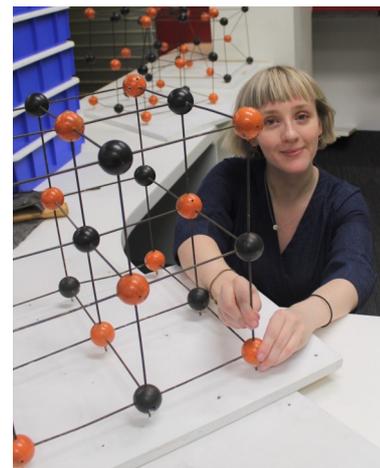


## The year in review: *a look behind the motivation for collection engagement*

What motivates students and volunteers to participate in the MCPP and engage with the University's museums and collections? While they come from diverse backgrounds with broad interests, there are some continuing themes that underpin this motivation. Students seeking work in the cultural sector are keen to develop practical skills - they know they need to be 'skilled up' for future employment opportunities. Real-world experience is invaluable, so many are motivated to complement classroom theory with hands on project work. In addition, by practising their decision-making skills through these projects, a student's confidence within a work place environment is enhanced. Further motivation for project work may be found in the networking opportunities created. The ability to ask questions of professionals and benefit from advice is an added bonus, and so it is not surprising that students see these projects as an advantageous career step.

Recently there has been a rise in the number of students coming from other disciplines to work on a MCPP project. Motivated by the desire to enrich their campus experience with a fresh take on their study area (seen for example in medical students wanting to work with the science museums) and explore their discipline from a different angle. Another common motivation for project work is the chance to 'dip your toe in' an area you are considering for future work or study. Volunteer participation with the collections may also be prompted by a desire to give something back to the University. Alumni who have fond recollections of the campus may wish to be involved in a value-adding capacity. International students new to Melbourne, want to connect to others and the collections are a welcoming place to start.

For all Program participants, underlying their primary motivation has been an appreciation of the University's outstanding museums and collections. Students and volunteers are enriched by their involvement with the cultural collections, and the many benefits go well beyond their initial motivations.



UoB student Alice O'Rourke with the Chemistry Collection.

### And now to the projects...

This year has seen a record number of students and volunteers work on projects with the University's museums and collections. These projects covered many areas of collection management, curatorship and public programs across a broad range of collections. Following, is an introduction to the Program's participants and their projects.

As a foundation area of collection management, **cataloguing projects** are keenly sought by students and volunteers. Under guidance from collections staff, they are seen as a valuable opportunity to develop these skills. At the **Medical History Museum**, Master of Art Curatorship graduate **Marnie Adamson** put her theoretical knowledge of collection management into practice by cataloguing objects from the Psychology Collection. **Elodie Peart** (BA Hons. Ancient Studies and Anthropology, UoM) and **Emily Hornsby** (MA Cultural Heritage, Deakin) also worked on projects at the Museum, and catalogued a collection which included surgical tools and splints. **Angel Thanur** (Bachelor of Bio Medicine, UoM) gained insight into how her cataloguing project was key in laying the foundations for future research, exhibitions and interpretation of the collection. At the **Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum**, **Joy Oriel's** (BSc. Dip. Languages, UoM) project involved creating the catalogue records for recent acquisitions to the collection. At Creswick, **Natalie Ford** (Bachelor of Arts, UoM) catalogued and sorted photographs from the **Creswick Campus Historical Collection** which relate to 100 years of forestry education. **Ashley Hayes** (MA Cultural Materials Conservation, UoM) and **Yingzi Xu** (MA Art Curatorship, UoM) worked in partnership on the **Union House Silverware Collection**. In addition to cataloguing, they rehoused the collection in anticipation of its transfer to UMA where it will be kept as a representative sample. **Daniel Schwartz** (MA Cultural Materials Conservation, UoM) and heritage consultant **Michelle Summerton** worked with the University's **Heritage Furniture Collection**. They reviewed, updated and catalogued historically significant items of heritage furniture located throughout the Parkville campus, gaining access to some very interesting buildings in the process! The **School of Chemistry Collection** benefited from the dynamic partnership of **Lia Sumichan** (MA Cultural Materials Conservation, UoM) and museum professional **Nancy Ladas** on a cataloguing and rehousing project. Applying their skills to this fascinating collection, they have enjoyed the challenge of identifying how bespoke laboratory equipment was originally used and deciding what to call it in the catalogue!



Sakina Nomanbhoy studies a drawing from the Print Collection.

**Curatorial projects** offered participants the experience of the exhibition process - in some cases from the earliest planning stages through to installation and opening. **Eugenia Pacitti** (PhD Historical Studies, Monash) curated an exhibition in the Main Dining Room of **University House**. Using reproductions of objects from the Baillieu Library's Rare Book Collection and the Herbarium, the exhibition explored the art of zoological and botanical illustration in Australia. Eugenia enjoyed the professional development opportunity of participating in the whole curating process. **Mona Mi** (MA Art Curatorship, UoM) has also been working on a curatorial project with **University House** at the Woodward, where she is developing an exhibition for the dining and conference spaces using the UoM's cultural collections as its focus.

**Communications, public programs and audience development projects** featured this year and were actively sought. For the first time 'blogger' projects were available, and **Anastasia Vassiliadis** (BA Ancient World Studies/Spanish, UoM) and arts professional **Charlotte Mills**, contributed to the *Special Collections and Grainger Museum Blog*. In their respective posts they introduced audiences to topics as diverse as Herodotus' *Histories*,



Joy Oriel discusses the collection with Registrar Alex Chubaty at the HFA Dental Museum.

incunabulum and an exploration of 'a day in the life of a curator'! **Heting Huang** (MA Art Curatorship, UoM) recently commenced a web enhancement project with the **Property and Campus Services Photographic Collection** which will improve the on-line presence of the collection and aid in its discoverability. **Indigo Holcombe-James** (PhD Technology, Communications and Policy Lab, RMIT) undertook a marketing and communication internship with the **Science Gallery**, assisting with the multi-faceted marketing campaign for the *Perfection* exhibition. **Xiaoran Ma** (MA Management – Finance, UoM) and **Anisa Nabila** (Executive Master of Arts, UoM) interned with the **Grainger Museum and Special Collections**. Xiaoran explored the area of audience development, while Anisa's focus was on marketing of the museum. **Daniela Mendoza** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM) was also based there and investigated ways to attract wider audiences to exhibitions and special events.

**Preventative conservation** is a vital aspect of collection management and a popular choice for students wanting to develop their skills. This year **Sharon Wong** (PhD Arts, Conservation UoM) and **Crystal Baptist** (MA Cultural Heritage, Deakin) worked on a multi-stage collection management project at the **Grainger Museum** that focused on the rehousing of a hat collection. As part of the process, collection records were checked, and new and updated information was added to EMu, the collection database. At the **Herbarium**, Masters of Cultural Materials Conservation students **Rose Maurice** and **Karen Thompson's** project work involved documenting and rehousing the beautiful and delicate botanical specimens in the Walter Zimmer Collection.

**Research and interpretation projects** generate new knowledge about the collections which can then be disseminated to a wider audience. Participants on these projects welcomed the opportunity to investigate the cultural collections and share their findings through exhibitions, displays, catalogue entries, blog posts and seminars. At the **Ian Potter Museum of Art**, **Sophia Booij** (BA Ancient Word Studies and History, UoM) and **Megan Taylor** (graduate MA Art Curatorship, UoM) contributed to the 'Public Art on Campus' project where they researched and wrote brief texts on artworks situated on the Parkville campus. Also at the Potter, **Emma Mills** (BA Art History and Ancient World Studies, UoM) researched proposed acquisitions for the UoM Art Collection. The Baillieu Library's **Print Collection** hosted several volunteers who delighted in the opportunity to work closely with its outstanding collection. **Alice Sandner** (BA Art History and French, UoM) and **Ada Coxall** (BA Art History and English Literature, UoM), completed in depth research on the Rembrandt etchings in the collection. Alice and Ada's close investigation of the prints helped determine their significance in relation to other international collections, and the research will feed into an upcoming exhibition. **Sakina Nomanbhoy** (BA Art History and Ancient World Studies, UoM) also at the **Print Collection**, has been examining a drawing after Rembrandt. Her new research findings will enrich our understanding and appreciation of this work. Finally, **Carly Richardson** (graduate MA Art Curatorship, UoM) completed original research on a couple of drawings in the **Print Collection** with her discoveries to be added to the EMu catalogue.

At the **Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum**, **Susannah Britt** (graduate MA Art Curatorship, UoM) has been researching 150 years of the Odontological Society of Victoria in preparation for a future exhibition. While over at the **Medical History Museum**, **Jessica Snir** (MA Public Health, UoM) and **Ana Cárdenas Jaramillo** (MA Museology and Cultural Heritage, University of Colombia) are engaged on a research project for an upcoming exhibition that will feature the recently acquired Royal Women's Hospital Collection. **Reetika Khanna** (Bachelor of Arts, UoM) completed her research on nine original Australian artworks found in Louise Hanson-Dyer's visitors book, which is part of the **Rare Music Collection** and shared her original research findings at a symposium. **Joshua Sims** (BA Anthropology and Philosophy, UoM) undertook a research project to find out more about two unbound palm leaf books in the **Rare Books Collection**. At the Law Library, **Gabrielle Grech** (BA Laws/BA Arts Monash) is researching significant items within the **Law Rare Books Collection** to better understand the collection. Lastly, a project at the **Herbarium** has **Alissa Puurunen** (MA Information Studies, Archives and Records Management, CSU) investigating the collection objects, historical documents and literature associated with the MELU algal collection to support the development of a future exhibition.



Rehousing the delicate specimens in the Herbarium requires a steady hand from Karen Thompson.

**Archival documentation, inventory and digitisation** projects were a popular choice again this year. At the **VCA's School of Film and Television Digital Archive**, **Ellen Becker** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM), **Josee Hennequin** (MA Information Studies, CSU), **Jing Yi** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM), **Olivia Floate** (BA Russian and Art History, UoM) and **Sorcha Delahunty** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM) contributed to the ongoing Digital Archive Project that is documenting the School's archive of student film prints, tapes and materials by creating metadata for the films. Also assisting on this project were Arts graduate **Ali MacGregor**, and **Clare Flynn** a graduate of MA Arts Management, UoM. Their project work will support the digitisation and online publication of the film archive channel.

At the **University of Melbourne Archives**, **Bronwyn Beech-Jones** (BA Honours, History and Indonesian, UoM), **Mary Hurley-McGillivray** (BA Art History, UoM) and **Jin Yu** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM) were involved in the development of on-line subject guides. The trio found it rewarding to see their new, dynamic and user-friendly guides available on-line which will aid researchers accessing the Archive's vast collections. Also at **UMA**, **Meenah Harrison's** (BA Librarianship and Corporate Information Management, Curtin) archival project supports the preservation and access of audio visual material in the Susan Hawthorne and Paul Ormonde Collections.

The **Law Rare Books Collection** had **Jobelle Magno** (Grad. Dip. Information and Library Studies, Curtin) create an inventory for *Federation*, a five-volume set of pamphlets, articles and other items that relate to this milestone in Australian history. While **Sally Malamas**, (graduate MA Art Curatorship UoM) is working on a project compiling a bibliography for the George Paton Collection. At the **Architecture, Building and Planning Library**, **Katrina Watson** (MA Cultural Materials Conservation, UoM) continued her project with the **Rare Materials Collection** creating an inventory of postcards in the Parkes Postcard Collection which comprises thousands of black and white postcards of European architecture. Also assisting on this project have been **Liana Stratsianis** (BA International Studies, Anthropology and History, Monash) and **Coral Guan** (BA Art History, UoM). The **Rare Books Collection** at the **ABP Planning Library** has also provided the opportunity for students to delve into the history of the collection through a provenance project. **Natasha Ressia** (MA in Urban and Cultural Heritage, UoM) and **Emily Harris** (MA Art Curatorship, UoM), documented items in the collection noting donors and former owners of the volumes, transcribing inscriptions and updating the catalogue records.

At **University of Melbourne Archives**, **Jacqui Baker** (PhD History, Deakin) completed her project with the VWLLFA poster collection. She was pleased that in addition to developing skills in archival procedures, her project work helped inform her PhD thesis which focuses on the Women's Liberation Movement in Melbourne. **Michael Slater** (graduate MA Information Studies, CSU) completed his inventory project with the **Property and Campus Services Photographic Collection** where he has documented the slides, photographs and albums. **Matthew Niccoli's** (BA Information Studies, CSU) project with the **International House Collection** enabled him to gain experience listing and rehousing the Women's Auxiliaries archival materials. **William Tan-Orders'** (Doctor of Dental Surgery, UoM) project continued with the digitising and rehousing of the Forensic Slide Collection which is part of the Melbourne Dental School's Anatomy, Oral Pathology and Forensic Odontology's teaching collection.

**Significance assessment projects** help inform future collection management decisions in areas such as conservation, acquisition/de-accession, valuation and access, and two volunteers were assigned projects using this methodology. **Maria Costa** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM) is currently completing a significance assessment of the **Burnley Campus Archives** which comprises of materials dating back to the 19th century and include official records, registers, attendance books, photographs, maps, plans and artefacts that tell the story of Burnley Horticultural College. While librarian **Roxane Leguen**, has commenced her assessment project with the Malcolm Fraser Book Collection which is part of the **Law Rare Books Collection**.

Lastly, there were **general collection management** placements that offered students the opportunity to gain skills across several areas. **Huan Shu** (MA Arts and Cultural Management, UoM), was placed with the **Science Gallery** on their pop-up exhibition, *Perfection*. For her project, she helped select objects from the UoM's cultural collections to be included in the exhibition, assisted with loan agreements and liaised with exhibiting international artists! During their internships **Xiyang Lin** (MA Art Curatorship, UoM) and **Lin Ma** (MA Art Curatorship, UoM) gained experience in several areas of collection management. They worked with three collections including the **Print Collection**, **Heritage Furniture Collection** and the art collection at Trinity College. These projects gave them an insight into the procedures and practices for the sound management of the collections.

## 'Incomings and Outgoings': the *International Museums and Collections Award*

This year the IMAC Award facilitated excellent professional development and travel opportunities for two student recipients. **Clare Fuery-Jones**, a third year UoM Bachelor of Arts student majoring in Art History and Philosophy, travelled to the University of Birmingham where she spent a month working with their museums and collections. In August, Melbourne hosted **Alice O'Rourke**, a Masters in Art History and Curating student from the University of Birmingham. Both Award recipients were delighted with their placements and enjoyed the collection-focused stays that developed professional skills, expanded networks and gave them a unique insight into the sector. In the excerpts overleaf, Clare and Alice reflect on their Award experiences.



Nancy Ladas and Lia Sumichan cataloguing an object from the Chemistry Collection.

## Clare's experience at the University of Birmingham...

*On arrival in Birmingham, I was warmly welcomed by the Research and Cultural Collections team. As I was unfamiliar with how collections management works outside of a specific museum or gallery context, it was interesting to become acquainted with the roles and responsibilities. Whilst at RCC I undertook some research into two Nigerian paintings from the Danford Collection. I also helped with de-installing an exhibition in the rotunda of the Ashton Webb building. Though I had had experience with exhibition installation previously, it was fantastic to consolidate these skills in this professional environment.*



UoM student Clare Fuery-Jones on her return from her travels to the UK.

*I spent Tuesdays at the Barber Institute of Fine Art. This was a very exciting and fulfilling experience for me in which I gained an insight into the workings of the gallery workplace. It would be impossible to gain such an insight into the daily roles undertaken in the gallery, as well as how exhibitions are created, and programming developed, without having an opportunity such as this to spend time in the environment, amongst professionals.*

*Winterbourne House and Garden [is] an Arts and Crafts home owned by the University which, after years serving as accommodation and function space, has recently been turned into a house museum. Because of its relative newness as a museum [and] given my interest in Arts and Crafts, I created an information sheet on the original Arts and Crafts features. It was a hugely satisfying project, and a terrific opportunity to extend my research skills to create an accessible piece, for visitors' practical use.*

*On Thursdays I visited the Cadbury Research Library, where the Library's paper conservator, taught me basic processes in paper conservation and care. I believe having a basic knowledge of conservation processes, such as bathing, repairing tears and infilling missing segments, is important so as to better understand the material composition of works we study.*

*I feel very privileged to have had such a wonderful opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience of the museum and gallery workplace. The variety of contacts I have made because of the IMAC placement will, I believe, continue to be of considerable value. Ultimately, my time at Birmingham has reaffirmed my commitment to working within the field of art history, and now, with an insight into the nature of the roles involved, I feel I am in a better position to prepare myself for a future in this area.*

**Clare Fuery-Jones, March 2018**

## Alice's reflections on her University of Melbourne experience...

*As a current MA student studying Art History and Curating, I saw this as an enriching opportunity that would further my understanding of collection management and areas of curatorial practice. I wanted to challenge myself and develop new abilities. The award provided me with all of this and more and encouraged me to hone and develop my skillset in the area of collection-management.*

*My project with the School of Chemistry was centred on exhibition curatorship. I was most looking forward to this project due to its alignment with my interest in curating, and I was excited to work with a collection out of the visual arts field. I was given total creative freedom, which was great for my development as it made me consider new curatorial approaches for working with unfamiliar objects and collections.*

*My project with the Baillieu Library Print Collection was assisting the Curator with the day to day management of the collection. My tasks included researching prints for an upcoming exhibition, contributing to the Special Collections and Grainger Museum blog and assisting with workshops for students at the University. The VCA Films & Television School project was a digitised archival-based task. The film school was in the process of making the student film archive online, ... [and] I watched a selection of films, created metadata for them and developed playlists and collections for them to be categorised within. I was also given the opportunity to write a response to one of the films.*

*An 'Introduction to Conservation' was my project at The Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation. Working with the team was enlightening, and I learnt a lot about conservation within contemporary arts. Each week was focused on a specific aspect of conservation work [and] this project taught me a lot about the importance of contemporary conservation practice.*

*Alongside my projects, the Award offered further professional development through one-to-one meetings with other collections managers. The Award also affirmed my aspiration to become a curator - I spoke with many arts professionals about their practices and discovered new ways of working towards curatorial approaches. Upon my return to Birmingham, I have been appointed the role of Associate Curator at Grand Union, a contemporary artist-led space. I sincerely believe that the Award afforded me the relevant skillset to deem me an ideal candidate for this role. Not only did the placement develop my understanding of collection management across a range of areas, but it also afforded me a confidence in my abilities to work in unfamiliar surroundings. The Award exceeded my expectations and has supplied me with a rich and resourceful experience working within collections.*

**Alice O'Rourke, October 2018**



UoB student Alice O'Rourke and her curated display of the Chemistry Collection.

## Year's end...

It has been an excellent year for the Museums and Collections Projects Program – notable for the impressive outcomes for participants and the collections. Also benefitting from this dynamic engagement have been the archivists, collection managers, curators, librarians, academics and conservators who have worked with and guided the volunteers on these projects. Thank you to all who have supported the collections and projects, and very best wishes for the festive season and year ahead.

**Helen Arnoldi**  
**Museums and Collections Projects Coordinator**  
**December 2018**