

Collections Projects Program 2023

University of Melbourne

Museums & Collections Department

Project Description

***Grainger Amplified* - Research and Interpretation project, Grainger Museum**

The Project

For this project you will have the opportunity to select an object (or a group of objects) on display in *Grainger Amplified*, and research and interpret its history, meaning and place in the collection and exhibition. Research findings will enhance and expand our knowledge and understanding of the collection, increase public awareness and inspire further interpretation of the Grainger collections.

Background

The University of Melbourne has endorsed a vision to unify its museums and collections under the umbrella of a [Cultural Commons](#). This integrated strategy will guide the University's cultural estate to enhance scholarly and public value and strengthen the University's global cultural standing. The Museums & Collections Department has been established to ensure coordination and alignment with University objectives. The Department is responsible for [Buxton Contemporary](#), [Science Gallery Melbourne](#), [Ian Potter Museum of Art](#), [Old Quad](#), and the [Grainger Museum](#). The Department aims to build a collaborative and flexible network around the University's cultural assets so students, staff members local and global communities gain knowledge and understanding of contemporary and traditional cultures, scientific discovery and creative practice.

The [Grainger Museum](#) at the University of Melbourne is the only purpose-built autobiographical museum in Australia. It is home to a diverse collection of art, photographs, costumes, musical scores and instruments acquired by Australian concert pianist and composer Percy Grainger. From late 2022, a new semi-permanent exhibition, *Grainger Amplified*, has been staged within the space, referencing original displays curated by Grainger in 1938 and providing a snapshot of the museum's past. Percy Grainger commissioned several display cases for the variety of objects in his museum, and these historical cabinets and many of the objects they contained have been reinstalled, providing visitors with an insight into the past and an opportunity to interrogate previous museum practices and cultural shifts in the Grainger collection.

Details

Working under the supervision of the Grainger Fellow, Dr Sarah Kirby, you have the opportunity to select an object (or a group of objects) on display in *Grainger Amplified*, and research and interpret its history, meaning and place in the collection and exhibition. To facilitate this research, you will be able to explore archival materials in the wider Grainger collection, including Grainger's own research materials and writings, and use these to contextualise the objects displayed in the exhibition. Outcomes will be public-facing and intended to aid museum visitors in understanding the objects on display and the curatorial choices made both in 1938, and now.

The proposed outcomes of this research project will be the creation of a 200-300 word didactic written label that contextualises the object(s) for visitors who will access the information via QR code in the museum space. Additionally, there will be the opportunity to develop a 1000 word blog post which will be published on the Grainger Museum website and the University's [Cultural Commons](#) website. This project would suit a student studying history, art curatorship, or related humanities discipline, and an interest in and ability to read music would be desirable. Creative and lateral thinking skills are needed to independently identify themes and concepts, and the context of the selected object(s), and then to interpret these for a broad non-specialist audience. Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of archival material is desirable, as this project may require handling and close inspection of collection items. Excellent communication skills are needed for this project, as is the ability to work independently and as part of a small team.

Benefits

Opportunity to work closely with one of the University of Melbourne's cultural collections. Professional development through the completion of original curatorial research on engaging objects from the Grainger Museum while developing your thematic research skills for a practical museum application, and in interpreting that research to appeal to and engage broad audiences. This project will improve our knowledge and understanding of the Grainger Museum collections and assist in making them more accessible and prompting further interpretation. If applicable, the completion of this project may be able to be used to earn a digital credential for Community Engagement through the 'Melbourne Plus' Program.

Supervisor

Dr Sarah Kirby, Grainger Fellow – Museums and Collections Department, Strategy and Culture