engagement.
- Increases reach by catering for diverse, sometimes previously inaccessible, audience sectors such as the visually or aurally impaired (Abdalla, et al 2020, p. 116).

Modes of learning and educational expectations have also progressed exponentially in line with technological development. Static labelling will not target every audience, particularly school children gorged on a diet of digital educational products, programming, artificial intelligence (AI), and gaming consoles. Nor can it be expected to cater for the various learning strategies individuals use to process and retain information; visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and reading/writing (Bay Atlantic University 2024). Greater emphasis on addressing these needs through a combination of integrated multimedia and interactive applications should yield higher levels of material engagement, improved learning outcomes and sense satisfaction for the visitor. From casual observations, visitors spend little more than five minutes viewing gallery content.

The Egyptian Room is small by gallery standards and well stocked. The quantity of information locked in suspension cannot be viably accessed with traditional labelling systems. To maintain aesthetics, reduce clutter, and foster new knowledge-based vitality, the room must transform to become invisibly vast on the inside. Of the options available, AR is by far the most achievable for SAM, and the most applicable for the Egyptian Room. AR is capable of fully integrating information pathways to produce the necessary expansion needed. To achieve this, cataloguing, scripting, and three-dimensional (3D) imaging of the Egyptian collection would be required.

The Proposal - Scope and Vision

The Egyptian Room is a high-density, visually cluttered space, beautiful in its declining splendour. It is wholly deserving of devotee's attempts to preserve it - they champion a stance difficult to resist. While the preservation of heritage museology certainly has significant cultural value, it does come at a cost measured

in the depletion of spatial resources, lowered educational engagement, and the perpetuation of inappropriate culture cliches. Many questions emerged from the research:

Is keeping the display in its current incarnation honouring the cultural heritage of Egypt?

- Other than the preservation of historic curatorial technique, does the current display carry an educational value commensurate with modern audience expectations?
- Are we helping to perpetuate 19th century archetypes dictated by western mono-narratives?
- In later years, will SAM be accused of supporting the continued dispossession of a people from their cultural heritage?
- Conversely, if the remodel does go ahead, will South Australia lose something unique to itself?

These questions form the foundation for redesigning the proposed exhibition space.

The intuitive cue most impactful on the ensuing design process was the room's pervading atmosphere of still finality. A room based upon a tomb chamber, filled with funerary objects, was itself lifeless. In all of its contents there were no people connected to them, an empty room where even the human remains were viewed with a detachment that bleached them of humanity. Restoring 'life' to the room was the first goal. Experimental archaeology, across all fields, has made great advances in our understanding of technical innovation in ancient societies.

Linking artefacts with their rediscovered construction techniques will add layers of interest and vitality.

The second is to preserve the beauty of the original room, and where possible, display elements of it elsewhere. The wall murals will be retained and incorporated; new labelling will stylistically reflect the original and 3D images taken of the room can be likewise incorporated into AR and/or the short documentaries discussed in the next section.

Lack of intellectual engagement can be approached from various angles. The dearth of relatable captioning/content has to be addressed but in a way that does not detract from or obscure the displayed antiquities. The information currently offered lacks depth and audience connectivity.

Embedded AR technology will reduce lengthy written labels but not replace them entirely. An overall reduction of displayed objects will be necessary to convey understandable units of micro and macro data without excessive repetition diluting the effect (Monti and Keene 2013, pp. 25-26).

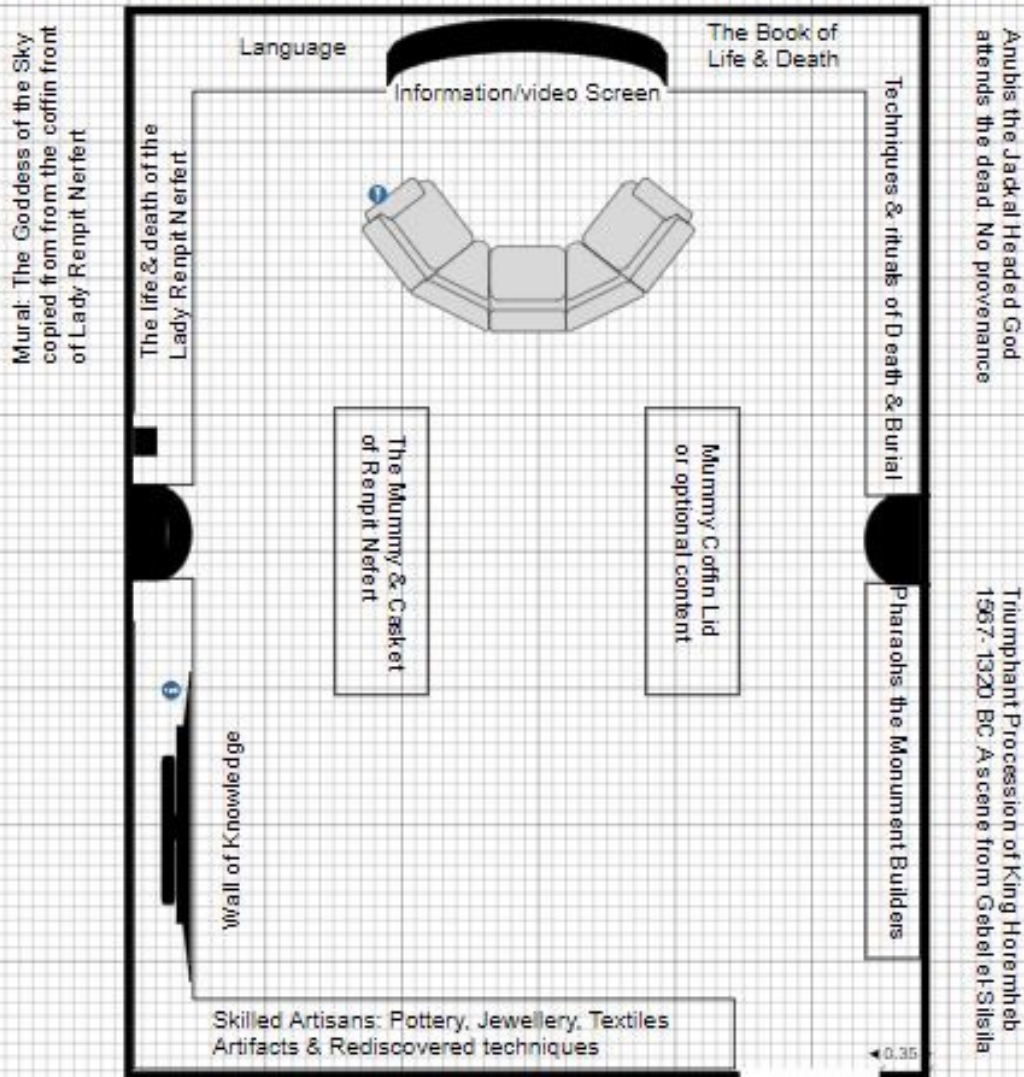
Figure 6 illustrates a scale diagram of the new cabinetry arrangement and their respective themes. Table 1 outlines the decorative alterations and elements suggested to achieve a canvas suitable for the proposed thematic framework. Figure 5 is an AI generated visualisation of how the refurbished room might appear.



Figure 5: AI rendering illustrating approximations of how the proposed refurbished Egyptian Room might appear. The above image show how the room would look with the wall frescos in situ. (Microsoft Copilot: May 2024)

South Australian Museum: The Refurbished Egyptian Room

Mural: Myth of Creation - Shu the God of the Sky creates the world by separating his daughter Nut from his son, the brown earth, Geb. Geb supports Nut's belly while four Gods support her arms and legs. Geb's tears create the oceans.



Mural: Myth of Creation - The Goddess Nut, in the form of a cow, giving birth to the sun. The mythical representation of Day & Night

Scale 1:50 (1cm = 0.5m)

Figure 6: Plan generated by the author, from measurements taken by the author in Smartdraw Building Plan Software

TABLE 1 (below). Outlines the decorative elements upon which the new display rests. The colour palate, furnishings, flooring and sundries necessary to build a timeless atmosphere.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT - DESIGN RATIONALE

CEILING

- The tower cavity in the northwestern corner must be sealed.
- The ceiling is encircled by a slim white margin edged with subtle recessed lighting.
- The ceiling itself is a dark blue, studded with tiny downlights evocative of stars.

This arrangement carries forward the mythology of the sky Goddess Nut and her association with the Milky Way featured in the eastern wall mural.

FLOOR

- The floor is a deep burnished blue providing a softly reflective surface for the ambient lighting above and emanating from the cabinets.
- The floor could be stained polished concrete (depending on what is under the current Linoleum), a continuous vinyl square or a floating timber/vinyl hybrid.
- A sound deadening underlay will assist with some of the echo necessary if audio were to be used.

While the ceiling is the Milky Way, the floor represents the life-giving Nile River around which all life flourishes.

WALL MOUNTED DISPLAY UNITS

- Slim, modern wall units line all four walls, perhaps 40-50 cm deep.
- The height of the units is indicative by where the fresco begins approx. 1.9 tall on all three walls with the back wall being 2.3m.
- Cabinet interiors are backlit appropriately and coloured where required with a limited colour palate to the object's best advantage.
- All interactive technologies must be framed by equally neutral casings. While inviting a sense of play, it is imperative that its appearance not infringe on the display.

Their colour is a neutral sandy beige; a continuation of the mural ground colour. These colours are chosen to avoid closing the room in or risk detracting from the antiquities within.

LIGHTING

Commensurate with the necessary preservation of artefacts from fading or heat damage.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT - DESIGN RATIONALE (Continued)

SEATING

- A curved couch approximately 2m long – preferably backless.
- Dark blue with patterned/contrast base.

The option of seating has been provided to facilitate visitor viewing of short documentaries (See Table 4). Also useful during school excursions or ticketed events.

EAST-WEST FLOOR CABINETS

Currently there is one full sarcophagus and 4 lids on display. Accommodating all of them consumes substantial space.

A reduction of material is necessary for this design, and the following are possible options:

- 2 waist-height modern glass floor cabinets; one to accommodate Renpit-Nefert's closed casket and the other a choice of lid.
- Hieroglyphs have not been included in the thematic framework and might well occupy the 2nd unit
- Have a single longer display unit down the centre of the room holding the casket and a sectioned off area for hieroglyphs.

REMOVABLE SCREEN


- A custom, purpose built 2m high, removable screen that fits the contours of the outer edge of the couch.


The question 'Where is contemporary Egypt?' should not go unanswered.

This screen provides the opportunity to run short term exhibitions of contemporary Egyptian visual art that can be attached to it. This may take the form of photography, painting, or textiles. Shallow modular shelving could also accommodate smaller ceramics/glassware/sculptures.

Thematic Framework. For ease of viewing, the thematic framework has been tabulated below in Table 2. The posited exhibition of mummified human remains, and their 3D visualisations will remain contingent upon the outcomes of source community consultation.

TABLE 2

PRESERVED 1939 MURALS	PROPOSED EXHIBITION CONTENT
<p>WESTERN WALL: Mythical representation of Day and Night. The Goddess Nut takes the form of a cow. Four Gods support her legs, and her brother, Geb, supports her belly as she gives birth to the sun.</p> <p>The creation of Day and Night gives rise to the seasons, calendars, and the measurement of time, enabling the rise of civilisation.</p> <p>Thematically linked to the toils of the ancient Egyptian people, in particular the skilled artisans.</p> 	<p>This section, occupying the Western length first section of the Northern wall, will be concerned with the techniques and products of skilled artisans.</p> <p>West: Sculpture (Stone/wood) and Pottery</p> <p>North: Jewellery/metalwork and textiles</p> <p>Key representational objects from the collection will be discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction materials original source if known – quarry, mine, crop, forest. • How were the materials procured? - trade routes, overland transportation networks. • Types of colour pigmentation and how they were derived/employed. • Where known - techniques/tools used for making/crafting such objects. • The types of people creating them: guild masters/ apprentices, slaves, craftspeople. <p>Augmented Reality: As part of the ‘Wall of Knowledge’ (Abdalla et al. 2020, p.111), the viewer will be able to hold a mobile device (Phone/Tablet) in front of an object and use the ‘DiscoverSAM’ application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See high resolution 3D scan of the object and rotate it every angle for better viewing • Learn more about the object through audio narrative/ subtitles • Discover similar catalogued items in the collection - researchers <p>Concise written labelling reinforced with cartoons/diagrams and voiced narratives that can be accessed through the application or via handheld receivers forming part of the display unit.</p> <p>Research Project: Locate, interview and hands on with an Experimental Archaeologist/s who have perfected the techniques that would have been used to make some of the displayed objects.</p> <p>Create 3–5-minute documentary content on the making of artifacts similar to those displayed.</p>

PRESERVED 1939 MURALS	PROPOSED EXHIBITION CONTENT
<p>NORTHERN WALL: The Goddess of the sky copied from Renpit-Nefert's casket. A common funerary motif.</p> <p>Renpit-Nefert was intended to be the collection's centrepiece.</p> <p>This section will tell a generalisation of her story. Her's and many young Theban women of the time.</p>	<p>Renpit-Nefert's mummified remains will be placed horizontally in the wall unit about waist-height.</p> <p>Labelling will discuss her place of origin, era, age, and health</p> <p>Using what is known, discuss what a Theban woman's life might have entailed.</p> <p>The remaining display should be devoted to exhibiting the results from the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there enough information to reconstruct Renpit-Nefert's facial features? • Can we extrapolate enough from her physical dimensions to create a life-sized replica of her? • What might a Theban woman of that era and socio-economic ranking have worn? • Can we ask the Weavers Guild to create the linen cloth in as close an approximation to what is known of Egyptian techniques and patterns? • Can we then have that cloth made into era appropriate apparel to dress her replica? • Can an era correct wig be made using authentic materials and techniques? • What types of jewellery might she have worn? If glass faience, can we commission the JAM Factory to provide the beads and have them strung as part of a student project? • What sort of cosmetics or perfumes might she have worn? Are there personal grooming artifacts in the collection that can be displayed as examples even if they are not period correct? <p>As each question is answered, record documentary content to make short 3–5 minute feature films on the making of apparel and accoutrements.</p>
	

EASTERN WALL: Shu the God of the air creates the world by separating his daughter, Nut, from his son, Geb (the brown earth). Four Gods support Nut's arms and legs, becoming the four corners of the world and her body the starry heavens. Horus is stationed to the south, Set to the north, Thoth to the west, and Sopdu the east, Geb laments the loss of his sister and his tears form the roiling seas.

Another great creation myth that, with the telling, hints at esoteric mysteries, astrology, and the motions of planetary movements.



It speaks to that which is unknown and hidden by the dearth of human understanding, as such relating well with the subject matters of religion and mythology.

Occupying the north-eastern side of the room, and using the available statues, stelae, amulets, touchscreen storyboards, labelling, and illustrations. Concentrate most efforts on the time of Renpit-Nefert, attempt to answer some of the following:

- Who were the Gods? What did they look like?
- Do we know what ancient world origins/influences underpinned dominant religious practises and beliefs?
- How might an ordinary individual like Renpit-Nefert have worshipped?
- What role did the temple/religion play in the lives of the people? Offerings, sacred rituals, and festivals etc.
- What did temples look like, how were they managed? Use architectural fragments from the catalogue to illustrate e.g. the column from the temple vestibule of Arsaphes at Heracleopolis.
- How and why was the Pharaoh considered a God?

The central portion of the eastern wall would/could contain a flat screen television with a series of connected and highly robust headphone sets. This is a multipurpose tool that can be used for a variety of learning activities.

- The documentary footage taken during various experimental archaeological reconstructions/ research projects can be played here on loop. Over time, once the film catalogue content has increased sufficiently, a console may be incorporated, allowing visitors to choose what they would like to watch. (The refurbishment of the room itself could be filmed in stages to create content).
- Over time, console operated educational games can be developed for playing on the screen by small groups of students either separate to, or as an augmentation of SAM's existing 'Shadow Initiation' adventure game.
- The screen can also be used during ticketed evening lectures/events.

The south-eastern side of the room will be dedicated to Ancient Egyptian mythology. Using available statues, stelae, amulets, touchscreen storyboards, labelling and illustrations - attempt to answer some of the following:

- What are the individual origin stories for each of the main Gods?
- How closely tied were mythological teachings to the seasonal cycles of inundation/growth/harvest upon which the Egyptian people's livelihoods depended?
- Do we know of other ancient world creation stories that could have been adapted and incorporated by the Ancient Egyptians? Example: as Gilgamesh is to Noah's Flood.
- How influential was Egyptian mythology on the advancement of scientific endeavour, literature, and social development? Example: Christianity's persecution of any theoretical dialogue that diverged from the biblical narrative.

Start a commentary on Anubis and the Egyptian Book of the Dead that can continue into the next section.

SOUTHERN WALL: This wall is broken into two distinct sections that succinctly create a fitting beginning and end to the visitor's circumnavigations of the room.

On the south-eastern end of the southern wall, Anubis, the Jackel-headed God and patron deity of embalmers, stands attending the dead. The spirit of the deceased will enter the underworld in his company and be guided by him through the rituals of final judgement.



This thematic flow on of religion to mythology reaches a seamless terminus with the final section discussing the greatest mystery of all.

After a room bustling with the ingenuity and creativity of human life, we come at last to the mummification section of the exhibit.

Here, opposite Renpit-Nefert, will lie the body of the unnamed Ptolemaic Priest. He will be central to the narrative on bodily embalming, wrapping, and preservation techniques. He will be accompanied by select examples of the collection's mummified animals and funerary goods, including shabti, urns, canopic jars (or approximations thereof) and the various domestic goods that might have been provided for the afterlife.

POSSIBLE DIGITAL DISPLAY, INTERACTIVE KNOWLEDGE EXTENDERS:

To one side a flat touchscreen displaying the computerised 3D animation of a tomb and chamber the Priest is likely to have occupied. Filled with appropriately arranged grave goods and offerings. Visitors can touch the screen to zoom in/out or get a 360°-degree view or touch an object to see it up close, spin it in 3D for every angle.

Additional panel paintings of the Papyrus of Hunefer, 19th Dynasty 1290 BC and the papyrus of Ani, 19th Dynasty 1320-1200 BC (excerpts from the Egyptian Book of the Dead) were used to ornament boarded window casings of the Egyptian room. Procure, if possible, high resolution sectioned images of the whole document or relevant passages. Resulting images to be compiled in such a way as to allow the viewer to swipe through one section at a time on an appropriately proportioned screen. The act of swiping activates an audio narration of the contents in the style of being read a story (i.e., describing perhaps the Ptolemaic Priest's journey and travails as he passed through the various byways of death).

SOUTHERN WALL (Continued)

We come full circle to the south-western end of the wall and the actual starting point of our tour - the Triumphant Procession of King Horemheb.



The imbalance of the room will now be addressed with a section entirely devoted to the Pharaohs and their monumental building programmes. The roles they had assumed as they ruled over the populations of the Nile Valley. People that have been represented throughout the remaining space.

Here will be presented an illustrated timeline, an orientation tool for the would-be time traveller. Carefully designed to encompass digital interface technology with key objects that best embody their given time period - such as the Ptolemaic Rosetta Stone cast. With the assistance of the 'DiscoverSAM' application, the viewer will be invited to hover over any specific time period in order to trigger a short cache of narrated images to appear.

- Deliver a brief historical overview of the period, the most significant King/s.
- Detail one or two important buildings/monuments/ technological advancements.
- To be paired with complimentary images of temples, tombs, monuments etc.

This same process can be used also to show a map of the Nile Delta depicting the location of ancient cities and sites of significance.

Next to the general timeline, the visitor will be able to drill down still further and access short biographies of 14 well-known Pharaohs. The interface consists of a cabinet mounted flat screen with a touch sensitive button board beneath. Upon pressing a short biographical presentation of around 1-2 minutes composed of still images and audio will run. Each biography should contain the following content:

A selection of Pharaoh related objects can be incorporated into the display including the original 1939 painted window panel of Akhenaten and his family.

Concluding Remarks

The proposed Egyptian Room refurbishment is understood to be a radical departure from its current embodiment. The changes are magnified by the passage of an 85-year hiatus. While the Egyptian Room has remained in stasis, elsewhere important scientific, technological, and social advances have taken place, pushing it still further out of time. Today it is one of only five dedicated permanent Egyptian exhibitions, but the question is posed: can it really afford to remain cloistered in colonial ignominy (Richards 2022)?

Any steps taken by the South Australian Museum to align with the emerging decolonisation movement and open a dialogue with source communities regarding their cultural heritage is highly encouraged.

Visitor experience and satisfaction have also featured strongly in the compilation of this paper. There is no life in the Egyptian Room's current arrangement, nothing to grab or engage attention. A huge gulf exists between what is written on the labels and what can now be learnt from any one piece in the assemblage. This, above anything else, should be one of the easiest and most crucial hurdles to jump. Whether the renovations only take place in a piecemeal fashion, or be mothballed entirely, this educational vacuum needs to be filled.

The South Australian Museum's Egyptian collection deserves to remain relevant. In a fast-moving world where values wax and wane according to the latest trend and fads, our fascination with ancient Egypt endures. Our commitment should be to care for its material culture and to honour it accordingly.

References

- Abdalla, RME. Abdalla, AO. and Abd El-Wareth Abd El-Megiup, O. 2020, 'The impact of using digital technology applications on the Egyptian Museum display', *International Journal of Heritage and Museum Studies*, pp. 109-124, viewed 30 May 2024, https://ijhms.journals.ekb.eg/article_188755_49d2f303a6eaf5e89be90728077da107.pdf
- Bay Atlantic University, 2024, *8 Types of Learning Styles: The Definitive Guide*, Bay Atlantic University, viewed 28th May 2024, <https://bau.edu/blog/types-of-learning-styles/>
- Brown, Amelia 2012, *Exhibition Review, Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb*, reCollections, Vol 8 Number 1, Viewed 18th May 2024, [reCollections - Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb \(nma.gov.au\)](https://reCollections - Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb (nma.gov.au))
- Carroll, Dr. Diana 2021, '165 years on, SA Museum Director speaks on the shifting museum lens', Artshub, viewed 25th May 2024, <https://www.artshub.com.au/news/features/165-years-on-sa-museum-director-speaks-on-the-shifting-museum-lens-262898-2371425/>
- Craig, Dr. Barry 1999, Rempit-Nefert, South Australian Museum, viewed 24th May 2024, <https://impactdb.uwo.ca/context/imp000781.pdf>
- Ferrandez, Cristina 2021, 5 amazing augmented reality museum experiences, Poplar.Studio, viewed 31 May 2024, <https://poplar.studio/blog/5-amazing-augmented-reality-museum-experiences/>
- Gilchrist, Charlie 2024, 'SA history body weighs into SA Museum debate', The Advertiser, 12 April, viewed 2nd May 2024, <https://www.indaily.com.au/news/adelaide/2024/04/12/sa-history-body-weighs-into-sa-museum-debate>
- Hammady, Ramy 2019, MuseumEye Story, YouTube, June 10, viewed 25th May 2024, <https://youtu.be/Nqjn0tcOckE>
- Hammady, R. Ma, M. Stathern, C. and Mohammad, M. 2020, 'Design and development of a mixed reality touring guide to the Egyptian museum', in *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, Springer Science and Business Media, LLC, pp. 2465-3494, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-019-08026-w>
- Heap, Matthew 2023, *Media Release: Ancient Egyptian Blockbuster opens at National Museum*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, Viewed 17th May 2024, Ancient Egyptian blockbuster opens at National Museum of Australia | National Museum of Australia (nma.gov.au)
- Hooper-Greenhill E. 1992, 'What is a Museum?', in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, London:Routledge, pp. 1-22.
- Lloyd, Tim n.d., *Ancient Egypt gallery at South Australian Museum nostalgic and authentic with mummy and sarcophagus*, Adelaide AZ from The Advertiser, Viewed 17th May 2024, [Ancient Egypt gallery at South Australian Museum nostalgic and authentic with mummy and sarcophagus | Adelaide AZ](https://www.advertiser.com.au/news/adelaide/ancient-egypt-gallery-at-south-australian-museum-nostalgic-and-authentic-with-mummy-and-sarcophagus-adelaide-az)

McGuire, Michael 2016, *Culture capital: The \$100m plan to transform the South Australian Museum*, The Advertiser, viewed 25th May 2024, <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/lifestyle/sa-weekend/culture-capital-the-100m-plan-to-transform-the-sa-museum/news-story/>

Merillees, Robert S. `990. *Living with Egypt's Past in Australia*, Museum of Victoria.

Monti, Francesca and Keene, Suzanne 2013. *Museums and Silent Objects: Designing Effective Exhibitions*, Ashgate Publishing Company, England.

Pitkin, Melanie 2022, *Ancient Egyptian Collections in Australia: a Curator's Perspective*, Egyptian Streets, Viewed 18th May 2024, [Ancient Egyptian Collections in Australia: a Curator's Perspective | Egyptian Streets](https://egyptianstreets.com.au/ancient-egyptian-collections-in-australia-a-curator-s-perspective/)

Richards, C. Pitkin, M. Thogersen, E. Donnelly, Guerry and P. 2024, 'An Evolving University Museum Paradigm: case studies of broadening participation with the Mediterranean collections at the Chau Chak Wing Msueum' in Minchin, E. and Richard, C. (eds). *Mediterranean Collections in Australia and Aotearoa: perspectives from afar*, Routledge : London, forthcoming.

Richards, C. Vokes, R. Inall, Y. Lowery, V. and Oreskovich, J. 2021, 'Egypt in Australia', *Africa in Australia*, Report Number 2, pp. 1-27, viewed 20th May 2024, <file:///D:/Faith/Downloads/egypt-in-australia.pdf>

South Australian Museum, 2024, *The Shadow Initiation*, South Australian Museum, viewed 10th May 2024, <https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/event/the-shadow-initiation>

Stankovska, Bisera 2023. *How Much does Augmented Realist Cost?* DesignRush, viewed 24 May 2024. <https://wwdesignrush.com/agency/ar-vr/trends/how-much-does-augmented-reality-cost#>

Stevenson, Alice 2022. *Egyptian Archaeology and the TwentyFirst Century Museum*, Cambridge University Press, UK.

The author gives special thanks to Dr Melanie Pitkin, of the Chau Chak Wing Museum who kindly provided the author access to unpublished material.

All photographs taken by the author unless otherwise stated.

The author acknowledges the use of Microsoft Copilot to generate professional looking visual aids describing interior design elements.

(Hieroglyphs motif taken from Jordon 1998 p. 175)

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of water. It features a central point where a drop has just landed, creating a series of concentric, overlapping ripples that spread outwards. The water is a clear, vibrant blue, and the lighting creates highlights and shadows on the ripples, giving it a dynamic, textured appearance.

**Proposal for a
NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF WATER**

Maeve McNeilage

This proposal is for the establishment of a National Museum of Water (NMW), to be based in South Australia. A NMW would generate interdisciplinary research and exhibitions exploring the variety of relationships between water and life on Earth, with the objective of facilitating a change in humanity's relationship with water. The museum intends to be for everyone and have sustainability and inclusivity at the centre of its operations. The establishment of a NMW is an opportunity for South Australia to host a vital cultural institution which does not yet exist in Australia and therefore benefit from the cultural, academic, and tourism interest a NMW can generate. Water museums are a growing trend internationally and it is not a matter of 'if' but 'when' one will be established in Australia. This is an opportunity with intrinsic value in its capacity to facilitate the reimagining of human-water relationships – a cultural shift imperative to the preservation of humanity in the face of the climate crisis.

Introduction

Museums, despite their reputation for stasis and fixity, are institutions of change and transformation (McCarthy, 2020, p. 95). Their purpose in society has evolved since their initial *Wunderkammer* conception. Museums no longer function to represent the past, time, space, and material culture in the ways the West taught the Rest (McCarthy, 2020, p. 96). Particularly in Australia, museums are reckoning with how this 'reference library for colonisation' purpose has facilitated the "ruthless exploitation of natural resources, and the violent dispossession of the previous inhabitants" (McCarthy, 2020, p. 98). Even the late 20th century 'new museology', which focused on redefining the relationship museums have with audiences and communities (Vergo, 1989, p. 159), needs reimagining. Fundamental to these past renditions of museology is a dualist philosophy, which "separates humanity from nature in thinking and practice" (Jeffery, 2022, p. 11). The detrimental effects of such an anthropocentric attitude can be seen at the heart of the climate crisis and, in particular, the global water crisis.

Water is arguably the most important element for survival: composing two-thirds of the human body and three-quarters of the planet on which we exist, water is a substance deeply connected to all aspects of human life (Hosseiny, et al., 2021, p. 189). Despite water being "a prerequisite for health, economic development, cultural goals and growth, and the development of human civilization" (Hosseiny, et al., 2021, p. 212), humanity has failed to maintain a sustainable relationship with this elixir of life and consequently finds itself on the verge of environmental collapse. There is a need for dedicated intercultural research into the complexities of humanity's relationship with water across time and place in order to find solutions to the water problems humans now face. Museums are institutions well placed to become sites for new approaches to democratic engagement and activism on this issue (Coghlan, 2018, p. 805), as well as research into human-water relationships more broadly.

There has been an emergence of ‘Water Museums’ internationally, which seek to “reconnect humanity with Water in all its dimensions, including the social, cultural, artistic and spiritual” (Lessa, 2020, p. 353). The UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme has established the Global Network of Water Museums which “supports cooperation among museums, institutions, and people to implement new actions aiming to build a ‘new culture of water’ and repair our deteriorated relationship with the most precious element for life” (The Global Network of Water Museums, 2024). At the time of writing, no such institution exists in Australia.

South Australia is well suited to host a NMW. The North Terrace Cultural Precinct boasts an art gallery with one of the largest art museum collections in Australia, access to a huge collection of objects in the South Australian Museum, a selection of other free access cultural institutions (TourismSA, 2021), and Adelaide University, the largest university in Australia, commencing in 2026. This is a well-established arts and academic ecosystem which still has room to grow. South Australia does not have an aquarium, and its cultural institutions lack the large-scale research and tourism appeal of counterparts in other states (e.g., MONA in Hobart or the Melbourne Museum). The NMW would be an excellent opportunity for South Australia to fill both of these roles and more.

Vision and Mission

The vision for a NMW is to provide a knowledge hub for all aspects of understanding water as it pertains to any form of life. This knowledge will be developed through interdisciplinary research, and communicated through trans-disciplinary exhibitions. Interdisciplinary research facilitates different research perspectives on the topic of water, while trans-disciplinary exhibitions can support collaboration between disciplines to generate innovative exhibition content. Through this work, it is the NMW’s mission to facilitate the change in humanity’s relationship with water necessary for the survival of our species and the prosperity of the planet.

Concept and Thematic Framework

The theme for a NMW is how water shapes life and how life shapes water, be it scientifically, culturally, historically, presently, physically, or metaphorically and use an eco-decolonial framework to inform its museum practice in order to take “a constellational approach to the expansion of museological theory” (Jeffery, 2022, p. 10). A constellational approach allows for collections of related ideas and it “provides the systems of thinking that are essential for approaching and dealing with issues that have a wide spatio-temporal character” (Jeffery, 2022, p. 10). This is ideal for the NMW’s intended trans and interdisciplinary approach to the study and exhibition of water across time and space.

An eco-decolonial framework supports knowledge building around the different types of relationships water creates, such as how “wells, pumps, and pipes are not just for water, but also create complex and different relationships between people, water, and the earth” (Hosseiny, et al., 2021, p. 209). If we are to transform our relationship with water as a species, a wide range of disciplines will be involved, including “economics, behavioural and cognitive sciences, decision making, social values, community psychology, and politics” (Rezaee, et al., 2021, p. 261). Central to the NMW’s concept is the view that water embeds humanity and all living things in a multi-species web of life, and the eco-decolonial framework acknowledges the necessity of employing a variety of disciplines in order to deepen our knowledge and understanding of that interconnectivity (Jeffery, 2022, p. 10).

To change relationships with water the NMW needs to go beyond academia and exhibitions, which is why community is another central facet of the museum concept.

The NMW can function as a community forum, with inclusive public access to encourage widespread and regular utilisation of the space as a community resource. In this regard, a NMW will be designed to function in the way that sociologists describe as ‘third place’. A ‘third place’ refers to “the places outside of the home (the first place) and the workplace (the second place) where people go to converse with others and connect with their community” (University of Chicago English Language Institute, 2023) in a casual social environment free from obligation and a price barrier.

Audience Analysis

Broad audience appeal is essential to the NMW’s mission to facilitate a shift in cultural attitudes towards water, thereby requiring the museum to appeal to the whole community. As such, the desired audience of the NMW is everyone. Though not all aspects of the NMW will appeal to every person, there will at least be something within the museum which any person will find appealing. When planning the exhibitions, curators will need to consider the audience appeal in the context of the other exhibitions, being careful to fill gaps and avoid over catering to particular demographics. This is feasible due to the breadth of possibilities the museum will be empowered to explore since a relationship with water is shared amongst all human beings. The design of the museum as a community ‘third place’ will also serve to appeal to a diverse demographic spectrum.

Collection & Exhibits

Collection sharing

A NMW would pursue collection sharing as a core aspect of its collection and exhibition operations for both online and brick-and-mortar facilities. South Australia already has a rich selection of cultural institutions, but many have limited space and resources to display their vast collections held in storage. The South Australian Museum is an example of this, with a majority of their over five million specimens and material cultural items going unseen due to a lack of display space (South Australian Museum, 2024).

Collection sharing has demonstrated success with the Institute and Museum of California Art (Cultural Strategy Partners, 2021), and is a collaborative rather than competitive approach to engaging with other institutions. There ought not to be much objection from other institutions as the NMW will be using loaned objects to tell water stories, and any one object will have a plethora of other stories for other institutions to tell. The goal of collection sharing is to increase the accessibility of objects, as there is little point in preserving these artefacts if they are not used to improve the present and the future (Jeffery, 2022, p. 9). An example of one such opportunity would be to loan objects from the South Australian Museum's collection pertaining to the Arabana people of the far north of South Australia to create an exhibit highlighting the results of extraction of water by mining giant BHP on their lands (MacLennan, 2025), and to discuss the broader differences in Aboriginal and Western relationships with water.

A collection sharing model will also empower the museum to not be limited by the breadth of a singular collection and will allow the NMW to act as a collaborative space across academic, municipal, and private collections (Cultural Strategy Partners, 2021). Though it will be necessary for the NMW to maintain its own collection, it will remain small and will not be assigned the same monetary significance as object loans from other institutions. Additionally, the exhibition and collection operation will prioritise allocating resources to interactive experiences and technologies which enhance storytelling and audience engagement over obtaining new objects for the collection.

Hope Theory

Exhibition narrative design will be grounded in Hope Theory, which evokes a feeling of agency from audiences and the ability to be in control of your actions in order to achieve set goals (MOD., 2024). This is an important reaction to elicit from the audience as it is the goal of the NMW to not only educate the population on water stories, but to encourage actual changes in people's relationship with it. Since Hope Theory encourages audience participation in the NMW's mission, it has the added benefit of improving the interactivity of the museum.

Critical Realist Structure

Collection gathering and exhibition design will follow a critical realist structure, wherein water relationships will be explored through the seven Levels of Reality (Jeffery, 2022, p. 12):

1. **Planetary level:** concerned with the planet as a whole and focuses on global environmental systems.
2. **Mega level:** activities and interactions of whole traditions and civilisations, .g., the historical trajectory from pre-colonialism, to colonialism, to independence.
3. **Macro level:** explores elements of a particular society, e.g., the national South Australian economy.
4. **Meso level:** concerned with the relations among functional roles such as board member, manager and employee.
5. **Micro level:** concerned with social interactions between individuals.
6. **Individual/biographical level:** how we tell our own story to others/how we present ourselves.
7. **Sub-individual/psychological level:** the inner self/how we think about ourselves.

Proposed Inaugural Exhibition: ‘Water Stories from the Dry State’

An inaugural exhibition would be a demonstration of the NMW’s mission and museological practise by exploring South Australia’s water stories. All items on display would be acquired from other local institutions to demonstrate the collection sharing model. The exhibit would go through the Seven Levels of Reality and would use Hope Theory so that the audience can feel empowered by what they have learnt and encouraged to take action. The story-telling will be transdisciplinary and will blend interactive and informative displays.

Table 1: The 7 levels of reality of the inaugural exhibition

Level of Reality	Exhibition Topics
Planetary Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How water physically influence the continent of Australia. • How the South Australian landscape has been formed by water through a geological lens, through weather, and through South Australian Aboriginal dreamtime stories (e.g. Karna stories of the Tjilbruke Spring).
Mega Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial relationships with major water sites in South Australia (e.g. how Aboriginal people used the River Murray pre-colonisation, to how colonists used it, to how it is used today, to how it can be decolonised for the future).
Macro Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships between South Australian Aboriginal groups and water (e.g. seasonal migration to avoid flooding estuaries and rivers which allowed those lands to regenerate). • How colonisation impacted the development of water management systems and how this was detrimental to the environment & the local Aboriginal people.
Meso Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive game which explores how the different roles in society control and influence water (e.g. role of government officials like the Minister for Environment, employees at SA Water, and domestic use of water by civilians).
Micro Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontier stories in contact zones with water between Aboriginal groups and colonists (dynamics between specific historical figures and water).
Individual/Biographical level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we use water on an individual level in an interactive opportunity for the audience to realise how they are part of this story (self-grooming rituals, baptisms, death rituals etc).
Sub-individual/Psychological Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive exhibit using psychology and neuroscience to demonstrate the way water can influence our emotions and behaviours.

South Australian event director Nathan Bazley’s 2021 exhibition ‘Immersion’ used The Ellipse, an immersive technology room, to tell the story of how water has shaped South Australia over the last 50 million years (City Mag, 2021). The success of exhibitions such as this demonstrate the possibilities the NMW could achieve on an even grander scale.

Education Programs

Education programs are central to fulfilling the mission of the NMW as attitudes towards water are dependent on people's awareness of water issues (Rezaee, et al., 2021, p. 260). Since museums are effective places to disseminate water culture and educate the public (Lessa, 2020, p. 350), it is important that the NMW's educational programs "equip people to play an active role in the situations and debates to come" (Sharrocks, 2019, p. 481). The use of Hope Theory in exhibition design is also complimentary to achieving this objective.

Education programs will fall into two categories: formal and informal.

Formal initiatives

Formal educational initiatives will include programs which have a broad alignment with different education standards. In order to appeal to primary and secondary schools, there will be programs which align with the Australian Education Curriculum and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

This would encompass the following programs:

- Work experience
- Facilitated school tours
- Workshops
- Free school resource page on the NMW website (includes information sheets, self-guided tour maps, exhibition quizzes object colouring-in resources, object scavenger hunts, etc)
- Paid school incursion programs
- Paid school after-hours excursion programs (a museum equivalent of a "Zoo Snooze")
- Teacher consultation and support

For tertiary education institutions, formal initiatives would encompass the following programs:

- Internships
- Career talks
- Class tours
- Access to museum research publications
- Lectures/Workshops

Each of these programs and opportunities will have the possibility to be tailored to non-institutional entities (i.e. private groups, societies, book clubs etc.) which want to take part in museum initiatives. The museum will be open to facilitating anyone interested in participating in formal educational programs. An example of this would be tailoring an experience to an additional needs student group by offering a session which has reduced sensory impact by giving a tour through low-stimulation exhibitions, offering tours outside of busy hours, or having the lights reduced/turned off in common spaces if possible.

Informal Initiatives

Informal initiatives will be how the museum incorporates passive learning into its structure and design. This would include the following features:

- Exhibitions
- Positive atmosphere experiences through proximity to 'blue spaces' (see 'Architecture & Design' section)
- On site socialising



'Bubblers' Spring, Mound Spring Great Artesian Basin, South Australia. Image: Department Environment & Water.

Technology & Interactivity

In the 21st century, technology has cemented itself as “one of the most important aspects of modern society” (Museum Next, 2020) and has transformed the way we see and interact with the world. The use of technology in museums, when employed with intentionality and creativity (as opposed to being a gimmick), has the potential to revitalise how we tell stories, to innovate museum interactivity, and to create an unprecedented accessibility to museum collections and exhibitions. That being said, methods of interactivity which do not involve technology still have value as they create physical experiences which can encourage people to be present and appreciate their surroundings.

Both technological and non-technological methods of interactivity will be utilised by the NMW in order to provide a diversity of experiences. This approach will also make the museum more inclusive as technology can increase accessibility for people with disabilities and is effective in engaging younger audiences, while non-technological interactivity will appeal to older generations and anyone else left out by technological experiences.

Interactivity facilitates participation outside of politics and supports the attitudes necessary for “citizens to learn that they can shape their society and environment” (Coghlan, 2018, p.805), which is important in achieving the NMW’s mission of changing relationships with water.

Fulfilling this social responsibility also affects the sustainability of the museum, which is detailed in the 'Evaluation & Monitoring' section.

Table 2: Interactive tools and how they may be used in the NMW

Method	Potential Uses
Virtual Reality (VR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VR underwater/tidal wave/hurricane experience • VR finding water on Mars experience • VR recreations of walking around ancient civilisations and seeing how they interacted with water
Augmented Reality (AR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large mounted tablets/digital 'mirrors' pointed at objects which the audience can interact with to see an augmented reality dimension to an object • Augmented reality can also be accessed through individual smart-devices using the NMW app
Digital Kiosks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum directory and navigation • Quiz to generate a museum itinerary/exhibition map based on your interests (can be printed out or emailed to you) • Visitor feedback system
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz to generate a museum itinerary/exhibition map based on your interests • Online exhibitions • Access to digitised collection archive • NMW podcast episodes
Interactive screens/touch tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attached set of headphones available to read information about objects/ displays out loud for those who cannot read clearly • Touch screen interactions affecting the exhibition
Projectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layering projected digital visuals and adding an audio dimension into physical environments
Tactile/physical experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at water from different locations under a microscope and learning about the differences • Outdoor nature playground with watermill • Aquarium • Water features (fountain, waterfall, pond, ice wall etc) • Recreations of ancient water infrastructure & tools (eg step wells, cisterns, aqueducts, canoes)
NMW App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used to access features on mounted screens and tablets through your phone by scanning QR codes near objects. This is useful to keep from crowding around a single screen, if someone doesn't want to use provided headphones for hygiene reasons, or if they just prefer using their own phone to experience AR • Quiz to generate a museum itinerary/exhibition map based on your interests • NMW podcast episodes

Architecture & Design

Architecture provides the material context in which a museum exists and operates, and the design adds meaning to the objects and interactions housed in these spaces of encounter (Jones & Macleod, 2016, p. 207).

The built and designed forms of museums influence visitors' experiences in complicated and significant ways as, when visitors move through museums, "they map their experiences physically, as well as emotionally and imaginatively" (Jones & Macleod, 2016, p. 207).

Architecture and design of museums is of particular importance with the global expansion of cultural tourism (Architecture With Emotions Studio, 2022). Museums are significant for city marketing and acting as symbols of urban vitality, which attracts millions of visitors (Architecture With Emotions Studio, 2022). For a NMW, the influence and significance of architecture and design will need to be considered carefully and with consultation with local Aboriginal people, and so that the physical space of the NMW will support the museums mission and ambitions.

Historically the elitist nature of museums was facilitated by their architecture and design as "the 'untouchability of the objects', 'religious silence', 'sparse' and 'uncomfortable' surroundings, 'grandiose' interiors and features such as 'monumental stairways' signalled its difference to everyday life and created for some a sense of belonging and for others, a sense of exclusion and arbitrary devaluing" (Jones & Macleod, 2016, p. 210).

As such, NMW's architecture needs to intentionally avoid this traditional museum atmosphere so as to create a space which is capable of being a welcoming and inclusive 'third space'.

Incorporating water into the interior and exterior architecture and design is necessary not only thematically, but because the presence of water (i.e. 'blue spaces') will enhance the NMW's welcoming and appealing atmosphere. Proximity to water is known to "spark many happy, calming emotions and boost mood and wellbeing" (Cubicoon: Architecture, Design, Spaces, 2021), in addition to the active ornamentality and sensory qualities of water attracting viewers and lending water a "particular power to inscribe meaning in public spaces" (Gaynor & Martin, 2021, p. 190).

The physical space of the NMW also needs to reflect the museum's sustainability mission.

The following sustainable architecture principles will be included in the design of the NMW (BREATHE Architecture, 2024):

- Passive design
- Energy efficiency
- Life cycle carbon footprint
- Material impact and waste
- Local environment
- Longevity
- Solar power
- Water collection & recycling

Financial Considerations

While a NMW will require considerable resourcing to establish, there are opportunities to engage with many partners from different sectors, resulting in benefits to stakeholders and the community.

Table 3: Costs and Benefit Framework

Costs	Benefits
Construction costs	Tourism yields
Initial set-up	Labour surplus
Investment in curating a collection	Community use benefits
Operations (staff, security, utilities etc)	Community non-use benefits
Maintenance & object preservation	Education benefits
	Residual asset value

Table 4: Sources of Funding and Income

External	Internal
State Government Grants	Ticketed exhibitions/events/lectures
Federal Government Grants	Consultation
Philanthropy	Venue renting
National Museum of Water (NMW) Foundation	Podcast advertising revenue
Sponsorships (SA Water, Australian Water Association)	Merchandise
	Paid educational experiences
	Workshops
	Museum membership

Marketing & Promotion

Marketing and promotional strategies will include:

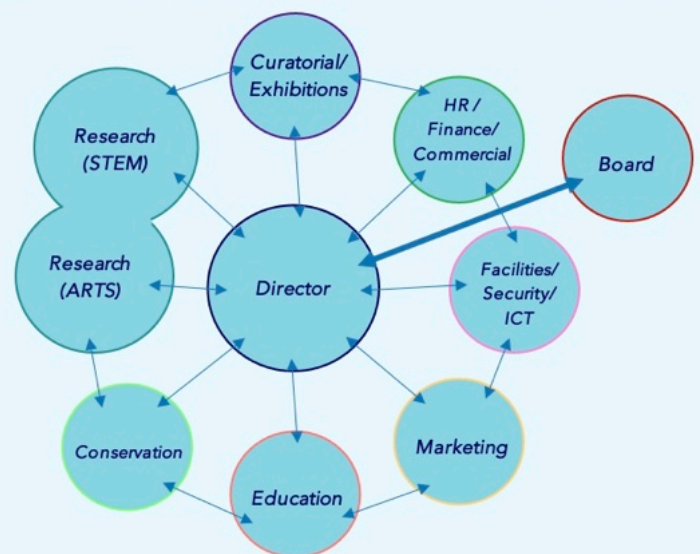
- Word of mouth
- Information pamphlets mailed out to schools and universities
- Social media profiles (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- National Museum of Water website
- National Museum of Water Podcast
- Local and interstate radio promotion
- Television and cinema adverts
- Local signage (flyers/signs/billboards)
- Media engagement (interviews, press releases, think pieces)
- Patron (public figure)
- Promotion on Tourism SA website and social media platforms
- Postcard bailouts
- The Global Network of Water Museums

Operations & Management

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the NMW, a decentralised organisational structure will be most appropriate as it increases autonomy and will support cross-collaboration between the disciplines (Forbes, 2023). The organisational chart would also be circular as opposed to hierarchical as hierarchies can work against the interdisciplinary and collaborative work of the NMW, which relies on liaising and cooperation more than vertical reporting (Museum Next, 2019).

As such, a Federated Organisation Structure (see Figure 5) would suit the needs of the museum best as it encompasses a network of semi-autonomous units with a degree of authority and independence which are overseen and coordinated by a central body.

Figure 5: Federated Organisation Structure for the National Museum of Water.



With this organisational structure, the Research branch will have teams for different research disciplines existing in parallel with each other in order to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing. When designing an exhibition, the Curatorial/Exhibitions team will have curators who have specialisations affiliated with the different research disciplines (ideally more than one discipline to each curator). The Curatorial team can therefore collaborate across the disciplines and liaise with the relevant Research teams depending on what is necessary for the exhibition. This would also require collaborating with the Education and Marketing branches to ensure exhibits are fulfilling the education aims of the museum and are sufficiently promoted. This model will allow for “different forms of leadership based on competency rather than authority and flexible task groups that work together” (Tanga, 2021, p. 5) to develop exhibitions and achieve the NMW’s objectives.

Evaluation & Monitoring

Sustainability

The sustainability and success of a museum is linked to that institution’s agency and relevance, wherein the “power of the museum lies in its will and ability to carry out its responsibilities to society” (Jeffery, 2022, p. 9). In the modern context of a world deteriorating from climate change, contributing to meaningful action to keep the planet liveable by changing humanity’s relationship with water is extremely relevant (Sharrocks, 2019, p. 495). Therefore, the NMW’s concept and mission is sustainable as it will be able to fulfil its crucial responsibility to society by making people’s lives better (Sharrocks, 2019, p. 482). Beyond this, the NMW’s sustainability is linked to its impact on its physical environment and its ability to function monetarily, which has been outlined in the ‘Architecture & Design’ and ‘Financial Considerations’ sections respectively.

Evaluation

It is recommended that a review of the NMW is conducted within five years of its establishment and operation, with an evaluation design that focusses on its concept, mission, aims and objectives.

Monitoring Success

Table 5: Metrics of the NMW's success and methods of monitoring

Success Metrics	Monitoring Methods
Amount/demographic of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital ticketing system to count visitors and collect data on demographics
Engagement with community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on collaborations with schools, universities, community groups Receiving feedback from engagement groups on their experience
Effectiveness of education programs/exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback form accessible through scanning on site QR codes or using digital kiosk Requesting detailed feedback from official engagements with community groups (e.g. schools, universities, community groups)
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reporting on finances Acquiring additional funding through government grants and philanthropy Energy efficiency of the building design
Academic and Public benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reporting on the amount of success of museum initiatives (exhibitions, publications, lectures, research publications, conferences, education programs)
Employee satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveying staff and volunteers to get data on satisfaction and any operations feedback Staff engagement in professional development opportunities
Scholarly recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting a Global Network of Water Museums International Conference

Conclusion

The establishment of the NMW is an opportunity to bring an essential institution to Australia for the benefit of South Australia, the whole nation, and the international water studies discipline. The destiny of our species is inextricably linked with water, and answers on how to reinvent our relationship with this element lay in an interdisciplinary understanding of it. Water flows through birth, love, loss, death and everything in between, “which is what you want from a museum - the whole of human life” (Sharrocks, 2019, p. 482).

Bibliography

- American Museum of Natural History, 2024. *Risk Assessment*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.amnh.org/research/science-conservation/preventive-conservation/risk-assessment>
[Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Architecture With Emotions Studio, 2022. *Museums and Architecture - Why museums are important and the role of architects*. [Online]
Available at: <https://emosastudio.com/blog/2022/08/27/museum-and-architecture-why-museums-are-important-and-the-role-of-architects/>
[Accessed 19 May 2024].
- Architizer, 2024. *An Architect's Guide To: Museum Planning*. [Online]
Available at: <https://architizer.com/blog/practice/details/architects-guide-museum-planning/>
[Accessed 20 May 2024].
- Boston Consulting Group, 2012. *Art & Business: Measuring a Museum's Performance*. [Online]
Available at: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2012/public_sector_arts_culture_art_and_business_measuring_museums_performance
[Accessed 17 May 2024].
- BREATHE Architecture, 2024. *Principles of Sustainable Architecture*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.breathe.com.au/guides/houses/principles-of-sustainable-architecture>
[Accessed 20 May 2024].
- Cao, Y., Yan Chen, W. & Wantzen, K. M., 2024. Human-river relationships in Chinese cities: evidence from highly educated water museum visitors. *Urban Ecosystems*, Volume 27, pp. 203-217.
- CityMag, 2021. *A 50 million year trip through the history of water in South Australia*. [Online]
Available at: <https://citymag.indaily.com.au/culture/a-50-million-year-trip-through-the-history-of-water-in-south-australia/>
[Accessed 22 May 2024].
- Coghlan, R., 2018. 'My voice counts because I'm handsome.' Democratising the museum: the power of museum participation. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 24(7), pp. 795-809.
- Corrigan, J. A. & Schutte, N. S., 2023. The Relationship between the Hope Dimensions of Agency Thinking and Pathways Thinking With Depression and Anxiety: a Meta-Analysis. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, Volume 8, pp. 211-255.
- Cubicoon: Architecture, Design, Spaces, 2021. *Water-Inspired Architecture: Fluid Structures of the World*. [Online]
Available at: <https://cubicoon.com/2021/07/01/water-inspired-architecture-fluid-structures-of-the-world/>
[Accessed 14 May 2024].
- Cultural Strategy Partners, 2021. *Collection Sharing: A Life Lesson for Art Museums*. [Online]
Available at: <https://culturalstrategypartners.com/collection-sharing-a-life-lesson-for-art-museums/>
[Accessed 16 May 2024].
- Fagan, B. M., 2011. *Elixir: a history of water and humankind*. 1st Edition ed. New York: Bloomsbury Press.
- Forbes, 2023. *7 Organizational Structure Types (With Examples)*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/organizational-structure/>
[Accessed 17 May 2024].
- FourWeekMBA, 2024. *Federated organisational structure*. [Online]
Available at: <https://fourweekmba.com/federated-organizational-structure/>
[Accessed 19 May 2024].
- Gaynor, A. & Martin, D. J., 2021. Every Fountain Tells a Story: Histories of Civic Water in Australia. *Australian Historical Studies*, 52(2), pp. 189-210.
- Global Network of Water Museums, 2024. *Mission*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.watermuseums.net/about/mission/>
[Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Hosseiny, S. H., Bozorg-Haddad, O. & Bocchiola, D., 2021. Water, culture, civilization, and history. In: O. Bozorg-Haddad, ed. *Economical, Political, and Social Issues in Water Resources*. Philadelphia: Elsevier, pp. 189-216.
- Infed Archives, 2019. *Museums and informal education*. [Online]
Available at: <https://infed.org/mobi/museums-and-informal-education/>
[Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Jeffery, T., 2022. Museums and Power: A Critical Appraisal of Context and Potential. *South African Museums Association Bulletin*, 44(1), pp. 9-20.
- Jones, P. & Macleod, S., 2016. Museum Architecture Matters. *Museum & Society*, 14(1), pp. 207-219.
- Lessa, J., 2020. Water Museums and Digital Media: Two Case Studies on Digital Media in Water Museums. In: F. Rebelo & M. M. Soares, eds. *Advances in Ergonomics in Design*. New York: Springer, Cham, pp. 349-355.
- MacLennan, L., 2025. *ABC - Water is under pressure in the Great Artesian Basin*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-23/water-is-under-pressure-in-the-great-artesian-basin/106002448> (Accessed 27 November 2025.)
- McCarthy, C., 2020. From histories of museums to museum history: approaches to historicising colonial museums in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Museum History Journal*, 13(1), pp. 95-110.

- Miklošević, Ž., Babić, D. & Zlodi, G., 2011. *Story Sharing - Model of Collective Collaboration in Online Museum Environment*. Zagreb, 3rd International Conference "The Future of Information Sciences: INFUTURE2011 – Information Sciences and e-Society".
- MOD., 2021. *Storytelling through technology: the intersection of museums and technology*. [Online] Available at: <https://mod.org.au/2018/10/31/storytelling-through-technology-the-intersection-of-museums-and-technology/> [Accessed 19 May 2024].
- MOD., 2024. *Hope Theory*. [Online] Available at: <https://mod.org.au/exhibits/hope-theory/?tab=delve-deeper> [Accessed 16 May 2024].
- Museum Next, 2019. *Can Flatter Organisation Structures Work for Museums?*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.museumnext.com/article/can-flatter-organisational-structures-work-for-museums/> [Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Museum Next, 2020. *How technology is bringing museums back to life*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-technology-is-bringing-museums-back-to-life/> [Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Museum Sector Alliance, 2016. *Key Performance Indicators (for museums)*. [Online] Available at: http://www.project-musa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Mu.SA_Key-Performance-Indicators-for-museums.pdf [Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Museums & Galleries of NSW, 2024. *Marketing for Museums*. [Online] Available at: <https://mgns.w.gov.au/sector/resources/online-resources/organisation-management/marketing-museums-factsheet/> [Accessed 16 May 2024].
- Museums & Galleries Queensland, 2024. *Operations, management & governance*. [Online] Available at: <https://magsq.com.au/operations-management-governance/> [Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Northern Ireland Assembly Research Matters, 2018. *Measuring Museum Success: How and why?*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2018/09/12/measuring-museum-success-how-and-why/> [Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Rezaee, A., Bozorg-Haddad, O. & Singh, V. P., 2021. Water and society. In: O. Bozorg-Haddad, ed. *Economical, Political, and Social Issues in Water Resources*. Philadelphia: Elsevier, pp. 257-270.
- Sharrocks, A., 2019. Treasuring Evaporation: The Radical Challenge of a Museum of Water. In: W. L. Filho, B. Lackner & H. McGhie, eds. *Addressing the Challenges in Communicating Climate Change Across Various Audiences*. New York: Springer Nature Switzerland, pp. 481-497.
- South Australian Museum, 2024. *Collections*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections#> [Accessed 16 May 2024].
- Tanga, M., 2021. Let's Imagine a New Museum Staff Structure. *Journal of Conservation & Museum Studies*, 19(1), pp. 1-16.
- The Global Network of Water Museums, 2024. *About Us*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.watermuseums.net> [Accessed 19 May 2024].
- TourismSA, 2021. *An Art Lover's Guide to Adelaide*. [Online] Available at: <https://southaustralia.com/travel-blog/an-art-lover-s-guide-to-adelaide> [Accessed 18 May 2024].
- Tvedt, T., 2006. *A History of Water: Water Control and River Biographies*. Volume 1 ed. London: IB Tauris.
- Tvedt, T., 2011. *A History of Water: Ideas of Water from Ancient Societies to the Modern World*. London: IB Tauris.
- University of Chicago English Language Institute, 2023. *Third Places: What Are They and Why Are They Important to American Culture?*. [Online] Available at: <https://esl.uchicago.edu/2023/11/01/third-places-what-are-they-and-why-are-they-important-to-american-culture/> [Accessed 19 May 2024].
- Vergo, P., 1989. *New Museology*. London: Reaktion Books.

INTENTIONAL REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

Transgender Memories and
Archival Practice

Kansas Bird

James Barry (left) with John, a servant, and Barry's dog Psyche, c 1862, Jamaica. Image:
Wellcome Collection under Creative Commons 4.0 International License

Archival practises vary between countries and cultures, but also from institution to institution. These practises are often defined by the groups they serve, resulting in choices which have the potential to impact wider public knowledge of history and of different people groups. There are significant differences between archives which collect objects and records from majority populations and those who collect from minority and/or oppressed groups. This article discusses the recent history of community archives and potential change to standard archival practice that may be required to accurately and respectfully maintain the memory of transgender individuals.

To intentionally remember is to provide avenues to store or reflect on memories, either one's own or those belonging to others. To intentionally remember people and groups within archives brings with it a complex series of intersections. Those who have power during their lives – politicians, socialites, royalty – will have their documents and information saved for posterity. Indeed, many politicians have been known to curate a secondary personal life through diaries to maintain a level of control over how they are seen by others after their deaths.

The majority of people, however, do not expect for more than their birth certificate or perhaps some academic accolades to appear in a public archive. Members of the transgender community exist in a world where their bodies and psyches exist in a constant state of public and private discourse. As a result, many transgender people end up having significantly more private information revealed about themselves in the public domain. Remembering and forgetting are key issues in archives of all kinds, but this article considers how standard practise may impact the transgender community, particularly those who wish for their transgender status to remain private.

Archives are areas of intentional remembering, but so are photo albums and jewellery boxes. When it comes to the archive, there are steps which aid in intentional remembering.

Resources including catalogues are crucial to the accessing of archival records. However, with the speed that language to describe the transgender community changes, these resources need to be updated at a frequency that is not conducive to how most catalogues are created and maintained. With the relatively recent adoption of the term 'transgender' (Rawson 2009, p. 124) and the decline in usage of terms like 'transsexual' and 'transvestite', modern users of online searches may not be able to find historical information by simply searching for 'transgender'. However, it is still important to maintain records which use terms like 'transsexual' and 'transvestite' in order to provide context and understanding of the evolution of queer language. Maintaining accessibility for both researchers and laypeople and updating search terms to include relevant modern slang or academic terms are key in the archive's role of intentionally remembering transgender people.

Digital archivist, Erin Baucom discusses the role of the archive's relationship with transgender people living today:

“Archives play a role [in the] continual process of identity formation and acceptance because archives hold and preserve [...] materials that help elucidate the history of the LGBTQ community. Being able to access this history helps combat feelings of isolation and contests [...] misrepresentations of the LGBTQ community.” (Baucom 2018, p. 66)

Intentional remembering provides proof of historical queerness which can counter the negation or silencing or erasure of a queer experience or history by institutions affected by political agendas which negatively target transgender and otherwise queer individuals. Librarian Alana Kumbier questions how individuals can “[...] produce historical knowledge [of their communities] when they lack material evidence,” (Kumbier 2014, p. 51).

There are several reasons to consider for why an individual, their family, or their community might want to remember their identity as a transgender person. Similar to family and cultural history archives, lay-people tend to be the ones wanting to access transgender history information, alongside trained researchers. People wish to see themselves represented in the archives, as well as wanting to access their culture’s history as suggested by Kumbier. Queerness, and particularly transness forms a culture which is not defined by blood-relation or upbringing, resulting in a cultural connection to people that a person researching may have never met, or had any other relation to other than their shared or similar queer identities.

Openly transgender individuals make up the primary group of those who take steps to be intentionally remembered. There may be member of past transgender communities who wished to be remembered but did not have the language that we now associate with the transgender community.

A group to also consider in this regard is transgender people who were not initially openly transgender, but who decided later in life that they wished to be remembered as such so as to demystify the transgender experience or to inspire other transgender people to live authentically. Dr Jacquelyn Burkell, PhD in cognitive science, argues that lived experience is key to identity formation, as a result of the memories which come from experience (Burkell 2016, p. 18). The identity of transgender individuals, therefore, can be more solidly understood through the process of intentional remembering in the archive, as archives can function to preserve the memory of these individuals.

It is through the lens of culture that we can better understand the need for visibility as provided by intentional remembering. Even in cases where a person’s gender is not immediately relevant to the documents which regard them – for example, school records or work history – it is generally accepted that the culture one belongs to will permeate their experiences.

Especially when considering the oppression which is felt by transgender individuals, mentioning their identity alongside regular documentation gives insight into what difficulties they may have experienced when going through otherwise ‘standard’ experiences.

An important question to ask in relation to the ethics of this remembering is ‘when is it relevant to discuss a person’s gender identity?’ While disclosing the status of a historical figure as transgender has the potential to showcase the diversity of fields and places where we know transgender people to have occupied, disclosure can also put a person – and the wider transgender community – at risk of privacy invasion. Historically, transgender people and their bodies have been the subject of public sensation and ridicule. Director of the Centre for Gender and Diversity, Eliza Steinbock, points out the significance of not just whether transgender individuals are recorded in the archive, but how:

“[...] in the historical study of transgender [people, the] visual materials that most often arrive in archives [are] via medical and police photography or pornographic materials.” (Isenia & Steinbock 2022, p. 24)

A case of particular interest and debate is that of Dr James Barry. Having died in 1865, he left behind a legacy of being a talented doctor and performing the first successful caesarean section where both mother and child survived. Upon his deathbed, he requested that he be buried in the clothes he was wearing and that his body not be examined. His requests were denied, and upon an autopsy table, it was discovered that he had a uterus, ovaries, a cervix, and a vagina. This immediately became a media sensation spawning debates about his identity that have persisted to the modern day. Even in cases such as Dr Barry’s, where the person has made their wishes for privacy clear, the bodies of transgender – or otherwise non cisgender – people capture the imagination of the public in particularly invasive ways.

Instead of Dr Barry being remembered for the work he did, or being allowed to fade into obscurity, Rebecca Ortenberg of the Science History Institute remarks:

“[...] people have spent the last century and a half hypothesizing about his gender – speculation based not on how he lived, but on the nature of his body when he died.” (Ortenberg 2020)

It is for reasons such as these that many transgender people make the decision not to be open about their genders, though many organisations – including archives – often remove their agency to preserve personal privacy.

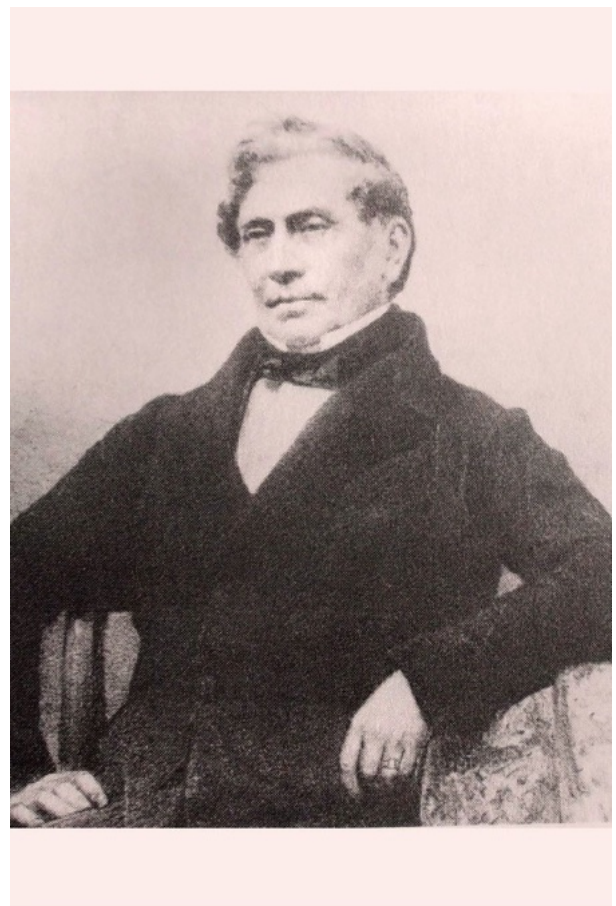


Figure 1. Joseph Barry (1796-1865). Previously assumed to be Dr James Barry (c 1790-1865). 1865. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Intentional forgetting, as remembering has now been discussed, may seem to be an inherently oppressive choice in regard to the transgender community. However, as in the aforementioned case of Dr Barry, there are many transgender individuals who would prefer that their gender remain insignificant to their life story. For many this would undoubtedly be about protection, given the violence that may be enacted if people were to discover their identity, as well as the risk of losing one's job or other financial security. The archive, however, deals primarily with a private person's information after their death.

The choices for remaining 'stealth' post-mortem stretch beyond safety and to one's personal liberty and privacy. For many, there are parts of their lives and personalities which may be ignored or misrepresented if their transgender identity were to be known and focussed upon.

Chelsea Manning presents an interesting contemporary case for how public perception of a person changes retrospectively after they are revealed as transgender. Manning leaked several US military files while working as a US army soldier. After being imprisoned for 3 years, Manning came out as a transgender woman in 2013. Discourse soon began surrounding how her identity affected her decisions, but more than that many started to herald her as a transgender activist in this work (Châteauevert-Gagnon 2023, p. 1).

Manning herself has expressed that the stress she felt while closeted in the military likely impacted her decisions, however the positioning of her as a specifically transgender activist in this venture undermines the international relations work that she undertook alongside Wikileaks (Châteauevert-Gagnon 2023, p. 1).

Postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Feminist Research, Béatrice Châteauevert-Gagnon, has further discussed the situation by citing the missteps that scholars often make when referring to the identities of transgender individuals. She criticises that sexuality is often privileged over gender, resulting in "[...] misreading transness through the lens of sexuality," (Châteauevert-Gagnon 2023, p. 6). There is a very real fear that many 'stealth' transgender people face, which is that their gender being public will allow for public discourse on other private matters such as their sex lives, or medical status.

Due to the oppression faced by transgender people both currently and in the past, it is little surprise that many transgender people want to keep their identity private even in death.

While there are many who decide not to – or are unable to – medically transition, this paper is instead focussing on those who choose to transition but keep this fact private.

While there are reasons for a transgender individual to want to maintain a level of privacy regarding their gender or sex, there are also several factors in which their identities may be intentionally forgotten against their will. Biological families play a significant role in this. There are dual risks that the biological family of a transgender individual will remove evidence of their identity post-mortem and have them interred under their birth name and sex, or that the individual will be removed from family documents all together.

Both forms of censorship make it particularly difficult to find evidence of transgender people in easily accessible files, often necessitating the examination of more private documents. These files, however, may be medical files, private diaries or other documents that we can assume were not to be made public. The National Archives of Australia have broad guidelines for personal information to not be made public for at least the lifetime of the individual they pertain to (National Archives of Australia 2025). However, there are exemptions made for academic researchers to apply for special access. In these rarer cases, does the archivist play the role of the mortician revealing sensitive information.

When it comes to the censorship of transgender identities, the erasure of historical transgender men is particularly contentious.

In cases such as Dr Barry's, many interpret historical figures as to be women pretending to be men either for their own safety or to perform in jobs which women were barred from. There are debates on how to ascertain the intention of the individual's behaviour, but again, this can often only be done through the invasion of an individual's personal documents to find evidence of how they truly felt about their gender or appearance.

Occasionally there are cases like Dr Barry's which seems to be fairly straightforward both in that he lived his life as a man even in private, and that he was specific about not wanting his dead body to be examined. More often than not, however, the lines are blurred as to what is the morally correct action for archives and archivists to take when working within legal and ethical frameworks that were not designed with the transgender community in mind.

Dr Burkell argues that "[...] a fully functional identity requires that the past – at least those aspects that are unimportant and irrelevant – be allowed to fade away," (Burkell 2016, p. 20). To some modern historians, the identity of a transgender person in the 1940s is important to showcase the history of the transgender community. However, to that transgender person, their identity as transgender may be inconsequential to how they wish to be remembered.

Identity is formed of more than just gender, and for many transgender people the fear of being misremembered at the cost of being remembered as transgender at all, is too high a cost. For many, it is far preferable to have one's gender be as inconsequential as a cisgender person's gender, rather than to be remembered only for one's gender.

The archive, like a museum, is undoubtedly a place of systemic power. It prescribes who may access certain documents – a power which is negotiated by archivists and researchers (Kumbier 2014, p. 57) – and also prescribes whose documents are housed to begin with. Whether it is a culturally specific archive, or a governmental archive, decisions will be made as to who 'belongs' in the archive and who does not. Historically, visibly transgender people have not been considered to belong in most archives. More than this, archives have the power to describe an individual as transgender or not, based on the private documentation that they house. In some jurisdictions archivists also hold power in the ability to make case-by-case decisions on who receives access to what information (Rawson 2009, p. 124).

In the case of files regarding transgender individuals, archivists hold the ability to be the reporter in the mortuary.

They can choose who to 'out' a transgender person's identity and at what time. Archivists must make choices as to whether they alter documents to reflect the chosen pronouns of a transgender individual, or whether they allow for misgendering of the person to take place in further research. These are the ethical responsibilities of archives, many of which do not have specific guidelines for how the documents of transgender individuals are to be treated, resulting in further case-by-case decisions.

Beyond the traditional idea of the 'family archive', there is the relevance of community archives created by other members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Professor of sexuality studies, Laura Doan, explains that:

"[...] genealogy – describes two different [...] modes of history writing, one that more closely approximates a family tree, [...] and another that more closely approximate Foucauldian genealogy, with an interest in rupture and in defamiliarizing and destabilising categories of identity." (Doan 2013, p. 58)

As a result of this, 'family archives' which involve the transgender community are just as likely to comprise political archives and activist archives as they are to involve social or biological family archives. Community archives may be a more encompassing general term for the archives that involve transgender people, however the lack of specificity does not provide the relevant nuance held by specifically family, political, or activist archives. It should be considered however, that activist archives often function as community archives due to their existence outside of a prescribed government function, and that they are organised by – often volunteer – members of a community (Brown 2020, p. 12).

The purpose of these archives is intentional remembering of groups that may be either intentionally or unintentionally forgotten by mainstream archives.

Particularly in the case of transgender activists, a government-funded archive may house records of arrests or particular news reports on the individual. An activist archive would instead collect documents belonging to the individual, and potentially even have a personal connection with the individual or their close family. Here, the same transgender individual may be depicted in very different ways between two different archives. Beyond this, due to the historic erasure of transgender individuals from mainstream archives, even the act of collecting documentation regarding transgender people can be considered to be activism (Wakimoto, Bruce & Partridge 2013, p. 11). Community archives which have the aforementioned benefit of having personal connections to the people they collect files from have the possibility of collecting non-traditional documentation of the lives of transgender people. They may be able to house items such as clothing, jewellery, or in the case of figures such as Dr Betty Paerl, items related to linked subcultures including kink and sex work. Dr Paerl was a transgender activist who is also remembered in regard to anti-colonial activism and sex work.

This means that she is primarily found in activist archives which have only recently found links due to the lack of information about her in mainstream archives (Isenia & Steinbock 2022, p. 25). Individuals who were closeted during their lives or were 'stealth' would likely be more comfortable to allow members of their own community to access their personal information than to allow a mainstream or government-funded archive.

While community, activist, and political archives undoubtedly retain the ability to

behave unethically in how they record the lives of transgender individuals, there exists several avenues for avoiding this. Mainstream archives may also simply be unaware of the minutia of the transgender community and be more likely to accidentally behave unethically as compared to archives which exist within the community. A significant difference between mainstream archives and community organisations is intracommunity trust. As opposed to being collected without consent or context by government archives or other mainstream organisations, the collecting done by community archives tends to be done in the interest of preserving community history and minimising "[...] the power of scientific, religious, legal, and academic professionals to pathologise and oppress," the community (Kumbier 2014, p. 25). Archival researchers Diana Wakimoto, Christine Bruce, and Helen Partridge link individuals and relationships to community archives:

"Personal collections were created by individuals in order to save queer history materials and provide these records for future generations. Individuals were instrumental in gathering and indexing records of the queer communities and getting others to come together to create community spaces around the records." (Wakimoto, Bruce & Partridge 2013, p. 307)

Here, the importance of adhering to ethical standards is to protect the wishes of those to whom the records belonged. There have been many transgender individuals and collectives who actively work for their stories as transgender people to be collected and showcased in archives, leaving the question as to whether it is necessary for archivists to 'out' transgender individuals who did not want their transgender status known.

Dr James Barry performed one of the first known caesarean sections where mother and child survived, he was known to be an advocate for sanitation in a time before germ theory was accepted. Chelsea Manning leaked key US army files to Wikileaks at the risk of her job and incarceration. While these two people had different preferences as to whether or not they were remembered as being transgender, both have had their accomplishments overshadowed by public discourse on their private matters. Had Dr Barry's request for privacy been followed, "[he] likely would be dimly remembered today for his crusading medical work," (Ortenberg 2020). It is not clear whether Dr Barry wanted to be remembered, but it is clear he did not want to be remembered as a woman or as someone who was anything other than a man.

Manning is still alive and continues to work against the covering up of the US government's military operations, and while she is open about being transgender, this part of her identity holds very little bearing on the work that she does. Archivists often make case-by-case decisions on the publishing of personal documents; it would be beneficial to the preserving of documents related to transgender individuals if the same nuance could be applied.

Many further questions are sparked from discussions of transgender people in the archives, most of which do not have clear-cut answers. How much power should be given to archivists so that they can protect the privacy of transgender individuals? Could it be considered ethical to alter or redact documents which use a person's former name or incorrect gendered language?

In the face of current movements for transgender rights, there is the urge to find representation in history.

This representation undoubtedly exists, even if there is deviation in the terminology used – particularly in the cases of pre-colonial societies and non-English speaking cultures. Is it then necessary to 'out' transgender people postmortem for the purposes of historical proof of representation? Medical abuse and loss of mortuary autonomy is not restricted to members of the transgender community, however the way in which bodies are dissected with the purposes of 'proving' something about their identity is reminiscent of criminal autopsies, turning otherwise non-descript deaths into scenes of victimhood. Where is the line of invasion into the lives of the dead for the 'benefit' of people living today? How can archivists today apply modern terminology and sensibilities to gender non-conforming people of the past; do they have the right to do this at all?

Even community archives which focus on transgender activism or political movements face these difficulties, however they have the benefit of maintaining relationships with the groups that they record the histories of. Furthermore, it is much more likely that the workers in these community archives will be members of the transgender community themselves and therefore have a better understanding of the people they collect information from. This relationship does not negate the risk of unethical behaviour but may significantly reduce it.

While the introduction of ethical standards relating to the transgender community will undoubtedly assist in improving archival treatment of transgender individuals, language and community culture shifts often, and guidelines will likely have to be revisited more often than is conducive. This suggests, then, that an important way to improve the ethical standards of remembering and forgetting in mainstream archives is to include researchers and archivists belonging to the transgender community to aid in ascertaining appropriate behaviour on a case-by-case basis.

Bibliography

Bail, J, Craig, A & Shores, M 2017, 'Transgender Culture and Resources', *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 4, viewed 25 July 2025, pp. 249-254, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/90009986>.

Baucom, E 2018, 'An Exploration into Archival Descriptions of LGBTQ Materials', *The American Archivist*, vol. 81, no. 1, viewed 20 July 2025, pp. 65-83, DOI: 10.17723/0360-9081-81.1.65.

Brown, E H 2020, 'Archival Activism, Symbolic Annihilation, and the LGBTQ2+ Community Archive', *Archivaria*, vol. 89, no. 1, viewed 20 July 2025, pp. 6-32, ISSN: 0318-6954.

Burkell, J A 2016, 'Remembering me: big data, individual identity, and the psychological necessity of forgetting', *Ethics and Information Technology*, vol. 18, no. 1, viewed 25 July 2025, pp. 17-23, DOI: 10.1007/s10676-016-9393-1.

Châteauvert-Gagnon, B 2023, 'Chelsea Manning, national security, and the cishetero/homonormative logics of protection', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4, viewed 24 July 2025, pp. 1-18, DOI:10.1017/S0260210523000037.

Doan, L 2013, *Disturbing Practises: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Isenia, W J & Steinbock, E 2022, 'How to Read Dr Betty Paërl's Whip: Intersectional Visions of Trans/Gender, Sex Worker and Decolonial Activism in the Archive', *Feminist Review*, vol. 132, no. 1, viewed 20 July 2025, pp. 24-45, DOI: 10.1177/01417789221137045.

Kumbier, A 2014, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive*, Litwin Books, Sacramento.

National Archives of Australia 2025, *Providing access to original records*, National Archives of Australia, viewed 24/11/2025, <https://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/our-services/providing-access-original-records>.

Ortenberg, R 2020, 'How History Keeps Ignoring James Barry', *Distillations: Science History Institute Museum & Library*, 20 October 2020, viewed 25 July 2025, <https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/how-history-keeps-ignoring-james-barry>.

Rawson, K J 2009, 'Accessing transgender // desiring queer(er?) archival logics', *Archivaria*, vol. 68, viewed 25 July 2025, pp. 123-140, ISSN: 0318-6954.

Wakimoto, D K, Bruce, C & Partridge, H 2013, 'Archivist as activist: lessons from three queer community archives in California', *Archival Science*, vol. 13, no. 4, viewed 20 July 2025, pp. 293-316, DOI: 10.1007/s10502-0139201-1.

STUDENT EXHIBITION

Douglas
Mawson

POLARITIES

Douglas Mawson: Polarities unearths the layers of the identity, life and legacy of Sir Douglas Mawson. Explore the broader facets of his identity through clothing, letters, photos, and objects which reveal a complex individual who embodied multiple roles: geologist, teacher, devoted husband and father, polar explorer, survivor, and pioneer.

Mawson is primarily remembered for heroic survival in Antarctic expeditions; however, his life and legacy extend far beyond these experiences. Through his groundbreaking research and expeditions, Mawson expanded our knowledge of Australia's geology, shedding light on the mysteries of ancient glaciation and mineral deposits. A professor of geology, Mawson inspired his students and advocated for hands-on learning for both male and female students.

Mawson is celebrated as an Australian national hero, with his image on statues and currency, and his name immortalised on places, species and educational buildings. In this exhibition, you are invited to step beyond the icy landscapes that have come to define his legacy and explore the other faces of Douglas Mawson.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge their ongoing spiritual connection to Country and the important cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship to the land that is held by the Kaurna people.



**Ziyang Geng,
Wendy Rushbrook,
Yanchong Su &
Cherrie De Leiuen**

In the second semester of 2025, the Curatorial and Museum Studies program provided students the opportunity to gain direct experience with the process of creating, curating and presenting an exhibition curation through the topic *The Exhibition: Concept, Design and Delivery*. Students need to work together to develop and present a professional exhibition based on a set theme and utilising The University of Adelaide's special collections. Experts with experience in a range of exhibition skills mentor students as they undertake this journey. In the short timeline of twelve weeks, students familiarised themselves with the subject – Sir Douglas Mawson - and undertook a deep-dive to understand about his life, develop a theme, learn processes involved in creating an exhibition, and then implement them. On the 7th of November, **Douglas Mawson: Polarities** opened to the public - the final output of the students' research, consultation, design, stakeholder and community engagement, project management, and installation. Three of the students have provided their insights into the process of the exhibition's conception and completion.

Student team: Wing Sze Tang, Claudia Barrientos Salas, Elizabeth Fenwick, Ziyang Geng, Yifei Li Chengzhe Sun, Faith Gerhard, Aimee Heidrich, Ann Heuzenroeder, Samantha Kotz, Wendy Rushbrook, Wee Shiang Tay, Hannah Stroehrer, Yanchong Su, Xingyu Yan

Staff: Prof. John Carty, Dr Cherrie De Leiuem, Fiona Borthwick



The Exhibition - Class of 2025. Image: Nelson Da Silva



Welcome to Country at the opening of the Exhibition. Image Nelson Da Silva

POLARITIES SHOWING:

7 November 2025 – 6 March 2026

Ira Raymond Exhibition Room, Barr Smith Library
10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

Exhibition Overview - Planning by Ziyang Geng

Curatorial and Museum Studies students chose to organise the exhibition around the many faceted roles and life of Sir Douglas Mawson— geologist, explorer, teacher, family man, to show not only his famous Antarctic expeditions but also his passion for geology and education. Thematic sections (rather than a fixed path) allow visitors to wander freely between topics, reflecting Mawson’s diverse legacy. A unifying design element, a subtle, continuous line motif running through the exhibition, visually ties these sections together, symbolising continuity across Mawson’s life.

Team organisation and Collaboration

The exhibition was a truly student-driven project. The class formed specialised teams (marketing, writing, research etc.) led by a project coordinator.



Faith Gerhard giving the opening address. Image Nelson Da Silva

We initially tried using the discussion board on My Uni for coordination, but found it cumbersome, so we switched to WhatsApp for day-to-day communication. Planning began about 12 weeks before opening. Due to limited budget and space, much work was done in-house: students built custom plinths and wall mounts at home, and painted the exhibition space. The team also consulted widely: the University library and museum professionals gave feedback on content, layout, and design.

Notably, written materials acknowledged the Kaurna Peoples as the traditional custodians of the land the exhibition took place on. The Barr Smith Library even provided a designer to polish the visual layout, making the final exhibition look professional and cohesive.

Exhibit Content: Objects and Media

The *Polarities* exhibition showcased a rich mix of historical artefacts and media. It featured authentic items such as old expedition photographs, century-old newspapers, Mawson's tools, geological specimens and clothing. An AI-generated video simulating Mawson's second Antarctic expedition brought the story to life. Artefacts primarily came from the University's special collections. In fact, the University's own Tate Museum (in the Mawson Building) holds an incredible collection of minerals, rocks, fossils and items from Mawson's famous expeditions to Antarctica. The student curators drew on this collection. Other rocks were borrowed from Professor Alan Collins and Dr Morgan Blades. Whenever copyrighted images were used (such as photographs and maps), the team obtained permission, a process that involved email negotiations and licensing fees, reflecting standard practice for image rights.

Narrative and Design Elements

Rather than narrating Mawson's life chronologically, the exhibition was thematically arranged. Each section highlighted a different 'polarity' of Mawson's identity and played on the nature of his polar expeditions. For example, one area focusses on Mawson the Geologist, with rock specimens and field tools. In contrast, another focuses on Mawson, the family man. By visiting all the sections, viewers piece together a complete portrait. This approach is supported by exhibition theory: grouping related elements and considering visitor flow (allowing free exploration) can help meaning emerge without forcing a single linear path. To reinforce unity, the designers used

recurring motifs – such as a coloured line on the floor and matching wall graphics. The walls of the exhibition are decorated with lines that represent the theme of continuity that runs through the exhibition, a visual strategy similar to the continuous line used which helps set the scene and tie the exhibit.

Stakeholder Engagement

The student curators worked closely with stakeholders to ensure accuracy and respect. Mawson's descendants were consulted about items and narratives. The staff reviewed draft panels, suggesting content adjustments where needed. These steps align with best museum practice. Physical accessibility was also addressed – the gallery is on one level, and we ensured pathways were clear. Likewise, feedback sessions with school and community groups ensured that textual and visual elements were clear, respectful, and engaging to all audiences.

Labels and Interpretation

Writing the exhibition text was a collaborative, multi-stage process. Students drafted the text panels, then peer-reviewers (classmates) checked facts and grammar. Faculty mentors and the University's exhibition team gave final edits. The labels were not only content-driven but also polished for clarity and consistency. Following guidelines, the text was written in short paragraphs, addressed a general audience, and focused on storytelling. Caption credit lines were included for all borrowed images. In sum, the students' writing and review process ensured that each display caption was accurate, concise, and aligned with the exhibition's theme.

Budget, Logistics, and Timeline

Funding and space were always limited. A portion of the small budget was allocated to securing image copyrights and printed materials; most of the fabrication was done DIY to save costs. The students built plinths and mounts, and volunteered to paint the walls and move objects. Many layout drafts were sketched before settling on the final floor plan. Several sketches of the on-site setup were discussed and designed during a brainstorming session in class. The entire project spanned about 12 weeks from inception to opening: research, artefact gathering, design, construction and promotion were all accomplished in that semester-long schedule.

Framing The Brief by Yanchong Su

Our design task was to convert a multi-faceted life—scientist, teacher, explorer, husband—into a legible journey that would feel coherent at room scale. We anchored the visual language in geological layering and a cold–warm polarity that translates from Antarctica to home life and legacy. The final layout with wall-by-wall specifications provided the framework for execution and ensured feasibility for print, painting and installation.

What changed and why (two decisive shifts) when framing the brief

- Antarctica relocation to Wall C: driven by AV throw distance, shadow control and mount ability; it strengthened the cold-warm rhythm without compromising immersion.
- Central cluster to Geology: consolidates Mawson’s core discipline at the centre, while legacy and family bookend the route - scientist at the heart, person on the perimeter.

External reference, same gallery: *Breaking Barriers*.

This demonstrated how a linear ribbon of content can orbit the room, with themes grouped and sub-sections tinted subtly; low-density walls and paper-like surfaces keep the space open, with display cases set off the walls for circulation. This model gave us a concrete understanding of the room’s scale and showed how colour can subdivide without heavy signage.

Mood Boards to Visual System

Two families of mood boards shaped decisions, each moving through four iterations from concept to buildable.

- First iteration - explored theme labels without hard dimensions—good for brainstorming, weak for flow.
- Second iteration - added precise measurements and the A–E zoning, turning concept into a technical plan and allowing object placement to inform graphics.
- Third iteration - refined the graphic language for painting/printing: we simplified contour lines, strengthened angular edges where needed, and prioritized “mountainous strata” over busy contours, aligning with stakeholder feedback and deadlines.
- Fourth and final iteration - unified palette, typography, wall assignments and display-case graphics into a single system ready for install.

The Final Visitor Route (Actual Layout Build Order)

Following is the real sequence in the room with the rationale for each wall. It follows the final decision to move Antarctica to Wall C for projection feasibility and to dedicate the central cluster to Geology.

Entry Title Wall F:

The title wall is the brand anchor: Deuterium Variable type, the orange strata mass meeting an aqua triangular plane, and a small greyscale Mawson figure that hints at the “behind the mask” theme. It introduces our colour pairings and the layered graphic language immediately.

Turn left To Wall A: “Behind the Mask” and “University Life & Teaching”

We deliberately begin not with childhood but with the public image versus the person. A deep blue panel labelled Behind the Mask addresses myth-making; an adjacent orange vertical band with subtle contour-line texture introduces University and Teaching: class photographs, framed images and quotes. The colour contrast sets the “polarities” thesis early—public persona—scholarly mentor—while the long 9750 mm run supports a sustained read.

Continue To Wall C (Part 1): Paquita and Family

Warm peach–beige tones soften the register for Paquita and family life. Rounder shapes and tighter groupings support intimacy and a slower dwell time before the shift to Antarctica.

Wall D: Antarctica conclusion (Penguins and Sledge)

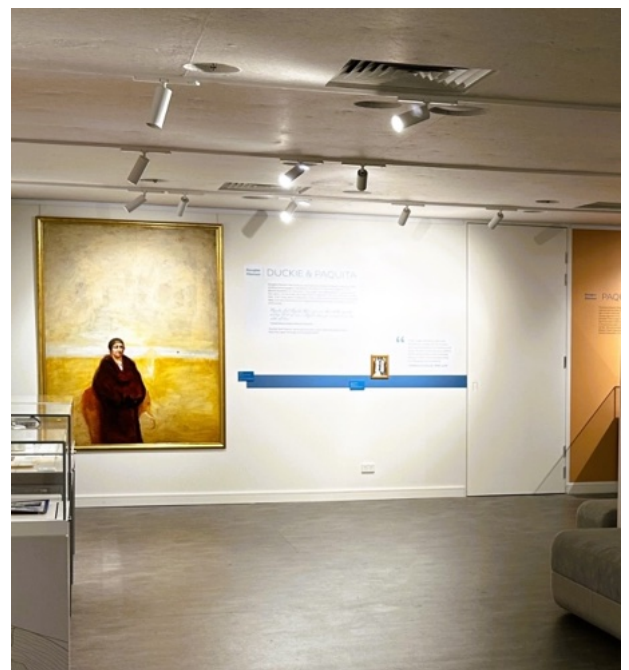
Here the polar story peaks visually with the penguin or sledge imagery and cooler accents. This closes the Antarctica arc so the narrative can pivot to material culture.

Walls D and E: Clothing

A shift to equipment and clothing invites close viewing. Warmer neutrals and simplified shapes keep focus on fabric, cut and wear, while label blocks sit on the display-case bases that carry subtle mountain-line artwork—tying micro-reading to the macro graphic language.

Wall E: Beyond the Ice — Legacy

Legacy is intentionally quieter and darker, with “mountainous strata” sketches re-introduced to end the story where it began—geology—but now as reflection and influence. The wall hosts the letter/plaque content and the “planting trees he’ll never see” thread, consolidating the afterlife of Mawson’s work.



From the entrance looking to Wall C: Paquita and Family. Image Fiona Borthwick.

Wall F (back): Mawson's desk

On the reverse of the title wall, the desk on plinth functions as a human-scale coda—quiet, tactile, almost domestic—bridging professional legacy and the person who wrote, calculated and corresponded.

Central cluster (room centre) to GEOLOGY (final decision)

In the final scheme the inner quartet—Wall G (inner), Wall I (inner), Wall J (inner), Wall K (inner)—plus the outer faces of Wall J and K are dedicated to Geology, not Antarctica. The choice recenters Mawson's scientific identity physically and conceptually. Blue-grey strata lines, thin-section patterns and calibrated gradients compose a circular “laboratory” feeling without crowding. Display-case graphics reprise the mountain-line motif to bind object and wall. This cluster is the intellectual spine of the show while Antarctica shifts to the projection sequence on Wall C.

Colour, Type, and Readability

The palette resolves into cool Antarctic blues (#197AAC and lighter tints) versus warmer peaches and stone neutrals for family or legacy zones; these are applied consistently across walls, labels and cases. Typography uses Deuterium Variable, giving us weight flexibility for headings, intros and captions across large A-panels and small object labels.

In addition to colour and typography, the exhibition's graphic devices are grounded in geological observation. The linear patterns used across the walls and display-case bases are not generic contour lines: they are abstracted from the texture of rock thin

sections and geological cross-sections, which formed a core part of our initial mood boards. These microscopic and sectional rock patterns provided a scientific, discipline-specific visual origin that aligns directly with Mawson's identity as a geologist.

On the walls, these thin-section-inspired lines appear as large-scale vinyl graphics that anchor each thematic zone, while at object level they reappear on the display-case bases to frame labels and subtly echo the geological core of the exhibition. This dual application ensures that the visual identity remains coherent across architectural surfaces and object-level interactions, creating a continuous, geology-led reading experience throughout the room.

Text integration

While the writing team finalized panel texts and object labels, the design team translated content into a coherent visual system—grid, margins, line length, and case-base labels—so texts read clearly against busy artefacts and textured fields. This is deliberately concise here because the design brief focuses on colour, shape, look, and flow rather than content analysis.

Acknowledgement and ethics

At the entry sequence we include acknowledgements for the student curators, academic leads and professional partners, alongside a cultural sensitivity statement recognizing First Nations custodianship. Positioning this early makes the project values visible and sets a respectful tone for the narrative that follows.

Concluding remarks - Framing the Brief / Final Design

The exhibition's design translates Mawson's layered life into a room-scale rhythm: a branded entry; a pivot from myth to teaching; warmth for family; a thermal drop into Antarctica via projection; artefacts you can almost feel; a reflective legacy; and a geological nucleus in the centre. The system stays legible because colour, shapes and texts are disciplined and recurring; it feels handcrafted because textures derive from geology rather than generic decoration. That balance—clarity and character—was the design's north star from sketches to the final layout.

Installation by Wendy Rushbrook

After ten weeks of thinking, designing and gathering, it was time to install the exhibition. We began with the painting and marking up of the portable interior walls borrowed from the Barr Smith Library. Guided by the designer's plans, we measured meticulously and masked up the single-coloured graphic blocks with tape and began to paint. The plinth to support Mawson's desk was next. It was designed and fabricated by the engineer husband of a student, consequently it was made to a high standard with robust internal metal framing. Students carefully painted the plinth, adding to its bespoke nature. Snacks became more critical as the days progressed - they nourished us but it was also a lovely way to express thanks to each other, show off culinary skills and share food from various cultures.

The student project manager ran a tight ship and was instrumental in the positive vibe our cohort experienced throughout the installation. Our university supervising



Students working on installation. Image Wee Shiang Tay

team was just as impressive. Professor John Carty, as the course lecturer, gave us practical strategies to tell Mawson's story in a range of ways. Dr Cherrie De Leuien, as program coordinator, provided us with vital information regarding contacts, object placement and helping us obtain a suitable geological collection. Fiona Borthwick, Exhibition Coordinator of Special Collections at the Barr Smith Library, was invaluable and worked tirelessly to ensure the exhibition met the requirements of the library, the university and our learning.

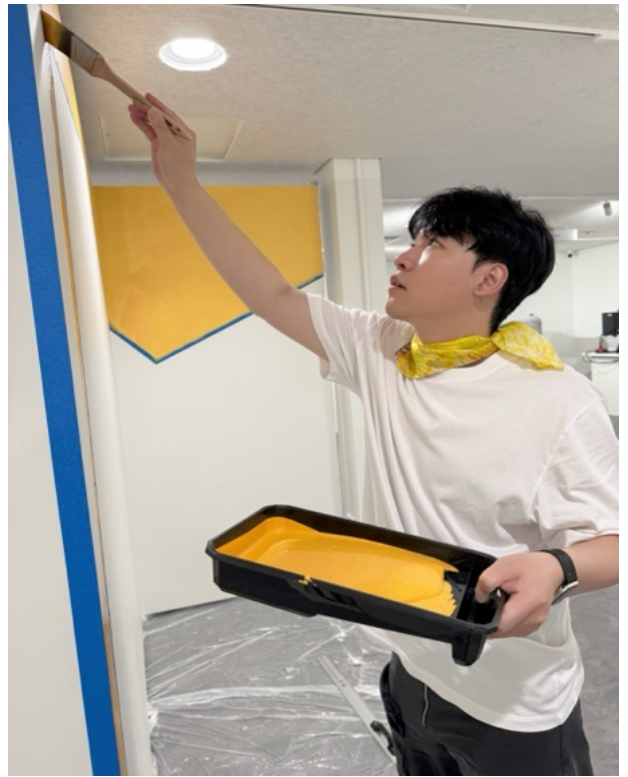
The following day began with hanging images, transporting objects and setting up displays. It was here we could see our ideas come to fruition. For example, we were initially unsure



Exhibition Room. Image Fiona Borthwick

if we had the funds to clad the small display case bases with vinyl wraps, printed with the strata lines that ran throughout the exhibition. The alternative was to cover with timber and hand-paint, but fortunately our budget was healthy enough to purchase the wraps.

Tom was our contracted exhibition installer, but so much more. He generously shared his time and ideas, answering our questions and enabling us to understand more deeply the design concepts and practical skills needed. We observed Tom's difficulty in avoiding drilling into certain parts of the walls due to metal inserts. Because of this, Tom began hanging the Hurley cluster of photos on vertical wires with ratchets to adjust the lengths. We discussed the wires and their interplay with the curved horizontal lines of the vinyl backdrop. At the beginning of semester a group of us suggested lines as a focus: dog sled lines, ski lines, strata lines, communication lines, so this was consistent with our thoughts. But were the thicker metal wire lines too much of a distinction from the light strata lines, or an effective contrast?



Working on installation. Image Yifei Li

John patiently workshopped major decisions with us, particularly with the two clusters of photographs to be hung. We agonised over which to choose and how to group them as a collection, a story and an aesthetic display. John's phrase of "finding the rhythm and dance" helped us imagine the collection of images in various ways, considering the content relationship between each. In one photograph, Mawson is profiled to the left and in another, to the right. We debated whether to place them facing each other, then wondered if that would be irrelevant or distracting for viewers.

The concept of drawing audiences into and through the exhibition also arose. For this reason, we placed the large portrait of Paquita Mawson at the end of the second wall as it is large and striking in its composition and sparseness. It also led onto displays depicting the Mawsons' marriage and their relationship.

The third day veritably flew past. Students cut and assembled printed text and backing material to create object labels. Then came the agonising decisions of not only how to place

them against their related objects but also to harmonise within the space of each display section.

Coloured vinyl wall strips and design shapes were carefully applied to the walls. Displays were checked for details and alterations made where needed. Surprisingly, it was a time of concentration and calm, which helped us focus on the impending opening night, Thursday November 6th. This was a wonderful, successful event attended by many visitors including some of Mawson's descendants. It concluded our involvement in the installation of the exhibition but heralded the beginning of further publicity and public involvement, including students in penguin suits distributing fliers on campus, an online exhibition catalogue and education pack and future public sessions.

One of the highlights of the course was working as a team. We discovered more about each other in those last three weeks than over the entire semester. There was time to ask questions, laugh and share our feelings and future plans. Another highlight was working with a range of industry professionals from concept to design to installation - extremely valuable and we gained a myriad of practical skills.

However, there were a few challenges. Initially we struggled to reduce the amount of text and focus areas, but as the weeks went on, we identified what we thought mandatory and what information should be culled.

One issue we could not solve was that of a hero image.

An iconic, easily identifiable and Mawson-rich image that would draw visitors to the exhibition and inspire them to learn more. We also encountered some unexpected issues, including not fully envisaging the implications of stakeholders' inputs. We needed to consider the wishes of the Barr Smith Library, as our host and site of the Ira Raymond Exhibition Room and caretakers of many of the objects and sources of information we accessed. We also had to take into account the University as the provider of our education, staff, objects and information to enable the exhibition to take place. Finally, we had a sense of duty to the relatives of Sir Douglas Mawson. We weren't as free as we thought.

We had read that Paquita gave Mawson a small toy chicken to take to Antarctica, telling him to ensure it came back to her, and undoubtedly Mawson with it. This began a search through archives and correspondence with the Mawson family relatives. No-one remembered a chicken. No photographic evidence of it existed. But we *really* wanted to tell that story. After much research it was decided that the chicken was probably a Barcelos Rooster, a traditional and common Portuguese symbol of good luck. A student skilfully carved a replica from balsa wood and decorated it beautifully, giving us a rich, tangible addition to the story we could now tell.



Portuguese
Rooster
Figurine.
Recreation by
Elizabeth
Fenwick. Image
Nelson Da Silva

Our learnings were wide, deep and varied. We gained hands-on skills masking up and painting. We used mathematical knowledge to translate the designs to larger scales onto the walls. Explicit teaching and learning abounded with drop sheets, stirring paint and painting with rollers. It was beneficial to know the correct amounts of texts for a range of purposes and the current styling for large text blocks down to object labels. We managed a budget and learned safe and effective ways to pack, move and display objects, props and display units.

So how do we feel about the exhibition process? Two quotes from students sum it up:

“This experience has contributed immensely to my understanding of what goes on behind the scenes in the preparation of an exhibition, together with the knowledge and the vast efforts of all those people involved in the creation of something unique. Something that can transcend time and show the museum or gallery visitor the life of a

person or the material culture of a society. Participating in this exhibition has given me the opportunity to create new friendships as well as providing knowledgeable insights into the research, debates and final product that visitors admire.” Claudia

“My learnings were about knowing when to pull back, lay a bit of groundwork then step back so others could find their own interpretations to run with and to not interfere with those results. To ignore my preciousness gene because no-one can do everything in such a large undertaking and collaborative results are often surprising and wonderful. Overall, I think the experience was extraordinary. Instead of structure and scholarly repression we found freedom and encouragement in experimentation. Not everything works out but it’s ok, there are always alternatives and contingencies, and the world won’t end. I left the course feeling confident I could stage an exhibition in the future.” Faith

TEXTILES, BUT MAKE IT

RADICAL

Edith Christie



Installation view: *Radical Textiles* featuring Julia Robinson's *Beatrice* and Sonia Delaunay's *Autumn (Automne)*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Image Saul Steed.

Review of *Radical Textiles*

Art Gallery of South Australia

Leigh Robb and Rebecca Evans' co-curated *Radical Textiles*, on display from November 23rd 2024 to March 30th, 2025 at the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA), presents a triumphant celebration of textiles not only as an art form, but their historical and ongoing role as a method for resistance.

Through meaningful curation and exhibition design, the show highlights the significance of textiles and subverts misconceptions of textiles as being purely decorative. The exhibition champions the work of over 100 artists, designers and activists, showcasing significant variation in both style and form. The objects coalesce effectively with one another and their physical environment, which unites the body of work and reinforces the storytelling of the curators.

Moving through each room of *Radical Textiles* is a sensory experience that tells an important narrative about the ongoing history of textile art. As one descends the stairs into AGSA's lower galleries, they are immediately presented with a vast display of women's trade union banners, accompanied by a vivid red colour on the walls. The effect of this immediately politicises the space, emulating a protest and challenging misconceptions about the trivial nature of textiles and their delegation to the category of 'women's work'. Moving into the next space, the exhibition takes on a sombre tone as visitors are confronted with an installation of Fiona Hall's *All the King's Men*, presenting ten hanging sculptural works that have been crafted by knitting repurposed military uniforms.

Hall's series of "ghostly, skeletal bodies", representing those "who have fallen and are yet to fall in the name of nationhood" (Robb 2016), are situated centrally in the room and accompanied by dramatic, high-contrast lighting that further reinforces the sobering nature of the work. The inclusion of this work so early in the passage of the exhibition helps to reconfigure opinions of textile art as frivolous, emphasising their ability to grapple with intense themes in unique and moving ways.

The next space of the exhibition presents an important display of tapestries and quilts that pay tribute to and recognise groups that have been made invisible. Panels from an AIDS memorial quilt made in the early 1990s hang opposite Anne Nell's quilt, which physically takes up space and makes visible the names of inspirational women whose stories remain untold. The communal nature and collaborative construction of these works is further complemented by the display of Kay Lawrence's tapestries in the same space, which were created to commemorate the 100 years anniversary of legislation allowing women the right to vote. The work was a participatory project, encouraging members of the public to weave a 'pass', and they were hung on the walls of the Assembly Chamber, inserting "women's issues, women's work and women's textile practices into the patriarchal space of the parliament" (Lawrence 2025).



Installation view: *Radical Textiles* Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Image Saul Steed

This space of the exhibition not only serves as a political homage to historically marginalised groups, it also highlights the importance of community and the uniting nature of textile practices and the consequent power this evokes.

Radical Textile's central gallery room invites viewers to slow down in an immersive space that presents several large-scale tapestries, including the work of Grayson Perry and Morris & Co. In this room, the perceived 'softness' or 'quietness' of textiles as an art form is paralleled using the carpet floor, as well as bench seating and arched doorways, which Robb explains was designed to emulate the architecture of a church. These elements of the exhibition's design contribute to a sensory and immersive experience, concurrent to the deeply tactile nature of textiles and motivates a moment of reverie.

This space creates the perfect interlude to the exhibitions as visitors move into a more contemporary and celebratory space for the remainder of the exhibition. The next gallery is painted a light purple colour and filled with a range of contemporary works, many of which have been created by local South Australian artists. Visitors move through one more gallery space after this before arriving at the exhibition's final display, showcasing the work of innovative and ground-breaking fashion designers, and includes iconic pieces such as a garment from Moschino's AIDS Awareness campaign and Don Dunstan's pink shorts. This final display feels joyous and celebratory yet still invites viewers to consider the many ways in which textiles can be leveraged as a form of protest while creating something beautiful.

Radical Textiles presents an impressive collection of work that has been meaningfully curated to engage, challenge and evoke wonder in its audiences. The exhibition includes a diverse and multidisciplinary series of objects, all unified by their subversive use of textiles to tell a story or make a political statement.

As viewers move through the gallery, they are immersed in a dynamic narrative that emphasises textiles as a tool for social commentary and political expression. This exhibition is a remarkable achievement in redefining attitudes toward textile-based practices and affirming their place within contemporary art and activism.



Installation view: *Radical Textiles*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Image Saul Steed.



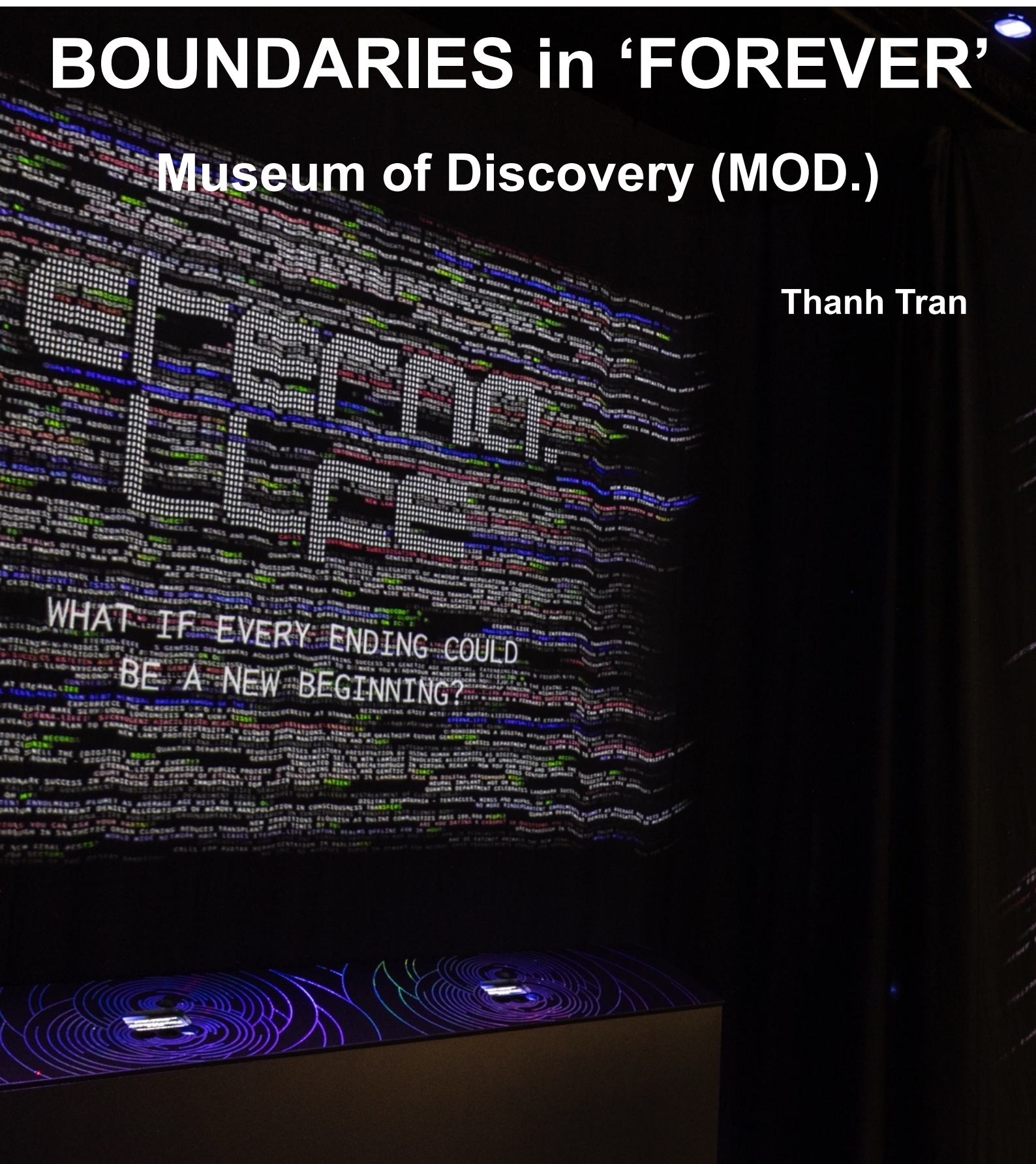
Installation view: *Radical Textiles* featuring Sally Smart's *Performance/Punokawan/Chout (The Choreography of Cutting)* and Yinka Shonibare's *Refugee Astronaut*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Image Saul Steed.

CURIO thanks the Art Gallery of South Australia for providing images of the exhibition for this review.

REDEFINING MUSEUM

BOUNDARIES in 'FOREVER' Museum of Discovery (MOD.)

Thanh Tran



Beyond Endings exhibit as part of 2025 Exhibition FOREVER. Image Sia Duff

In 2025, the Museum of Discovery (MOD.) presented its annual exhibition, FOREVER, offering a highly immersive and thoughtfully curated visitor experience. By blending art, technology, multi-sensory interaction - such as light, sound, and scent - and gamified elements, FOREVER pushes the boundaries of what a museum exhibition can be, transforming the traditional museum visit into a dynamic and engaging encounter.

The idea for FOREVER began in 2019, during MOD.'s Future Themes Forum. At that time, the museum's team noticed that many visitors were concerned about how to make meaning out of their existence. Why are we here? Is death the end? These big questions have haunted humankind for centuries and still remain unanswered. Yet, within each person may lie some responses, shaped by personal experiences, beliefs and moments in life. Perhaps it's not about finding the answer but learning to listen to our own. Therefore, the exhibition appears to help the visitor find their own answer, encouraging them to experience time in new ways, to acknowledge and embrace the blurred lines between the past, present and future.

The theme of the exhibition is shaped by two main elements: modernity and humanness. On one hand, FOREVER features new technologies and scientific discoveries such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in "Beyond Endings" exhibit, projection mapping and hyperreal in "Infinity", or interactive LED walls in "Time" and "Season". The use of advanced technology creates a rich, multi-sensory experience. Everything feels futuristic, innovative, visually striking and especially engaging to kids and teenagers - the main target of MOD..

But technology alone can feel distant. Too much of it might even make people feel isolated, like they're walking through a world built for machines, not humans. That's why the second element - human connection and stories - appears to add something softer and more personal.

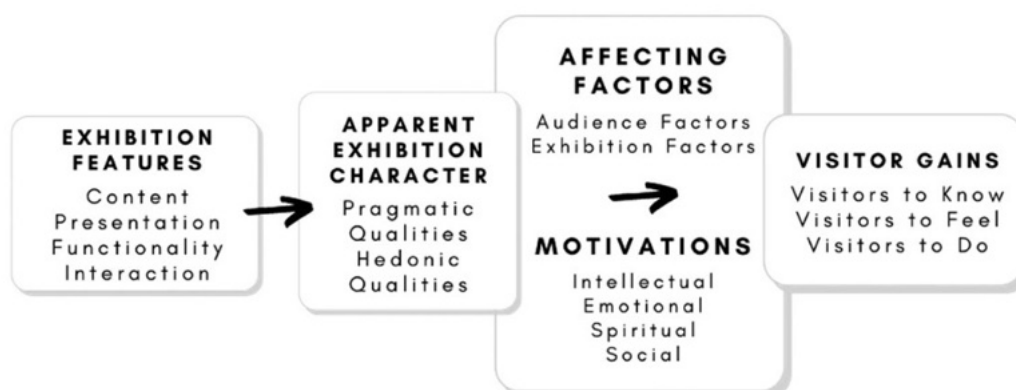
In the "Change" exhibit, there is a wall filled with handwritten sticky notes - questions, thoughts, and messages from visitors of different ages. There was a 'scent database' in the "Memory" section too - each one carrying a memory through smell. These small, simple interactions invite people to pause, reflect, and connect - not with screens, but with each other and with themselves.

In a research study about a model for Museum Exhibition User Experience (MEUX), adapted from a well-known model in the UX industry of Marc Hassenzah, the museum and visitors were considered from two perspectives. Although the designer's intention and the audience's response may differ, designers can try to make a "good UX" including feelings of pleasure, positive emotions, and an enjoyable experience for the user (King, E. et al. 2022).

MUSEUM PERSPECTIVE



VISITOR PERSPECTIVE



The MEUX model - adapted from Hassenzahl's model in the UX industry, distinguishes between the Museum Perspective and the Visitor Perspective (King, E. et al 2022).

According to the MEUX model, the FOREVER exhibition demonstrates strong user experience design. For example, in the "Time" exhibit, audiences could use a touchscreen to complete missions and learn about global time zones. By combining digital storytelling and gamified experience, museum designers encourage visitors to learn, feel, and act in their own way. They also put very short introductions about each exhibit so that visitors can concentrate on the feelings. After that, a book is provided in the reading space for anyone who wants to learn about what they just experienced. I especially appreciate how the exhibition triggers people's curiosity first and teaches them later.

FOREVER and other annual exhibitions at MOD. could be an inspiration for how technology can be integrated into museums. The museum experience has been changed dramatically by digital

technologies, and I am so excited to see how tools like immersive technology, interactive systems or AI can make future visits more engaging.

The advantage of new technology is undeniable, as it creates diverse and engaging user experiences, especially for young generations. However, its application should align with each museum's goals and directions. Exhibition designers should be aware that not all visitors interact with digital elements in the same way. Some may prefer tactile, human-centred experiences, or even a mix of both.

It can be a challenge to accommodate such diversity, but it is essential. As Megan E. Hamilton pointed out, visitors' choices should not be limited simply because others nearby are engaging differently (Hamilton, 2024).

The advantage of new technology is undeniable, as it creates diverse and engaging user experiences, especially for young generations. However, its application should align with each museum's goals and directions. Exhibition designers should be aware that not all visitors interact with digital elements in the same way. Some may prefer tactile, human-centred experiences, or even a mix of both. It can be a challenge to accommodate such diversity, but it is essential. As Megan E. Hamilton pointed out, visitors' choices shouldn't be limited simply because others nearby are engaging differently (Hamilton, 2024).

Before visiting MOD, my impression of museums was institutions for displaying artefacts, evidence and telling important stories. There were some, but very few, artefacts displayed in FOREVER exhibition. This made me reflect on what museums might become in the future. In a digital world, do they still function as "secular temples"?

Wenrui Li suggested that as technology advances, physical objects may gradually disappear from exhibitions, since digital media can deliver educational messages more effectively (Li, 2023). I believe that changes are always necessary, and it is important to learn about emerging developments, ideas and concerns of our audience. To me, humans should remain at the heart of every museum.

References

King, E, Smith, MP, Wilson, PF, Stott, J & Williams, MA 2022, 'Creating meaningful museums: a model for museum exhibition user experience', *Visitor Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 59–81, viewed 3 August 2025,

Hamilton, ME 2024, 'Multimedia interactives in exhibition design: a qualitative UX (user experience) approach', *Knowledge@UChicago*, viewed 3 August 2025,

Li, W 2023, 'Do museums still need objects? politics of museums reconsidered in the digital era', *Sight as Site in the Digital Age*, pp 65–82, viewed 3 August 2025, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9209-4_4

CRAFTING FUTURES: Glass, the Value of Making and the JamFactory



Wing Sze Tang

Figure 1: The display background applied Clare Belfrage's signature patterns, creating a visual echo with her glassworks. Image Wing Sze Tang

Review of “Gathering Light”

Gathering Light is a major exhibition presented by JamFactory. The exhibition was curated by Brian Parkes and displayed from 6 December 2024 to 30 March 2025. It showcased the glassworks of six leading South Australian artists who were alumni of the JamFactory: Clare Belfrage, Tim Edwards, Kristel Britcher, Liam Gleming, Jessica Murtagh, and Nick Mount. By examining its curatorial design, display strategies, and interpretive methods, this article positions glass as a medium that embodies the intersection of endurance with fragility, heritage and innovation. It also considers the role of JamFactory in educating the value of craftsmanship and fostering the next generation through encouraging, protecting, and reframing traditional crafts for the future.

Upon entering the exhibition, visitors were immediately greeted by a text panel, providing a narrative of the exhibition. On the opposite wall, a short video of the glass-making process played on a screen, documenting each designer's production journey. This method allowed the audience to understand the complexity of techniques in glassmaking while appreciating the transformation of raw material into a glass piece that they will see in the exhibition. According to a glass-blowing programme, glass serves as a medium that reflects light and reveals darkness (Blown Away Season 4, 2024). To emphasise this character, the curator did not rely on overhead ceiling lights; he maintained a darkened atmosphere where only spotlights illuminated the works.

This approach allowed the glassworks to reflect the spotlight, which became the primary source of light and show the unique relationship of glass and light. Each artist was assigned a dedicated space to present their glassworks, accompanied by signage that introduced their professional background and concept. The display formats were tailored to suit the qualities of each artist's work. For instance, Nick Mount's cone-shaped glassworks (Figures 2 & 3) could not stand alone. Therefore, they were supported and suspended by using a metal structure just above eye level, enabling audiences to observe the pieces from different perspectives. In contrast, Clare Belfrage's vessels (Figure 1), inspired by natural patterns, were displayed in front of a backdrop that echoed the motifs to immerse the audience in her aesthetic sense. These curatorial strategies not only highlighted the distinctive qualities of each object but also reflected the individual styles of the artists, effectively emphasising their creativity and artistic voice. To further enhance the visitor experience, the absence of stanchions encouraged audiences to make close observations of the artworks. However, this design also revealed limitations, as the works were predominantly displayed at adult eye level, making them less accessible to children and wheelchair users.

Although the exhibition was able to present the characteristics of glass and the artist's talent, certain interpretive and curatorial choices could be refined to enhance audience understanding.

While the exhibition emphasised artist biographies, there was an imbalance between the artists' specific skills and techniques underpinning the works. Most of the content is about the qualifications and career paths of the artists, rather than explaining the crafts and skills of the artists. It is understood that JamFactory, as an institution, highlights the achievements of its emerging artists by introducing their distinguished experiences. However, as Cain pointed out about the phenomenon of customer behaviour in the United States in the 20th century, showcasing the backstage of the production process could satisfy audience curiosity because craftsmen rarely disclose the production process at that time (Cain 2012, p. 27).

Similarly, including more information about technical skills, materials and concept of artworks could deepen and extend audiences understanding of process and enhance their appreciation of the artworks.

Despite this limitation, the exhibition successfully showed the spirit of craftsmanship. Due to the industrial revolution, craftspeople started to be replaced by machines. This meant the cost of objects was decreased due to mass production, and therefore people no longer invested in the craft works paying less to obtain a machine-made object, which decreased the value of craftsmanship. To deal with the situation, Cimatti & Campana suggested craftsmanship should emphasise creativity and quality in order to maintain relevance (Cimatti & Campana 2015, p.15).

The exhibition demonstrated the enduring significance of craftsmanship, not only presenting the inherent qualities of the objects but also surprising audiences with the artist's skills and creativity. JamFactory is a non-profit organisation supported by the South Australian government.

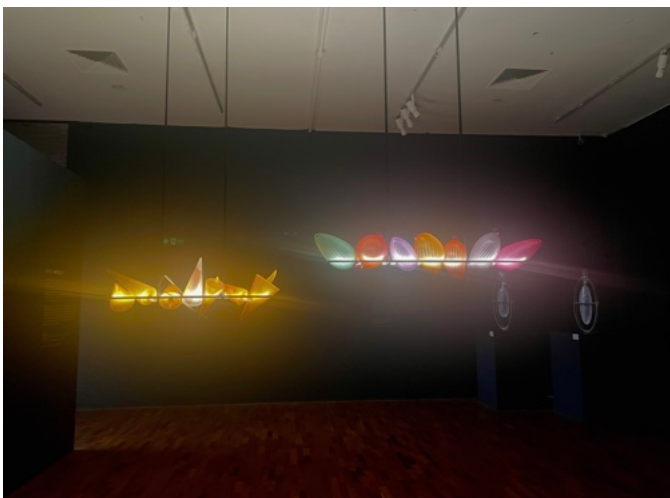


Figure 2: The display method for Nick Mount's glassworks addressed the challenge that it cannot rest on a flat surface. Image Wing Sze Tang



Figure 3: Suspended from the ceiling just above eye level, the object allowed audiences to view the glasswork from different angles. Image: JamFactory. Photographer Saige Prime

JamFactory is not only an institution but provides professional training and also plays a vital role to promote the significance of arts and craftsmanship and maintaining public engagement. An example is the Associate Program, allowing alumni to enhance technical expertise and develop entrepreneurial and business skills. At the same time workshops such as marketing and gallery management are able to guide associates to sustain their career in the creative industries. Beyond professional development, JamFactory promotes craftsmanship to gain wider audiences. Exhibitions, for example, *Gathering Light* celebrate alumni's continued achievements while situating their practice within cultural narrative. Short courses, workshops and a public viewing platform enable the public access to the skills, develop interests, bridge the gap between the viewer and the maker, and foster appreciation for the skills involved. (JamFactory n.d.). Meanwhile, the retail shop extends this engagement further, giving alumni opportunities to receive feedback on their works from the market.

These strategies ensure that craftsmanship in all forms remains visible and approachable to diverse audiences.

Moreover, the institution's long-term sustainability depends on raising public awareness, building artist profiles, and fostering community participation. The continued support from community demonstrates the institution's cultural relevance and positive impact, reinforcing its role as a valued contributor to heritage, creativity and craftsmanship in the community.

Gathering Light highlighted the aesthetic potential of the material and articulated broader cultural values. Through its design and interpretation, the exhibition celebrated the unique qualities of glass while situating the work of six JamFactory alumni within a traditional skill and artistic innovation. Yet its significance lies not only in the display of objects but also in how it reflects JamFactory's wider institutional role. As an institution for professional development, education, and public engagement, JamFactory positions itself as a crucial bridge between tradition and contemporary practice, sustaining craft knowledge while ensuring its relevance in a rapidly shifting cultural landscape. More broadly, the exhibition presented the continuing importance of craftsmanship from past to present. Glass symbolises the resilience of craft as a cultural practice and *Gathering Light* demonstrated how heritage and innovation affirm the roles of institution and artists and craftspeople alike in shaping sustainable and meaningful cultural futures.

References

Blown Away Season 4 2024, television programme, Netflix, 8 March.

Cain, VEM 2012, 'The Craftsmanship Aesthetic: Showing Making at the American Museum of Natural History, 1910-45', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 25-50.

Cimatti, B & Campana, G 2015, 'The Value of Craftsmanship in Manufacturing and Related Organizational Models', *International Journal of Organizational Innovation*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp.7-16

JamFactory n.d., *About*, JamFactory, viewed 28 March

2025, <<https://www.jamfactory.com.au/about>>.

JamFactory 2024, *Events*, viewed 30 March 2025, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/DDOQT-UOUFV>>.

Marmalade 2024, 'Gathering Light', *Marmalade*,

A bstracts

of MASTER THESES

On the Periphery:

Evaluating the representations of diverse people groups within South Australian historic house museums.

Nicola Butler, University of Adelaide, Master of Curatorial and Museum Studies 2025.

Keywords: historic house museums, South Australia, Martindale Hall, Carrick Hill, diverse representations, inclusive

The historic house museum is one of the oldest and most prevalent museum subtypes in the Western world and it was brought to Australia through a lasting connection with British museological ideals. House museums can commemorate a range of different historical aspects including a house's architectural style, a famous resident or a specific moment in history. A portion of the appeal that house museums hold is the conveyance of information about the historic owners and residents. Visitors are interested in the lives of the people who originally lived there.

Historically and into the present, the curatorial focus within house museums has been an emphasis on the stories of the privileged elite, often neglecting or silencing the presences of house staff, women, people with disabilities, and local First Nations groups. To bring these museums into the modern day, a decentralisation of information must take place, in order to expand on and diversify the perspectives of people who had historical connections with these buildings and the land they stand on.

Using two historic house museums as case studies, and through the collection of primary data in the form of museum assessments, interviews and visitor surveys, an evaluation is made of the current state of inclusive curation at these South Australian house museums and whether visitors are calling for more variety in the perspectives on display. Recommendations are made on the best ways to go about performing this change.

This thesis draws on survey data collected from two case study museums; Martindale Hall, in the regional Mid-North, and Carrick Hill, in Adelaide's Eastern foothills.

Using the exhibits in the Peranakan Museum in Singapore as a case study:

How do female descendants of Peranakan Chinese in Singapore construct their identity?

Catherine Poh Lin Khoo, University of Adelaide, Master of Curatorial and Museum Studies 2025.

This thesis is a journey across time, memory, and identity—told through the lives of three Peranakan women: my grandmother, my mother, and myself. Anchored in narrative theory and feminist theory, it explores how personal stories and museum exhibits coalesce to shape the evolving identities of female descendants in the Peranakan Chinese community in Singapore.

The Peranakan Museum serves not only as a repository of cultural artefacts but also as a curated space where gendered narratives are preserved, performed, and sometimes challenged. Through a close reading of its exhibits—bridal chambers, beadwork, domestic spaces—this study interrogates how femininity is constructed and conveyed. At the same time, it asks whose voices are amplified and whose are absent.

To ground theory in lived experience, the thesis weaves in three intergenerational narratives. My grandmother's story of escape from patriarchal violence in early 20th-century China, my mother's longing for love and stability in postcolonial Singapore, and my own reflections as a contemporary Peranakan woman navigating global landscapes—together these stories offer a deeply personal lens into how women inherit, resist, and reshape cultural identity.

This work does not aim to define what it means to be a Peranakan woman, but rather to explore how that meaning shifts—across generations, across spaces, and within the quiet corners of museum galleries. It is as much a critique of institutional narratives as it is a tribute to the quiet resilience of women whose stories were never carved into history but live on in memory, ritual, and reflection.

Ultimately, this thesis calls for a more inclusive and empathetic museology—one that honours multiplicity, invites dialogue, and embraces the personal as political.

The Shape of Water-Heritage:

Developing a Water-Heritage Framework.

Maeve McNeilage, University of Adelaide,
Master of Curatorial and Museum Studies 2025.

Throughout human history, water has been fundamental to human survival and civilisational development, creating an asymmetrical relationship where humanity depends intrinsically upon water. While this relationship has traditionally been characterised by appropriate reverence, the modern era (particularly in Western societies) has witnessed a concerning deterioration in respect. As climate change intensifies, the urgent need to repair our relationship with water has become apparent. This critical issue is addressed in the thesis by focusing upon the concept of “water-heritage”: a society’s inherited tangible and intangible relationship with water. The research posits that museums and cultural institutions are capable of reflecting and shaping societal values, and thereby represent under-utilised tools for restoring humanity’s fractured relationship with water. The thesis defines “water-heritage” as a distinct concept within heritage studies, and develops a comprehensive Water-Heritage Framework (W-HF) which can inform museum practices, particularly in narrative construction and exhibition content.

The methodology combines framework development with empirical analysis, employing content and observational analysis of two museum case studies: the South Australian Maritime Museum and the Signal Point Visitor Centre. It is demonstrated in the thesis that there is promising potential for the developed W-HF as a tool for reimagining how existing museum collections can portray diverse facets of local communities through the flexible and inclusive lens of water. The framework provides a scaffold for exhibition narratives to convey important messages that enhance respect for water, directly addressing the critical disconnect between human reliance on water for survival and the ways we currently value and respect this relationship. This thesis contributes to heritage studies by conceptualising water-heritage as a distinct area of inquiry and provides a practical tool for museums seeking to foster more sustainable and respectful human-water relationships.

The Representation of Female Athletes in Sports Museums

Grace Turpin, University of Adelaide, Master of Curatorial and Museum Studies 2025.

Over the past decade there has been a rise in the coverage of women's sport in the Australian media. This has been largely a result of the creation of professional sports leagues within multiple disciplines around the country such as the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL), Australian Football League Women (AFLW) and National Rugby League (NRLW). There has been global success of the national teams for cricket, netball, hockey, rugby, basketball and football and in turn, a gain in popularity over time which in turn has resulted in an increase of media attention. But is this representation mirrored in physical spaces like museums and sporting halls of fame? This thesis will analyse if the rise of popularity of women's sport in the media is reflected in the representation of female athletes in sports museums. Using a feminist museology as well as an analysis of female athletes in the media, this thesis will explore whether sports museums have, or have the potential to have, equitable representation of male and female athletes.

Unfortunately, women's sport is often thought as a 'sequel' to men's sport. Women who are playing these games at a professional league are still viewed and judged as if they are playing a 'man's game.' An example of this can be seen just in the names of the leagues the women play in, especially in Australian sports. For example, AFLW is adding a 'W' to AFL. This example can also be seen in the NRLW, WBBL, and the Women's Ashes. This issue is even prominent on a state level, where the women's leagues in soccer and rugby are the Women's National Premier League (WNPL) and the South Australian Football League Women (SANFLW).

Athletes and the sports they represent have become successful not only because of the mainstream media coverage they receive, but through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Audiences not only have the option to choose how and when they interact with sports they are interested in, but once a social media algorithm picks up that interest they are exposed to so much more content surrounding the sport. The use of social media for the athletes means they are able to guide their own narrative and chose how their story told.

This is in contrast to traditional media outlets where a journalist or someone else would give an interview and only pick the best quotes to tell that athlete's story. The importance of telling their own story is a guiding principle of the presentation of female athletes and women's sport, not just the representation of it.

Museums are sites of discourse and the presentation of stories, of cultures and subcultures. Sports museums often tell the story of teams and athletes. However, there is a gap in the representation of female athletes in museums. The feminist standpoint is an appropriate lens to view the context of existing representation within the museum and applied to the topic of female athletes within museums. Emerging themes in the existing literature about female athletes being represented in museums is that there is a lack of representation and there needs to be a change in culture. This culture change needs to not only be internal, but it also needs to be external.

This thesis aims to analyse the gap of female athletes in sports museums by examining how museums operate through a feminist lens. It will assess the representation of female athletes in Australian Sports Museum and Boola Bardip Western Australian Museums, and does this by asking "Does the rise in popularity of women's sport in the media shape representation in sports museums?"

One Dimension from Three: The martyr, The bloody, and The virgin?

Does the portrayal of Lady Jane Grey, Mary I and Elizabeth I in museums and art galleries reinforce the stereotype that these women were one-dimensional?

Rebekah Morgan, University of Adelaide, Master of Curatorial and Museum Studies 2025.

The Tudors are one of the most popular and studied royal dynasties, yet, despite the overabundance of scholarship, the Tudors have been neglected in museum studies. A focus of current Tudor literature is debunking the misconceptions that these women were one-dimensional and attempting to showcase complex women, akin to their male counterparts. Likewise, museum studies have a large focus on how women are represented within exhibition spaces and attempting to present women as complex and inserted into histories where they have been forgotten. Despite the similarities, there is a lack of research on Tudor women and how they are represented in museums and art galleries.

This thesis investigated the three Queens regnant of the Tudors: Lady Jane Grey, Mary I and Elizabeth I and how these women are represented in museums and art galleries and whether this leads to the perpetuation of one-dimensional stereotypes.

One-dimensional in this context refers to whether the women are defined by a single trait, such as exhibitions only including Mary's negative traits, perpetuating the stereotype of 'Bloody Mary.' Eight case studies were investigated: three online databases, three exhibition catalogues and two virtual museums through the application of a visual analysis on the exhibition objects and a discourse analysis on the exhibition and object labels.

Findings indicated that the representation of Jane, Mary and Elizabeth in these spaces still leads to one-dimensional characterisations; however, exhibition catalogues did occasionally break this trend. Exhibition catalogues did, in some instances, portray these women with more characterisation, but still primarily focused on better-known traits such as Jane as a martyr, 'Bloody Mary' and Elizabeth as the great virgin Queen. The presence of these traits, albeit in small quantities, still gives hope that future research can build upon this study to branch out and look at how Tudor women are represented within museums and art galleries.

P hDs in progress

Repatriation at the South Australian Museum and Beyond.

Analysing a cultural model of governance with sector-wide significance.

Annamaria Russo, Aboriginal Heritage and Repatriation Manager, South Australian Museum. UniSA Creative University of South Australia.

Australian museums have collectively acquired, stored and studied the remains of approximately 10,000 Aboriginal ancestors. Almost half of these were collected by the South Australian Museum between the 1870s and 1980s. As the collector and custodian of approximately 4500 Aboriginal ancestral remains, the South Australian Museum has begun the most ambitious and successful museum repatriation program in Australian history.

The Museum has implemented recognition of cultural authority at the policy level and a community-led, engagement model of repatriation and reburial, that addresses the challenges of land with protection in perpetuity; achieving consensus within Aboriginal communities' governance structures: and providing the space, time and

resourcing to build community capacity and confidence to undertake the new cultural ceremony of reburial (as opposed to burial). Since 2018, the South Australian Museum has pioneered significant new methods and pathways for repatriation with Aboriginal communities that have resulted in over 500 ancestors being reburied by eight different Aboriginal communities. A significant number of the ancestors have been reburied by the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide plains, the Kurna community at *Wangayarta*, a co-created memorial park in Adelaide's northern suburbs. The Kurna model of project governance and community led decision-making is now being translated in a second large scale reburial/memorial park project, the *Ngarrindjeri Raukkan Resting Place*. With construction expected to be completed by the end of 2025, the Ngarrindjeri memorial park will eventually become the final resting place for over 1000 Ngarrindjeri Old People disturbed from original Ngarrindjeri burial sites and acquired by the South Australian Museum and other institutions in Australia and abroad.

The Museum's repatriation program is continuing at a pace, scale and scope never achieved before, however, no significant scholarship around this major period of transformation in the cultural sector has been undertaken.

The most cited scholarly articles published about ancestral remains repatriation over the last ten years have mainly been written by non-practitioners and focused on repatriation policy, principles, historical trade, historical inequities, the rise of self-determination and scientific methods to identify remains without provenance (Adams 2019) (Fforde 2023) (Hemming 2023) (Nicholas 2022). Only a few articles have been written by Aboriginal leaders (Carter 2020) (Rimmer 2023) (Sumner 2020) and museum practitioners about how repatriation practice is achieved through active engagement between museums and Aboriginal communities. This thesis aims to address that gap.

A major obstacle to reburial of Aboriginal remains on Country has been access to land that can provide protection in perpetuity. Other barriers include breaks in continuity in Aboriginal governance leadership arrangements, lack of resources and cultural safety concerns about handling and reburying Aboriginal remains (Wilson 2005). As a result, repatriation across Australia has been slow and while many ancestors have been administratively repatriated to communities from museum collections, most of these ancestors' remains have stayed in the state museums or other temporary keeping places and only a small number of ancestors have been reburied on Country.

Successful repatriation is not about institutions absolving themselves of historical culpability by 'handing over' the ancestors' remains. Success relies on maintaining a proactive responsibility for institutional history by supporting communities to rebury the ancestors. Kaurna's *Wangayarta* is a clear example of this principle of owning up to institutional responsibility while elevating cultural authority.

What has been achieved at the South Australian Museum in terms of community led Aboriginal ancestral remains repatriation and reburial is nationally significant - and the model created for large scale reburials through the Kaurna *Wangayarta* memorial park project ([Wangayarta | SA Museum](#)) has even wider significance (Marques and McIntosh 2025) . Having proven a model, this research will analyse what worked and why in terms of First Nations governance, decision-making and co-creative models between museums and Aboriginal communities in Australia. The research will:

- Review and analyse the historical conditions that led to the current situation at the South Australian Museum;
- Analyse how the historical information informs consultation and collaboration with First Nation communities with repatriation ambitions;

-
- Review repatriation and governance systems across the cultural sector that open access to appropriate landscapes and spaces for reburial and memorialisation.
 - Case study the co-created Kurna Wangayarta collaboration between the South Australian Museum and Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation and the Ngarrindjeri Raukkan Resting Place projects, by recording oral histories of Kurna and Ngarrindjeri Elders and industry partners involved in the projects, map the decision making and governance processes and partnership model.
 - Compare and analyse the Wangayarta model with other museum case studies.

The thesis will build upon the existing repatriation literature to document how and by whom one of the most complex repatriation challenges in Australia was created. Through archival research of the South Australian Museum archive records, State Records and other published and non-published sources, the thesis will contextualise the South Australian Museum's current repatriation practice by necessarily including the historical context and conditions that enabled the South Australian Museum's collection of Aboriginal ancestral remains to grow to such an astounding number by the end of the 20th century.

This will add to the body of repatriation literature by positioning the South Australian Museum's historical actions in the context of institutional attitudes towards Aboriginal people and museum research and collection priorities across Australia in the late 1800s to the end of the 20th century.

The contextual history will be followed by a review of the South Australian Museum's organisational cultural shift that began in the late 1980s but which was not fully embedded as core business until 2018. The Museum's relevant corporate memory, the collaborative policy development with First Nation leaders policy implementation and evaluation of outcomes under the new policy will be fully documented.

Case studies will be used to demonstrate the impact of the South Australian Museum's approach to ancestral remains repatriation. Two main case studies, Kurna's *Wangayarta* and the *Ngarrindejri Raukkan Resting Place*, will document the frameworks and processes leading to establishment of the two large scale memorial parks in South Australia. Smaller repatriation projects will also be documented and compare the principles of First Nations engagement across both large and small-scale repatriation projects.

Oral history recordings of a key group of Aboriginal Elders and leaders actively

involved in the Kurna and Ngarrindjeri resting place projects and repatriation of Aboriginal ancestral remains from the South Australian Museum today, will feature significantly in the case studies. The interviews will be conducted following the Oral History Association of Australia guidelines (Robertson 2006) and will ask Elders to describe how they are resolving and reconciling the unique scale of repatriation of their ancestors from the South Australian Museum. The interviews will address core themes of cultural authority and cultural safety in repatriation practice and elicit key insights and learnings from these Indigenous experts.

Through an analysis of the Elders' oral history recordings, the research will determine how elements of the Museum's repatriation program fit in the context international standards of Indigenous human rights and principles of restorative justice. Through the interviews, the research will also examine pressure points between cultural and institutional imperatives in repatriation processes and explore whether remediation of these tensions has been successful.

The study will leave a legacy by recording interviews with the Aboriginal Elders and leaders about their repatriation work and depositing these recordings in the South Australian Museum archives in perpetuity.

By doing so, the Elders' repatriation practice will be accessible to future generations who are interested in why these leaders and Elders did this work and the challenges, barriers and collaborations they navigated.

This PhD study is funded under the Australian Government's Industry Researcher PhD program and began in 2025.

Reference List

Adams S., Grün R., McGahan D., Zhao J.-X., Feng Y., Nguyen A., Willmes M., Quaresimin M., Lobsey B., Collard M., Westaway M.C. (2019) A strontium isoscape of north-east Australia for human provenance and repatriation. *Geoarchaeology*, 34 (3), pp. 231 - 251

Carter, N. B., Joe and Pickering, M. (2020). Cultural Protocols in Repatriation. Processes at the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre. In C. T. M. a. H. K. Cressida Fforde (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation* Routledge.

Davis, A. Tuckey, M. Gwilt, I. Wallace, N. (2023) Understanding Co-Design Practice as a Process of "Welldoing".

Hayter, J. Wright, T. (2025). *Oxygen, Australia: Practice-Based Research in Designing Therapeutic Environments Social and Cultural Practice for Health and Wellbeing*. Marques, B. (Ed) and McIntosh, Jacqueline (Ed). Pp193-197. Routledge

Hale, H. M. (1956). The First Hundred Years of the South Australian Museum 1856-1956. *Records of the South Australian Museum*, XII, 226.

- Hemming, S. Rigney, D. Fforde, C. Adam, W. Della-Sale, A. Pickering, M. Rigney, G. Trevorrow, T. Sumner, D. Trevorrow, E. Trevorrow, L. Rankine, L. Jnr. Berg, S. (2023). Repatriation, healing and wellbeing: understanding success for repatriation policy and practice. Final report to AIATSIS Research Exchange Grant (no. IRE_OR00047)
- Jenkins T. (2008). Dead bodies: The changing treatment of human remains in British museum collections and the challenge to the traditional model of the museum. *Mortality*, 13 (2), pp. 105 - 118
- Jones, P. G. (1996). 'A Box of Native Things': Ethnographic Collectors and the South Australian Museum, 1830s-1930s' University of Adelaide. Adelaide
- Kakaliouras A.M. (2017). NAGPRA and Repatriation in the Twenty-First Century: Shifting the Discourse from Benefits to Responsibilities. *Bioarchaeology International*, 1 (3-4), pp. 183 - 190
- Krmpotich C. (2010). Remembering and repatriation: The production of kinship, memory and respect. *Journal of Material Culture*, 15 (2), pp. 157 - 179
- Lambert-Pennington K. (2007). What remains? Reconciling repatriation, aboriginal culture, representation and the past Oceania, 77 (3), pp. 313 - 336
- Marques, B. (Ed) and McIntosh, Jacqueline (Ed). (2025). *Designing Therapeutic Environments Social and Cultural Practice for Health and Wellbeing*. Routledge
- Nafziger J.A.R., Dobkins R.J. (1999). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in Its First Decade. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 8 (1), pp. 77 - 107.
- Nicholas G. (2022). Protecting Indigenous heritage objects, places, and values: challenges, responses, and responsibilities. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 28 (3), pp. 400 – 422
- Rimmer, Z. (2023). *Tasmanian Aboriginal Activism and Intervention in Cultural Institutions: Repatriation and Creating a Pakana Museology*. University of Tasmania]. Tasmania.
- Robertson, B. M. (2006). *Oral History Handbook* (Fifth edition ed.). Oral History Association of Australia (South Australian Branch) Inc.
- Robertson, G. (1999). *Crimes Against Humanity. The Struggle for Global Justice*. Penguin Books.
- Silverman S. (200) "Who knows the power of his bones": Reburial redux. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 925, pp. 79 – 119
- Sumner, M. (2020). Sharing reflections on repatriation: Manchester Museum and Brighton negotiations, a decade on. In C. T. M. a. H. K. Cressida Fforde (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation*. Taffe, Simone, Kelly, Meghan. (2025) *CoDesign People, Participation, Practice*. Routledge
- Turnbull P. (2020) International Repatriations of Indigenous Human Remains and Its Complexities: the Australian Experience. *Museum and Society*, 18 (1), pp. 6 - 18,
- Turnbull P. (2007). British Anatomists, Phrenologists and the Construction of the Aboriginal Race, c.1790–1830. *History Compass*, 5 (1), pp. 26 - 50,
- Wilson, C. (2005). *Return of the Ngarrindjeri Old People back to Country*. Thesis submitted for the requirements of the degree Bachelor of Archaeology (Honours) Flinders University
- Wright J.L., Wasef S., Heupink T.H., Westaway M.C., Rasmussen S., Pardoe C., Fourmile G.G., Young M., Johnson T., Slade J., Kennedy R., Winch P., Sr M.P., Wales T., Bates W., Hamilton S., Whyman N., Van Holst Pellekaan S., McAllister P.J., Taçon P.S.C., Curnoe D., Li R., Millar C., Subramanian S., Willerslev E., Malaspinas A.-S., Sikora M., Lambert D.M. (2018) Ancient nuclear genomes enable repatriation of Indigenous human remains. *Science Advances*, 4 (12).

Keeping House.

Authenticity, Domestic Heritage, and
Museological Practices in South Australian
House Museums.

Lauren Wallis. Decie Denholm Scholar,
PhD Candidate. School of Humanities,
Department of Historical and Classical
Studies, University of Adelaide.

This research examines how Historic House Museums (HHMs) reflect historical narratives and contemporary museological practices, with a specific focus on three South Australian case studies: Malowen Lowarth Cottage, The Cedars, and Carrick Hill (Figure 1). These sites were selected due to their contrasting governance structures: Malowen Lowarth Cottage is managed by the National Trust of South Australia; The Cedars by the not-for-profit Hans Heysen Foundation; and Carrick Hill by the Carrick Hill Trust and the South Australian Government. Each house also represents a different historical socio-economic context, offering a valuable basis for comparative analysis within a shared regional and cultural setting. The houses themselves differ significantly in scale and character. Malowen Lowarth is a modest cottage, The Cedars a villa-style home, and Carrick Hill a grand mansion. These architectural and spatial distinctions further inform the interpretation of class, domesticity, and heritage within each site.

South Australia was chosen for its strong heritage conservation culture, its layered colonial, artistic, and domestic histories, and its range of house museums that together reflect varying social narratives and curatorial approaches. This regional focus enables an in-depth, site-specific study while also serving as a foundation for broader comparison.

HHMs sit at a critical intersection of time, where the conservation of material authenticity must also engage contemporary audiences to remain meaningful. Far from static relics, HHMs actively shape how societies understand and use material culture. Although often framed as materially authentic domestic spaces, HHMs are curated environments shaped by institutional authority, conservation priorities, and inherited interpretive frameworks. These forces can constrain community agency and limit the inclusion of diverse, especially marginalised, narratives. Focusing on three uniquely governed South Australian HHMs, this thesis examines how governance models influence curatorial practice, visitor engagement, and the potential for community participation.



Figure 1: (L-R) Malowen Lowarth Cottage, The Cedars, Carrick Hill. Image L Wallis 2025.

To contextualise findings and identify best-practice models, the research will draw on interstate and international examples of HHMs known for innovative interpretation and visitor engagement strategies. These comparative cases will inform the evaluation of the South Australian sites, providing a benchmark for assessing curatorial decisions and interpretive methods. Furthermore, the research will focus on how house museums serve as cultural and historical artefacts, reflecting the values and stories of their time, whilst also engaging modern audiences through various curatorial techniques. By examining these interactions, the project aims to highlight the unique role of house museums in preserving and presenting

history. Through archival research, interpretive analysis, curator interviews, and visitor feedback, the study investigates how each site constructs narratives of domestic life, cultural identity, and historical significance.

A central concern of the thesis is the contested role of authenticity. Rather than viewing authenticity as a fixed attribute of preserved objects or architecture, the research draws on the Nara Document on Authenticity, the Burra Charter, and the concept of *timehold* to re-conceive it as dynamic and negotiated. Authenticity is produced through affective engagement, narrative framing, and cultural context,

elements that should be co-shaped by communities, not imposed solely by institutions. House museums do not simply preserve the past, they *timehold* it. I propose this conceptual framework reimagines house museums as curated temporal experiences, rather than static repositories of historical fact. While traditional museological frameworks emphasise the preservation of material culture and the authenticity of place (Risnicoff de Gorgas, 2001:11) *timehold* recognises that house museums mediate history through interpretive choices, constructing a version of the past that is both safeguarded and performative. This reorientation, from emphasising the geographical movement of objects to examining the temporal evolution of collections, highlights the HHM as a dynamic space where histories are not preserved unchanged but are constantly reinterpreted and reconstructed (Grünfeld & Tybjerg 2023:213). In doing so, the *timehold* framework can be used here to explore how HHMs actively shape historical understanding through curated domestic narratives that blur the boundaries between preservation, interpretation, and lived experience.

Moreover, within this framework, the home not only preserves the remnants of lives once lived but manipulates their legacy through narrative and curatorial strategies. This process reflects the nature of engaging with history itself; although we can continually

return to past events, they can never be entirely or conclusively recaptured in any one act of reflection (Risnicoff de Gorgas, 2001:10). Instead, they persist as stable points of reference, yet each return to them is mediated by the present, reshaping them with meanings drawn from contemporary experience (Risnicoff de Gorgas, 2001:10). HHMs cannot restore the past; they can show how people used to live, but they cannot explain why they used to live this way, without curatorial interpretation (Cabral, 2001:45). In this way, *timehold* offers a curatorial model that embraces the temporal fluidity of historical understanding, acknowledging that what is held is never fixed, but always subject to reinterpretation through the lens of now. This reconceptualisation invites us to interrogate not only what is held in time, but who does the holding, and to what extent.

The significance of this interdisciplinary project lies in bridging the gap between historical authenticity and contemporary museological practices in three case study South Australian museums. The research will interrogate how to convey historical accuracy while enhancing visitor engagement. It aims to formulate recommendations for improved preservation, interpretation, and public interaction, ensuring these museums effectively convey South Australian domestic history and connect with modern audiences.

The research is expected to yield several key outcomes. First, it will provide a deeper understanding of how house museums interpret and preserve domestic history, particularly in the South Australian context. By analysing the selected HHMs, the project will highlight the curatorial decisions that shape historical narratives within these spaces. Additionally, the study will reveal the challenges and strategies house museums face in balancing historical accuracy with visitor engagement. Finally, the research will lead to practical recommendations for enhancing the interpretation and presentation of domestic heritage in house museums, theoretically guiding future curatorial practices and improving public engagement. These insights will contribute to both academic discourse and the practical management of heritage sites through a series of conference talks and public presentations, practical recommendations and journal articles.

References Cited:

- Cabral, M. (2001). Exhibiting and communicating history and society in historic house Museums. *Museum International*, 53(2): 41–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0033.00311>.
- Grünfeld, M., & Tybjerg, K. (2023). Collections, Knowledge, and Time. *Centaurus*, 65(2), 213–234. <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.CNT.5.135107>.
- Risnicoff de Gorgas, M. (2001). Reality as illusion, the historic houses that become museums. *Museum International*, 53(2), 10–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0033.00307>.

N

ews: what's on

Art Gallery of South Australia

2026 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Yield Strength

27 Feb 2026 – 8 Jun 2026. Free exhibition

Remaining attentive to aesthetic details and receptive to the intricacies of life, the exhibition fosters intimacy through layered viewing experiences across the Art Gallery of SA, Samstag Museum of Art and Adelaide Botanic Garden.

Two Islands, One Thread: Textiles of Lombok & Bali

15 May 2026 – 11 Oct 2026. Free exhibition

The exhibition highlights the diversity of art including the woven, embroidered, painted and tie-dyed textiles created by the Sasak people of Lombok and the Balinese as an expression of their spiritual beliefs, community values and reverence for the ancestors.

Touching the Divine: Love and devotion in Asian Art

28 Feb 2025 – 26 Apr 2026. FREE exhibition

Touching the Divine: Love and devotion in Asian art explores aspects of love and devotion expressed through art created in sacred contexts across Asia.

Featuring works of art from the AGSA collection this exhibition presents the divine and worldly aspects of devotion expressed through a wide diversity of media created in the context of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam.

Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition

11 Jul 2026 – 8 Nov 2026. TICKETED exhibition.

Opening in 2026, *Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition* traces a ground-breaking era in art history through iconic works by the most influential European and American artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Exclusive to the Art Gallery of South Australia, experience fifty-seven masterworks from the Toledo Museum of Art's world-renowned collection, as *Monet to Matisse* tells the story of artists defying tradition and transforming modern art, from Impressionism to Cubism and Surrealism to Abstract Expressionism.

Turrangka....in the shadows

31 July 2026 – 1 November 2026

The exhibition includes daguerreotype photography and hand-made Kurna cultural objects from multidisciplinary Kurna artist James Tylor, one part of his long-running project of reframing and decolonising the landscape and histories of South Australia.

Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE)

Kumarangk: Exhibition

22 February – 4 April 2026.

An intergenerational love letter for Ngarrindjeri women, an exhibition that explores the survival of a culture and the resistance to the destructive forces of the colony. Kumarangk is an honouring of the resistance work of the Ngarrindjeri women protesters, who organised and acted against the building of the bridge from Goolwa to Hindmarsh Island. Featuring a mix of traditional and contemporary art mediums, Kumarangk showcases existing alongside ambitious new works by multiple generations of Ngarrindjeri women artists.

History Trust of South Australia

Migration Museum

19 February - 22 March 2026. Adelaide Fringe: The cells at the Courtyard of Curiosities.

1 August 2025 – 30 June 2026. Face to Face Exhibition.

SA Maritime Museum

13-20 March 2026. Adelaide Fringe: Gilbert & Sullivan Season.

Carrick Hill

Out of the Archive.

18 February – 31 March 2026.

The Wall Gallery, Carrick Hill House Museum.

Country Arts South Australia – Yarta Purtli Art Gallery, Port Augusta

Woven Within Stars

30 November 2025 – 1 March 2026

FREE exhibition (Port Augusta)

The exhibition considers how, from childhood, we carry stories that connect Country and Culture, then retell them as adults. Yet often as we age, the meanings of those stories develop, and we start to understand them differently. Their works speak to the power, resistance and resilience of First Nations Communities.

MOD.

BEGINNINGS

Open Tuesday-Saturday until 20 November 2026.

Embark on a journey to better understand how and why we are here, where we belong in the world, and how we can act in the present to shape the future.

South Australian Museum

Ride on, shine on: The East Kimberley Art Movement

5 July – 14 December

FREE exhibition

Ride on, shine on: The East Kimberley Art Movement showcases 14 precious early paintings by the founding members of the contemporary East Kimberley art movement of Western Australia, representing the beginnings of what became a major episode in Australian art.

AMaGA South Australia

2026 Program Launched 11 February 2026.

<https://www.facebook.com/AMaGASouthAustralia/>

Samstag Museum of Art

2026 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Yield Strength

27 Feb 2026 – 8 Jun 2026. Free exhibition

Jemima Wyman: Deep Surface

26 June - 18 September 2026

Deep Surface offers audiences a vivid, kaleidoscopic lens through which to observe and interpret three decades of Wyman's visually and politically charged oeuvre.

World Heritage Bids

The Victorian Goldfields

In early 2025, the Australian Government added the Victorian Goldfields to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List. A nomination dossier is being developed, including the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, management framework, and conservation plans.

<https://goldfieldsworldheritage.com.au/>

Australian Cornish Mining Sites: Burra and Moonta

On 9 May 2017 the Australian Cornish Mining Sites: Burra and Moonta were included in the National Heritage List. As a result, the next natural progression is for World Heritage listing.

<https://burramoontaworldheritage.com.au/>

Intangible Heritage Bid

Switzerland has submitted a nomination to UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, for yodelling to be included on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/culture/switzerland-seeks-unesco-recognition-for-yodelling/74882280>



'Weaving futures', a collaborative artwork between Sonya Rankine and contributing artists. Image MOD.

CURIO

Adelaide Journal
of Curatorial and
Heritage Practice

<https://able.adelaide.edu.au/humanities/research/curio-adelaide-journal-of-curatorial-and-heritage-practice>