Engaging with Cultural Collections: increase learning outcomes and enhance the student experience by engaging with objects in the collections

With thirty historic, rich and significant cultural collections representing a broad range of academic disciplines, the University of Melbourne is uniquely placed within the Australian higher education landscape to develop innovative pedagogical programs - engaging students in object based learning, primary research and cultural literacy.
Who are we?

Our collections, named Special Collections and Grainger Museum, are one part of the larger group of Cultural Collections. They comprise of the Grainger Museum and collection, Rare books collection, Print collection and the Louise Hanson-Dyer Rare Music collection.
Rare Books at the University of Melbourne holds a significant collection of books, journals and ephemera. Strengths of the collection include printing history, Greek and Roman classics, private presses, English literature, social and political thought, children’s books, Australiana and book arts. These items are housed in special conditions by reason of their age, value or uniqueness in order to ensure their care and preservation for current and future generations of scholars and researchers.

Some significant works held are Piranesi, Collection of folio works, 1761-1807; Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, 1499; Mr William Shakespeares comedies, histories and tragedies (Second folio) 1632; John Gould, The birds of Australia, 1848 and the Mammals of Australia 1863; Latin Bible Mainz: Peter Schoeffer 1472; Parler seul : poème Tristan Tzara and Joan Miró 1950, Dlia Golosa. Mayakovsky, Vladimir and El Lissitzky 1923.
• **Current users**
  • Languages
  • Renaissance
  • Conservation Students
  • Knowledge Learning and Culture (breadth subject)
  • Literature
  • Medieval studies
  • Landscape Gardening

• **Potential subject links**
  • Philosophy
  • Cultural studies
  • Anatomy
  • Art History
  • Art practice
  • Latin
  • History
  • Politics
  • Book History
  • Literature
  • Military history
  • Languages
  • Sociology
  • Gender Studies
The University’s Print Collection is one of its most prized treasures. It includes some 8,000 prints – mostly etchings, engravings, mezzotints, lithographs, woodcuts and wood engravings – that date from the fifteenth century to the twentieth. It is based on a gift of 3,700 Old Master prints donated by Dr John Orde Poynton in 1959 and was further enhanced in 1964 with Harold Wright’s bequest of half his Lionel Lindsay print collection and prints by his British contemporaries. There are some Australian works, but the majority of prints are European.

The Collection is unique amongst Australian university collections; no other university in Australia has a similar collection of international prints spanning five centuries. Some of the highlights include prints by Albrecht Dürer and his contemporaries, Aldegrever, the Sadeler Family, Jacques Callot, Claude Lorrain, Rembrandt, William Hogarth, Francisco de Goya and Lionel Lindsay. The Collection was originally intended as a teaching tool for students and it continues to be used particularly by students of art history and history here at the University.
Current users

- Museum curatorship
- Conservation
- Museum curatorship
- Art history

Potential subject links

- A History of Violence
- Animation
- Anatomy
- English
- History
- Theology
- Cultural studies
- Architecture

*The Print Room* starts in Semester 2, 2015
Prints

Dürer, Albrecht (1471-1528) Knight, Death and Devil, 1513

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) Sheet of studies: head of the artist, a beggar couple, heads of an old man and old woman, etc. (c. 1632)

Hogarth, William (1697-1764) The Reward of Cruelty 1751

Lindsay, Norman Julia's Monkey 1920

Martin, John (1789-1854) Creation of Light 1825
Louise Hanson-Dyer Rare Music Collection

The Rare Collections of the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library are diverse in both content and origin, and include many items acquired in the very early years of the University Conservatorium at the end of the 19th century. Collection strengths include manuscript scores, chiefly by Australian composers, from the colonial period to the present day, Australian print music and concert and theatre programs. Of a number of noteworthy named collections in the music library, the Hanson-Dyer Collection of 15th to early 19th century music imprints, first editions and music manuscripts, is of particular significance. Transferred to Melbourne in 2005, this collection includes French operatic works, British publications, works of the Italian renaissance and books on music theory, establishing collection strengths that have been built on with recent acquisitions. The music rare collections also include the very substantial archive of the music press, Editions de l’Oiseau-lyre (1932-2013), founded by Louise Hanson-Dyer (1884-1962), after whom the music library is named.
Current Users

- Classes such as, “Music in the Culture of the Renaissance”, Faculty of VCA and MCM
- Copied for performance by MCM students and staff

Potential subject links

- History
- Book History
- Musicology
- Cultural Studies

Program music: a depiction of the removal of a kidney stone for lute
Now unwrapped and fully conserved. Twenty-one bamboo pipes from the ‘Pipes’ social movement in the 1930s, promoting home made music for everyone.


Guidonian hand (Dalle Grotte, *Il cantore*). *Ecclesiastico*, 1713. This was a mnemonic system, assisted in sight singing.

Medieval music for the feast of Mary Magdalen. *Fragment from a sanctorale*, 13th or early 14th century.

Bookplate of English merchant banker, Henry Huth, found in *A second musical entertainment perform’d on St. Cecilia’s day*, 1685.
The Grainger Museum is the only purpose-built autobiographical museum in Australia.

Its fascinating collection contains not only objects directly related to Percy Grainger's compositional career, such as scores and manuscripts, but also more than 50,000 items, including diaries, ethnographic objects, furniture, decorative arts, photographs, artworks, clothing and correspondence with famous and not-so-famous contemporaries.

Percy Grainger developed a highly eclectic collection, motivated by the desire to interpret and contextualise his creative achievements and cultural environment. Selected items are on display and the majority of the collection is available for research by prior arrangement.
Current users

• Museums Studies - Deakin University
• Knowledge, Learning and Culture
• MCM Writing about music; Musicological research methods
• RMIT Industrial Design students

Potential Users

• Experimental music (VCA subject)
• History – (Edwardian England)
• Literature – art of letter writing, creative writing
• Psychology- (fame, nature of genius, collecting)
• Neuro psychology
• Cultural studies
Why should you incorporate collections into your subject?

The thrill and inspirational benefit of interacting with primary resource materials cannot be underestimated. Students often prefer object based learning as a method of teaching and it is of great value to academic staff wishing to encourage participation in the class and enhance the student experience. It also contributes to the development of key skills in communication, observation, and teamwork. When used by skilful and knowledgeable collections staff within a pedagogic context, collections can be inspirational as well as informative. There is also great value in the opportunity to touch and learn from the object directly. Object based learning elicits powerful responses from all who engage with the physical artefacts.

What we can deliver?

Visit our collections to benefit from the ‘experiential’ element and context of the material. We currently work with academics to create a class based around material in our collections that enriches understanding of the topic for students.
“Thank you again for your session in the Rare Books room. I surveyed the students after the session about how they enjoyed it, and overwhelmingly the feedback was positive. What was especially pleasing was that it engaged some of the students that were previously unengaged. I would not hesitate to bring my class this year to the Rare Books collection for a similar session”

Nicholas Spinks

**RMIT mid-year intensive subject: Master of Fine Arts, June 2015**

“Dear Astrid, Thanks so much for taking the time last week with the RMIT MFA group. It was really great to hear more about the Grainger – the students were totally amazed by it and loved all the stories that you told. Many thanks for having us.”  Phip Murray, Lecturer, Fine Arts, RMIT

“I just wanted to say a big thank you for taking our class (ENGL20020: Romanticism, Feminism and Revolution) on a guided tour through the Rare Book Room recently. It was an incredible experience- and one the highlights of my university course thus far. I do appreciate your time and expertise!”

Francesca Ohlert.

“For me the most valuable part, however, is having the chance to not only see, but handle and work with art objects in the flesh and then be able to research and write on those that are of particular interest to me. Viewing art on a PowerPoint is one thing but being able to view it in person is another, and this allowed me to add another dimension to my understanding.”

Amelia Saward, Prints Intern 2015
Students engaging with collection material
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