

WONDERS

FROM THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

LARGE TYPE LABELS



Government
of South Australia



SOUTH
AUSTRALIAN
MUSEUM

165 FOR 165

165 years of the Museum's history is a lot to absorb visually both through looking at the objects and reading labels. Feel free to wander through the exhibition and enjoy each section but you don't necessarily need to look at every object.

Every object has a story to tell. Look at and read what appeals to you. There is a lot of variety from all areas of the Museum's collection so if you get tired, have a break, a cup of coffee or browse in the Museum Shop. Then, come back and enjoy some more. Another visit might let different objects speak to you so make sure to come back for a second or even a third visit.

Most of all, enjoy the richness of the South Australian Museum's collections and appreciate their history and place in your past, present and future.

Nat Williams
Guest Curator

FOYER OBJECTS

JAPANESE SPIDER CRAB

MACROCHEIRA KAEMPFERI TEMMINCK, 1836

c. 1940s

Provenance unknown

The Japanese spider crab (*Macrocheira kaempferi*) is the largest species of crustacean on Earth and has the largest leg span (more than 3.5 metres) of all the arthropods (includes insects, spiders and crustaceans). They are considered 'deep sea' crabs, found at 50–600 metre depths in the North Pacific Ocean off the coast of Japan. This specimen is a real animal exoskeleton that was painstakingly restored by South Australian Museum taxidermist Jo Bain after many years of accumulated damage while in storage.

GREAT SOUTH AMERICAN GROUND-SLOTH

MEGATHERIUM AMERICANUM CUVIER, 1796

South America, c. 8,500 BC

Exchange from the American Museum of Natural History in May 1901 This cast was modelled from original bones in the British Museum, and the Museum of the College of Surgeons, London

This giant animal gets its scientific name, *Megatherium*, from the Greek words μέγας ('big') and θηρίον ('beast'). It was the largest of all ground sloths weighing at about 4,000 kg and was one of the largest land mammals to have existed. The first specimen was discovered in Argentina in 1788 and was thought to have lived around 8,500 years ago. It is possible that the species died out as a result of human predation.

FEMALE SPERM WHALE SKULL

PHYSETER MACROCEPHALUS LINNAEUS, 1758

Collected near Ardrossan 10–12 December 2014 by Museum staff and volunteers

In December 2014, eight sperm whales stranded near Ardrossan, South Australia. Sadly only one of the sperm whales managed to survive, the other seven perished on the mudflats at low tide. The local community and council, Arium mine workers, the Department of Environment and Water and the University of Adelaide came together to assist the Museum to safely recover the whale skeletons including this skull, and to bury the remaining carcasses on the shore. The Museum also collected the lower jaws and teeth of all whales for research. Sperm whale teeth have always been valued throughout history, from making scrimshaw to learning about the whale's history and biology through tooth ageing and stable isotope analysis. It has left such a lasting impression that the community built a memorial at the stranding site with seven granite boulders, one for each whale.

M26366

TEKOTEKO

CARVED WOODEN HOUSE POST

19th century

Unknown Maori maker, Aotearoa, New Zealand

Wood 9th century

Māori are skilled and prolific carvers, using a wide range of materials, especially wood. A tekoteko is a freestanding carved human figure, usually placed at the front apex of a Māori whare whakairo – a tribal meeting house. These structures were named after ancestors to instil protection and guardianship over the tribe (iwi). Visually striking, tekoteko were designed by master carvers and were often the focal point of the whare whakairo. This tekoteko consists of a carved ancestral figure covered in markings and tattoos standing upon another ancestral figure, both have three-fingered hands. The secondary figure's feet terminate on the head of another important figure who is covered in deep facial tattoos or moko. The very distinctive moko would have meant the ancestor figure would be recognised by those who visited the whare whakairo.

A8594

FLENSING TOOLS

Australia, c. 1980

Albany Whaling Station, acquired by Peter Aitken

Steel, wood

This is an original flensing knife used by whalers on the Albany Whaling Station in Western Australia. The Curator of Mammals at the time, Peter Aitken, acquired two of these knives for the Museum after the closure of the station. These knives have been used since then for whale recoveries by the Museum.

POUPOU

A PAIR OF CARVED WOODEN WALL POSTS

Māori, Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1870s

Swapped by the Otago Museum, Dunedin with South Australian Museum, originally acquired by Dr Thomas Hocken from the New Zealand and South Seas exhibition of 1889-90 in Dunedin, made for Chief Karaitiana, Ngāti Te Whatu-i-Apiti and Ngāti Kahungunu.

Wood, shell (paua)

These large beautifully carved wall panels are known as poupou and they formed part of the framework for a Māori whare whakairo – a carved meeting house. These panels represent the iwi (tribe) and also allude to its whakapapa (genealogy). The poupou can be read as a kind of portrait gallery of those who influenced the life and history of the whare.

These poupou were made for Chief Karaitiana, whose Māori name was Takamoana, and who was a leader and politician of Ngāti Te Whatu-i-Apiti and Ngāti Kahungunu descent in Hawke's Bay, near Napier. Karaitiana died before his large whare was finished and the panels were later lent to the New Zealand and South Seas exhibition of 1889–90. The 43 known poupou and other items were then acquired in 1890 by the famous New Zealand collector and benefactor Dr Thomas Hocken. Hocken subsequently gave them to the Otago Museum in Dunedin. In the early 1900s, Otago Museum swapped many of the poupou for other material with museums around the world including Adelaide. For decades confusion existed around the origin of the poupou. Originally it was believed they came from the Ngāti Porou people in Hick's Bay and while the makers were most likely itinerant Ngāti Porou carvers, these poupou were actually made in Hawke's Bay, more than 400 kilometres south.

MUSEUM PUBLIC SIGNS

Late 19th – early 20th century
South Australian Museum

Over the past 165 years the Museum has communicated with visitors and supporters in many ways. These posters are part of the Museum's history, whether giving information on exhibits and collection displays or setting out the rules for visiting. 'No spitting or Naked lights' may seem obvious to us today, but perhaps earlier audiences were less familiar with Museum etiquette. Curiously however patrons were once instructed to bring torches as part of their visit. Museums have always been places of public education, to exercise and intrigue curious minds. In the past they were quite direct in their interactions with the public.

BOTH PORTABLE CABINET RESPIRATOR (IRON LUNG)

1930s, South Australia
Plywood and metal
E.T. and D.J.R. Both (designers, South Australia) and
Nuffield Organisation (manufacturer, United Kingdom)

The Both Respirator was designed in South Australia in response to the Polio epidemic of the late 1930s by Edward and Donald Both in their workshop which was situated behind the South Australian Museum.

In 1937 there was a severe outbreak of Poliomyelitis in Adelaide and the Both brothers were asked by the South Australian Health Department to develop a locally made alternative to the American 'Iron Lung'. The Both Cabinet Respirator was a cheaper, lighter and easier to manufacture design. During the summer of 1937–38, such was the demand for the Both Respirator that within an hour of each one being completed it was being used by a patient.

INTRODUCTION

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MUSEUM AND ITS COLLECTIONS

During the Museum's 165 years it has collected, purchased or been given thousands of remarkable items. From Aboriginal artefacts to insects, from the rarest of minerals to mammals, from frogs to frozen tissue, these collections are bountiful and significant. The Museum's collections can never be seen in total as some objects are too fragile, others have cultural or scientific significance, and that there is simply not enough room here on North Terrace to display them.

Wonders from the South Australian Museum is a broad snapshot of the richness and diversity of the collections. There is something for everyone and each item tells a story about the Museum's history and mission over more than one and a half centuries. Constant throughout is the affection South Australians have had for this collection and their generous support of it. The density of the exhibition display seeks to replicate the Renaissance *Wunderkammer*, a proto-museum in which visitors, if they were admitted, viewed unfamiliar objects and wondered at them and their larger world.

Enjoy this exhibition and, as you do, appreciate that for each item selected, there are thousands more on display or in storage awaiting exhibition.

OPAL 'PINEAPPLE'

White Cliffs, New South Wales

100 million years old, Cretaceous Period

Donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program in 2005 by Alan and Katharyn Barton Thompson

Mined in 1970s

Colloquially named for its spiky shape, this 'pineapple' is actually composed of precious opal which has replaced the less stable mineral ikaite, copying its spiky structure. Ikaite grows in near freezing conditions on and in seafloor sediments, it is unstable and will rapidly disintegrate into calcite when removed from its natural cold water environment. The presence of these 'pineapples' in the opal bearing sediments of the Great Artesian Basin is not surprising as during the early Cretaceous Period, 100 million years ago, Australia was joined to Antarctica as part of the supercontinent Gondwana, and lay at very high latitudes

BORNITE

Olympic Dam Mine, Roxby Downs, South Australia

Purchased in 2017

Bornite is a copper iron sulphide (Cu_5FeS_4) and the official state mineral of South Australia. This specimen comes from the Olympic Dam Mine at Roxby Downs and is considered the finest in the world. It comprises the largest known single crystal of bornite, perched on a tabular baryte crystal.

Copper has been a vital part of South Australia's mining history. By the 1850s, South Australia was the third largest producer of copper in the world and large, rich deposits on the Yorke Peninsula were worked continuously for more than 60 years. In the 1980s the enormous iron oxide-copper-gold deposit was discovered at Olympic Dam in the State's far north.

HIROSHIMA ROOF TILE

6 August 1945, Hiroshima, Japan

Donated in August 1949 by the Commander of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan.

Earthenware

On 6 August 1945, the United States detonated the first atomic bomb ever deployed in war, over Hiroshima Japan. This unprecedented act of warfare resulted in the deaths of approximately 170,000 people, just over half of the population of the city. This relic from the explosion bears witness to the immense power and the areas on this unglazed roofing tile that were exposed to the heat from the detonation are now covered with tiny globules – dust that was melted and solidified into glass as it cooled. While no longer radioactive, this unassuming tile is a stark reminder of the power and intensity of the explosion.

TRINITITE

16 July 1945

Produced at Trinity Bombsite, Alamogordo, New Mexico, USA.

Purchased in 2020

Trinitite is made from sand super-heated and melted by the first atomic bomb test in New Mexico. The explosion produced a blast equivalent to 18,000 tons of dynamite and such was the heat of the explosion it melted the sand which solidified into this pale olive-green glass. Trinitite is nearly pure melted silica with traces of quartz, feldspar and other minerals present in the desert sand.

BADGE, CLOTH WITH PRINTED MAGEN DAVID (STAR OF DAVID)

c. 1940

The Hague, Netherlands

Donated 10 July 1978 by Mrs O. Eilers, Ascot Park, South Australia

Cotton, printed ink inscription

In May 1940, the Netherlands was invaded by Nazi Germany. From April 1942, all Dutch Jews were ordered to wear these Judenstern (Jewish star) on their clothing. The intent was to intimidate, harass and isolate Jewish people from the general populace. There were grave consequences for not wearing the star including beatings and imprisonment. It is estimated that more than three quarters of its Jewish population (around 102,000 people) were murdered by the Nazis during World War II, the largest number of deaths in any of the occupied countries of Western Europe.

NIBUTANI ITA – CARVED TRAY

19th century, Ainu people, Hokkaido, Japan

Collected by James H. Tindale 1908

Wood

This is a 19th century *Nibutani Ita*, a hand carved Ainu wooden tray or plate, made in Biratori-cho, Saru County, Hokkaido. The Ainu considered that every plant and animal has a kamuy or god inside them, and that they lived side by side with the gods and their patterns were derived from natural forms to avoid attracting evil spirits. Traditional patterns include soft spiral lines like rippling water (*moreunoka*), thorn motif (*aiushinoka*), and the diamond-shaped eye motif (*shikunoka*). Scale shapes called *ramuramunoka* fill the space between the other patterns.

MAKIRI

19th century, Ainu people, Hokkaido, Japan
Collected by Mr and Mrs R.M. Hawker in 1905
Acquired from F.R. Levinge 7 April 1941
Wood, steel

The Ainu are the indigenous people of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands with their own distinct language, dialects, traditions and culture. Their relationship with neighbouring Japan over centuries has been difficult particularly during the Meiji Period when in 1899, Ainu language and culture were suppressed and their land was stolen from them. It was not until 2008 that the Ainu were officially recognised by Japan as a distinct ethnic group.

The plain but forceful lines carved into this Ainu *Nibutani Ita* were originally made by a knife or *makiri* such as the one seen here. The tools used by Ainu carvers each carry designs to ward off evil spirits and *makiri* were worn by men and women who used them in daily life and also in carving. Today a variety of knives, chisels and carving tools are made to produce *Nibutani Ita*.

A34460

CARVED IVORY TUSK

18th–19th century
Unknown maker, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria
Removed from Benin in 1897, to London dealer William Webster, purchased by David Murray 1898, gifted by Murray to the South Australian Museum in 1899
Elephant ivory

The Kings or Obas of Benin and their high-ranking chiefs displayed ivory tusks on altars to honour their ancestors. Carved tusks were also supported by the cast brass heads of Obas. The size of the tusk and complexity of the images, read from bottom to top, with the King's head at the tip, conferred authority on him. The intricate carvings were created by several members of the royal ivory-carvers' guild, who used small tools to chip, smooth, and scrape away ivory. The figures on this carved tusk represent the Oba's power to preside over trade networks. The lowest carved register shows two Portuguese traders being accompanied by a palace official. The fifth register depicts a Portuguese supplicant and a severed crocodile's head, possibly a reference to Olokun, the god of the waters.

A73539

FIRE MAKING APPARATUS, STEEL AND TINDER POUCH ON BELT

Tibet, 19th century

Unknown makers

A72344-8 acquired by the Museum in 2003 by Stella Kaye.

A72344, A72346-8 from Tibet and dated to the 19th century.

A72345 from either Mongolia or China and dated to 1920, A55172 is registered as Tibetan type and was registered by the Museum in 1954, transferred from the Art Gallery of South Australia

Variety of metals, metal work techniques, stones, leather

A chuckmuck is a belt-hung leather and metal decorated tinder pouch with an attached thin long striking plate, found across North Asia and China to Japan from at least the 17th century. Chuckmucks form a well marked group within flint-and-steel types of fire-lighting kit, still used as ethnic jewellery amongst Tibetans (mechag) and Mongolians (kete). This large distinctive style of a worldwide daily utensil was noted in Victorian British India and the 1880s Anglo-Indian word chuckmuck (derived from chakmak) was adopted into specialist English by the early 20th century.

A72437, A72344, A72345, A72346, A72348, A55172

PERSIAN METAL HELMET

India or Iran, 1750–1850

Unknown maker

Bequeathed by Mrs M Aiston – from the estate of George Aiston, 1953

Engraved metal, gilt, steel chainmail

This handsome helmet was probably acquired in the Middle East and it gives us a good idea of the sophisticated design and metalworking techniques that were undertaken in Persia and beyond, as its stylistic influence was felt across northern Asia. Probably made around two centuries ago, it is fortunate to have survived the battlefield. Its owner would have looked commanding especially with the addition of feathered plumes to the recesses on the helmet's front. The delicate naturalistic gilt floral design seems at odds with the fierce intent of the warrior who would wear the helmet. The sharp spike on the helmet and pointed nose protection balance one another in this elegant Islamic work of art and war.

A44711

SAMURAI MASK

Japan, 19th century

Unknown maker

Bequeathed: Mrs M Aiston from the estate of George Aiston, 1953

Steel, lacquer

Japanese Samurai warriors needed facial protection in battle and a way to counterbalance and secure their heavy helmets or kabuto. This protection came in different forms known, collectively, as *men-yoroi*. This piece, a *Menpō*, covered the face from the nose down to the chin and has fixings, *Ori-kugi*, for the helmet strap and may have had a false moustache attached at some point. As seen here, the neck was protected with a *Yodare-kake*, or throat guard. This is part of a set of Samurai armour owned by the Museum which requires extensive conservation and restoration before it can be displayed.

KAI-AWASE CARVED AND PAINTED SHELLS

Japan, 19th century

Unknown maker

Provenance unknown

Kai-awase, or shell-joining, was a popular game to play for Japanese nobility in the early Edo Period (1603–1868). A full Kai-awase set consists of 360 pairs of shells. The game is played by laying the shells faced down and taking it in turns to find the matching pairs.

These shells are from the genus *Meretrix*, in the family Veneridae (commonly referred to as Venus Clams). They are marine bivalves – Phylum Mollusca, Class Bivalvia, Family Veneridae, Genus *Meretrix*.

CANTONESE DISPLAY CABINET

Late 1800s, Shanghai, China

Donated by the Rev. J. Wesley-Smith and Mrs. Wesley-Smith, 1914
Blackwood

This ornate cabinet has been carved in the Cantonese style. Made of carved and slotted blackwood it features a phoenix, a Chinese symbol of immortality, and the design includes cherry, plum, and peach blossom as a symbol of happiness. Carvings of rats up the side of the cabinet symbolise wealth and surplus as the rat is considered to be nimble with vitality and an enterprising spirit.

A54191

THE BENIN BRONZES

For centuries, the tendrils of the British Empire spread over the globe. As an expansionist imperial power, Britain sought to control First Nations peoples around the world, often with devastating and tragic results. Cultures were suppressed, remodelled, driven underground, only to arise again in spite of adversity. Today, natural history museums must contend with the difficult legacy of objects unlawfully collected in this period and have an active voice in the growing conversations about their return.

These Benin 'Bronzes' originate from Benin City, the historic capital of the Kingdom of Benin, a major city state in Western Africa from the medieval period. Benin was part of the British Empire from 1897-1960 and is now within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Many of the rituals and ceremonies associated with the historic Kingdom of Benin continue to be performed today.

These artefacts were among thousands looted in the aftermath of a British trade mission, which was attacked on its way to Benin City in 1897 leading to the deaths of hundreds of African carriers and seven British delegates. This incident triggered a large-scale British military expedition in retaliation. The city was overrun and brutally occupied by British forces in February 1897. There were many casualties and the occupation of Benin City saw widespread destruction and pillage by British forces. The Royal Palace was burned and destroyed, its shrines and associated compounds looted by the British. Thousands of objects of ceremonial and ritual value were taken to Britain as official 'spoils of war' or distributed among members of the expedition according to their rank. The brass plaque on display was seized from Benin in 1897 and purchased in London by Sir William Ingram. The tusk, head and staff were also seized in 1897 and subsequently purchased from a London dealer by the South Australian merchant and politician David Murray. All of the objects were donated to the Museum in 1899.

The Museum is part of the Benin Dialogue Group, a worldwide consortium of museums and galleries committed to the return of the many objects seized from Benin which will be exhibited in a yet to be constructed museum in Nigeria purpose built for the display of these significant objects.

COMMEMORATIVE HEAD OF AN OBA

Unknown Edo maker, mid 19th century

Cast brass, lost wax process

Court of Benin, Nigeria

Removed from Benin in 1897, to London dealer William Webster, purchased by David Murray 1898, gifted by Murray to the SA Museum in 1899

The Benin Court commemorated deceased royalty with public shrines featuring brass heads and carved elephant tusks. When an Oba or King died, his successor commissioned a bronze head to memorialise him. Such bronze heads were displayed on ancestral shrines located in open courtyards around the royal palace, and sacrificial rites were performed at these altars acknowledging the royal ancestors. Approximately 170 such heads were produced, with the oldest dating from the twelfth century. They were also designed to function as the stands for displaying carved ivory tusks. This head probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century, the later period of the Benin court. The highly stylised composition, with swollen cheeks and enlarged eyes, and the flanged base are all characteristic of this later period.

A6523

PLAQUE WITH THREE MALE FIGURES

Unknown Edo maker, 16th–17th century

Cast brass, lost wax process

Court of Benin, Nigeria

Removed from Benin in 1897, purchased by Sir William Ingram 1899, donated by Ingram to the SA Museum in 1899

Most Benin plaques represent daily life in the royal court, rather than specific historic events or people. They were originally nailed to wooden posts in the court (hence the visible puncture marks), but how they were grouped and sequenced remains obscure. When the royal palace was seized the plaques had already been removed from display and were being kept in a storeroom. About 900 Benin plaques survive worldwide. This example frames three figures against a background of floral motifs. The figures with high beaded collars (Odigba) are chiefs, while the third figure is a priest.

A41812

STAFF SURMOUNTED BY A LONG-BEAKED BIRD

Unknown Edo maker, 18th–19th century

Cast brass, lost wax process

Removed from Benin in 1897, to David Murray, gifted by Murray to the SA Museum in 1899

This is a hand-held ‘clapper’ or chime, which would be struck with a metal rod to make a sound. The bird figure on these chimes is referred to as the ‘bird of prophecy’, which is probably a mythical creature rather than a specific species. There are Benin myths that feature the bird of prophecy, and brass plaques show groups of figures playing these musical instruments.

ETHIOPIAN HEALING SCROLL

Ethiopia, collected by Dr Ian Stevens

Acquired from Dr Ian Stevens (1996)

Pigment on parchment

Ethiopian healing scrolls eliminate illness by purging evil spirits and demons from a sick person. Part of a larger healing ritual, the scrolls were commissioned to combat grave illnesses. While plant and animal medicines alleviate physical symptoms, these medicinal scrolls were thought to alleviate spiritual symptoms. A pan-religious phenomenon practiced among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the northern regions of Amhara and Tigray, the scrolls are said to restore health by utilising written words and talismanic images imbued with magical protective powers.

CHINESE TAOIST 'PHILOSOPHICAL' SCULPTURE

1800s
Unknown maker
China
Wood

The Chinese religious tradition of Taoism venerates a group of eight Xian or Immortals who are said to have the ability transcend the limitations of ordinary human life through Taoist beliefs and practices. A number of the Immortals may have actually existed in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) or Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE). The Eight Immortals have a range of powers including the ability to transform into different creatures and objects, bodies that do not age and are capable of amazing physical feats, the skill to command people, animals and objects through the control of *qi*, the gift of healing and the ability to predict the future.

This sculpture is thought to depict Taiguai Li, often translated as 'Iron Crutch Li.' Li is ill-tempered but also a benevolent patron to the sick and needy, he is usually depicted with a crutch and carrying a vessel from which he dispenses medicine to heal the sick.

THE LOGIC BOOMERANG

1880s, 'Logic' or Pinba (c. 1855–1903)
Cooper Creek, South Australia
Acquired from J H Johnson who acquired it from Mounted Constable Willshire who obtained it from Logic
Hardwood

In 1878 Logic killed Cornelius Mulhall, a fellow stockman on Tinga Tingana station, south of Innamincka. Mulhall had provoked, whipped and shot Logic before the Aboriginal man stabbed him to death. Logic fled, and for two and a half years he evaded the law, following his eventual capture he was charged with manslaughter and sentenced to 14 years despite positive character references from Europeans who knew him. While a petition to remit his sentence was being prepared, Logic escaped. Heading north and aided by local farmers who fed and provisioned him, he was recaptured in Parachilna after two months. He arrived to positive crowds in Adelaide and after pressure from the public and the press he was freed by the Governor in 1885. He returned to Innamincka where he lived until his death in 1903.

THROWING STICK

1st century CE, unknown maker

New Mexico, USA

Exchanged with University of New Mexico Museum in January 1967

Wood

This throwing stick was found in a cave near Haeco, Texas and dates to the 1st century CE. It was made by Coahuiltecan Native American people from the lowlands of north-eastern Mexico and adjacent southern Texas. It bears comparison with the boomerang and also a throwing stick in the Egyptian Gallery on the third floor which was created c. 2000 BCE and used for catching birds. Throwing sticks have been found at archaeological sites on five continents and were universally used for hunting small game and for sport.

A43877

'RETURNING BOOMERANG'

c. 1870s

Unknown maker

Carved wood

This carved returning boomerang accompanied NASA astronaut Dr Andrew Thomas AO, on a ten day mission on the Space Shuttle Endeavour in May 1996. This was an historic first as Dr Thomas became the first Australian to travel to space as an astronaut. In his career Dr Thomas completed four space flights, spent 177 days in orbit and visited the Mir space station. This returning boomerang from the Museum's collection dates back to the 1870s and it was most likely collected when Dr Thomas' great-great grandfather Frederick George Waterhouse served as the Museum's first curator.

A5276

YANDRUWANDHA BREASTPLATE

1861

Xavier Arnaldi (1824–1877), Melbourne

Found by Eric and Klaus Ganzert at Cooper Creek in 2001, purchased by Kerry Stokes in 2008 and donated to the South Australian Museum

Engraved brass

This enigmatic object is a surprising relic crafted in the aftermath of the tragic Burke and Wills expedition. Having traversed Australia from south to north, the surviving members of the exploring party perished on their return trip, except one man, John King. Kept alive by the kindness and acceptance of the Yandruwandha people at Cooper Creek, this commemorative gorget is one of three offered as gifts in thanks for ‘the humanity shewn to the Explorers Burke, Wills & King.’ At the 1862 Royal Commission enquiring into the failure of the expedition, King said, ‘They appeared to feel great compassion for me when they understood that I was alone on the creek, and gave me plenty to eat.’ Anthropologist Alfred Howitt returned to Cooper Creek to gather the remains of Burke and Wills for burial, and presented these breastplates, commissioned by the Victorian Exploration Committee, to the Aboriginal community.

A77418

WAHAIKA (SHORT EDGED WEAPON)

19th century, unknown maker, Maori culture

Aotearoa/New Zealand

Purchased from R. Wein Smith

Wood

This short wooden club was used by Māori warriors in hand-to-hand combat. Wahaika were usually made of whalebone or wood. The warrior would thrust the weapon at his enemy. The notch on the side was used for catching an opponent’s weapon. With a quick flick and twist of the wrist, an opponent could be disarmed. The word *wahaika* can be roughly translated to ‘the mouth of the fish’. Wooden wahaikas such as this one often have intricate symbolic designs carved on them.

A51700

PATU ŌNEWA

19th century, unknown maker, Maori culture
Aotearoa/New Zealand
Purchased from C.S. Ashley
Basalt

The patu onewa was made from greywacke and basalt stone, hammer dressed, pecked, and finally ground and polished using varying grades of sandstone until they were perfectly finished. Remarkably regular and uniform in appearance and universally finished to a very high standard, a hole was drilled in the handle for the *tau*, or dog skin cord and grooved designs feature on the *reke*, or butt, of the handle.

A48418

MERE POUNAMU

19th century, unknown maker, Maori culture
Aotearoa/New Zealand
Donated by Sir George Grey 1 January 1893
Nephrite

Mere pounamu (nephrite weapons) were originally used in hand-to-hand combat. They were also symbols of *mana* (authority), high status, cultural identity, and important relationships. Mere pounamu are no longer used for fighting, but their symbolic role continues in Maori culture. As in the past, they are used at cultural performances, and at funerals to honour the deceased. Orators gesture with mere pounamu to emphasise important points. As gifts, these *taonga* or treasures can define or change relationships.

A9965

ELDO SPACE TRACKING STATION

MUNGGURRAWUY YUNUPINGU (c.1907–1979)

1967

Ochres on masonite board

Mungguraway Yunupingu was a prominent bark painter, born and raised in Yirrkala and a leading member of the Gumatji clan. This unusual painting represents a story from Gulkula on the Gove Peninsula, in the Northern Territory where the European Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO) space tracking station was built in 1964 without the consent of the traditional owners. The rocket shape in the centre of this painting represents one of the unmanned Europa rockets launched by ELDO from the Woomera rocket range in outback South Australia, part of a joint European program to launch a one ton satellite into space. In the same year this bark was painted Australia became only the third country in the world to build and launch its own satellite.

A66759

TENBERRY, A CHIEF OF THE MURRAY

HERMANN FRIEDRICH SCHRADER (c.1813–1863)

1851

Presented to the Museum by Dr Gope 23 June 1879

Oil on canvas

King Tenberry (c.1798–1855) was a Ngaiawang man, considered 'Chief' of the Murray River, from the Moorundie area, south of Blanchetown. Tenberry worked as a trusted guide and Native Constable for Edward John Eyre, the British explorer and Protector of Aborigines at Moorundie. His role as a mediator was important in keeping the peace. In 1844, Tenberry's son Warrulan accompanied Eyre to England and the latter's narrative published in 1845 included an engraving of 'Tenberry with his wife and child'. Six years later, this portrait of Tenberry was painted by Schrader. Schrader arrived in Adelaide from Hamburg in 1849 and worked as an artist and photographer in a studio on Rundle Street. Schrader took his own life through a strychnine overdose in 1863, aged 50.

TENBERRY'S WIFE

HERMANN FRIEDRICH SCHRADER (c.1813–1863)

1851

Presented to the Museum by Dr Gope 27 November 1879

Oil on canvas

AA 280/1&2 Schrader Collection

POSSUM-CLOAKED FIGURES AND LYREBIRD

WILLIAM BARAK

1880–1940

Presented by Mrs L.A.M. Rogers 11 June 1940

Ochres and watercolour on paper

William Barak was not only the Headman of the Wurunjeri people at Coranderrk Reserve, near the Yarra River, he was also a diplomat, advocate, Native Policeman, oral historian, linguist, performer, and an innovative artist. Barak's art depicted images of Aboriginal scenes. His total of 50 drawings of corroborees, ceremonies or hunting scenes illustrate the stories that Barak narrated to the anthropologist and author A.W. Howitt for inclusion in Howitt's book, *The Native Tribes of Southeast Australia* (1904). In ochres, watercolour and charcoal, Barak created memorable images of great cultural significance. Here, in this rather formal composition, arrayed ranks of Wurunjeri in possum skin cloaks appear to surround a lyrebird. The rhythmic patterning of the cloaks also extends to the lyrebird and ties the scene together.

AA 795/1 Barak Collection

TIWI PORTRAITS

MARUWAMI (AA228/3/2), UNKNOWN ARTIST (AA228/3/52)

1954

Tiwi people, Melville Island, Northern Territory

Collected on a National Geographic Society sponsored expedition to Melville Island led by Charles Mountford

Mixed media

These portraits are part of a series produced by Tiwi artists on Melville Island in 1954 for the anthropologist Charles Mountford. Mountford's expeditions to various parts of Australia over several decades created a remarkable archive of imagery and knowledge about Aboriginal culture. These drawings show designs for body painting for Tiwi ceremonies and are strikingly modernist in appearance. Ceremonies are an important part of Tiwi culture, particularly Kulama, an annual three day ceremony held at the end of the wet season and the mortuary or Pukumani ceremony which is held approximately six months after the deceased is buried.

AA 228/3/2 and AA 228/3/52 Mountford Collection

A MUSEUM ON KAURNA LAND

A MUSEUM ON KAURNA LAND

The South Australian Museum stands on Kurna land at Tarntanya, the place of the red kangaroo. The Museum is the custodian of the largest collection of Aboriginal cultural material in the world, it comprises tens of thousands of objects and artworks including fish traps, nets, shields, weapons, paintings, drawings, sculptures, mats, weaving, archaeology and sacred and ceremonial items. This exhibition features only a small fraction of this remarkable collection. These are objects that inform us of the sophisticated and abundant existence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of past wrongs, and of resilience in the face of adversity and persecution.

Objects included here demonstrate the skills of makers long past and cultural traditions flourishing today. Some of the earliest acquired pieces in the Museum's collection are also featured. Some of the objects in Wonders were created by largely self-taught artists; as they sought to tell us about their present and past, for the future. Such objects preserve knowledge and tradition. The struggle for Aboriginal rights is also signalled here as well as the birth of flourishing artistic movements which have received international acclaim. The landmark map of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia by Norman B. Tindale (1974), is featured along with items from the Museum's remarkable *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia* touring exhibition from 1988. These items all bear witness to the splendour, power and continuity of one of the oldest cultures on earth.

In addition to cultural material, the Museum is the custodian of a significant collection of archival material containing a wealth of information about Aboriginal languages and family history. Since 1988 these archives have been made widely available to Aboriginal communities in order to contribute to a better understanding of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to connect Aboriginal people with their past.

The Museum is also sadly the custodian of the skeletal remains of thousands of individuals, mostly Aboriginal people from South Australia. These skeletons are in the custodianship of the Museum as a safe keeping place until they can be returned to their Country. Some were stolen from ancient burial grounds, others from hospitals, collected by frontier workers and police. Some died of natural causes whilst others show evidence of trauma or bullet wounds. As an institution, the South Australian Museum is fully committed to reconciliation and to working with Aboriginal communities to start to heal the wounds of the past and to return these remains to their Country and community.

THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE

The Overland Telegraph Line (OTL) was a single 3,200-kilometre strand of galvanised wire spanning 36,000 poles between Darwin and Port Augusta.

It linked all the Australian colonies (except WA) with the rest of the world and was the greatest engineering feat of 19th century Australia. It crossed often impenetrable, unexplored land that just a decade before had claimed the lives of explorers Burke and Wills.

The South Australian colonial government believed that by being the first point of contact with rest of the world, economic benefits would accrue. The government offered a reward of £2,000 to find a route from the bottom to the top of the continent. South Australia's Superintendent of Telegraph, Charles Todd managed the OTL contract, and the exploring party for the difficult central section was led by John Ross and Alfred Giles accompanied by surveyor William Harvey.

The OTL construction party followed not far behind. The exploring party roughly followed the route of John McDouall Stuart's successful crossing in 1862, which also intersected with ancient Aboriginal lines of communication and trade. The OTL exploring party experienced hardship, floods, flies and dry spells, short rations and lack of water. On its completion in August 1872, messages that had once taken three months to reach London now took less than a day.

IRON HAFTED TOMAHAWK

1870s

Unknown maker

Previously owned by Sir Charles Todd

Iron, wood

The Overland Telegraph Line was targeted during its construction by Aboriginal people looking for material which could be repurposed to their advantage. Frequently innovative on the frontier, Aboriginal culture quickly adapted to the incursion of new technologies and materials. Here, the iron footplate of a telegraph pole has been skilfully fashioned into a hafted axe. Porcelain line insulators were also sought by Aboriginal people to make effective spear heads. The fact that Charles Todd owned this tomahawk is significant. He wrote that it was 'made with much ingenuity' which suggests an awareness of the transformative changes occurring along the new line of communication.

MESSAGE STICK

19th century

Unknown maker

Purchased by Mr A.H. Lewsey in 1914, acquired by History Trust of South Australia and transferred to the South Australian Museum
Wood

Message sticks are a communication tool used by Aboriginal people for passing messages between, and within, language groups. This message stick is inscribed with story of the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line between Eucla and Pt Augusta. The markings represent the five tents of the construction gang.

A69467

BLACKBURN'S WHIP

1788

Unknown maker, Eora people/David Blackburn (1753–1795)

Acquired at auction, Christie's, London, 1999 from the descendants of David Blackburn, then by the South Australian Museum in 2002 with the assistance of the National Australia Bank and the National Cultural Heritage Account.

Wood, rope

This object, first an Aboriginal club, then a First Fleet sailor's whip, links the settlement of Australia with the dispossession of its original inhabitants. It is a symbol of two systems of law. Master of HMS Supply, Blackburn spent four years in New South Wales and wrote sympathetically of the Eora. He sent home a Port Jackson wordlist, and may have acquired this club directly from an Eora man. Blackburn returned to England in 1792 and died only three years later. Ironically, the object was preserved by Blackburn's family not for its status as a very early colonial artefact, an Aboriginal club, but rather as an object of discipline, a device to beat sense into sailors.

A72553

GALAH FEATHER APRON

c. 1910

Unknown maker, Wangkangurru, Yarluyandi people
Birdsville, Queensland, Australia
Cacatua roseicapillus (galah), string

This beautiful apron made from galah feathers was created near Wirrarri (Birdsville) on Wangkangurru and Yarluyandi country in Queensland. It was used in ceremonial dancing by Aboriginal women, and it entered the Museum's collection as early as 1911. The tiny settlement of Birdsville, on the edge of the arid Simpson Desert may have been named for the large flocks of birds which congregated around waterholes in the Diamantina River. Birdsville's abundant galah numbers clearly spurred the creation of this delicate and beautiful apron which may also have had totemic significance.

A2995

COIL OF HUMAN HAIR

c. 1880s

Yandruwandha people,
Cooper Creek, South Australia.
Collected by Mrs Annie F. Richards, Innamincka before 1911
Human hair

This braided ring of human hair was created by a Yandruwandha woman at Cooper Creek, South Australia about 140 years ago. It was most likely used for a belt slung around the waist which allowed objects to be carried, freeing up the hands. While the Museum's Aboriginal collections are full of items collected by male explorers or anthropologists, this and a number of other collection items were collected by Mrs Annie F. Richards. Richards was married to the resident constable at Streaky Bay in the late 1800s the couple later moving to Innamincka, South Australia. For 20 years she sent extensive plant collections to the famous botanist Baron von Mueller in Melbourne and wrote in the Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia about her collecting and what she had learned from Aboriginal people about native plants.

A1945

WUMERANG – BOOMERANG

c. 1831

Unknown Aboriginal maker

Acquired 2016 as gift from a tourist visitor to Adelaide, purchased in Scotland in 1965

Wood

This is the earliest known example of an Aboriginal boomerang in an Australian collection. It is inscribed, 'Wumerang. South Seas Is weapon, 1831'. Before the term boomerang had become the common descriptor for such objects, the names *wumerang* and *boomerit* were both used. It appears this boomerang was acquired in the early colonial period and it made its way to Europe incorrectly labelled as a weapon from the 'South Sea Islands.' The wumerang was purchased in 1965 at auction in Glasgow by the donor who returned it to Australia whilst on a world cruise. Having caught a cab to the Museum, the donor approached the front desk and offered the wumerang as a gift, which was readily accepted as the date inscribed makes it the earliest recorded example in Australia.

A80137

ROSS AND HARVEY'S TELEGRAPH EXPLORATION PARTY CROSSING THE MACDONNELL RANGES

WILLIAM HARVEY

1871

Presented by Janet F Smith in July 1958

Watercolour on paper

Made after the event by surveyor William Harvey, this watercolour documents an altercation between Aboriginal men and the Overland Telegraph exploring party in January 1871. The depiction shows the sparseness of the mountainous western MacDonnell Ranges and an apparently equal number of protagonists. Five a side – John Ross, William Harvey, Alfred Giles, Thomas Crispe and William Hearne confronting unnamed Aboriginal men. Interestingly, this incident is not recorded in Ross's Overland Telegraph journal and Harvey left no extant written record to support this image. Having recorded peaceful encounters with Aboriginal people in the previous months, there is no mention of this illustrated fraught meeting or evidence as to whether or not it even took place.

SAMA 1201 Smith Collection

STEAMER SKETCH

CHARLIE FLANNIGAN

c.1892–93
Gift of Miss Watson
Pencil on paper

To pass the time while awaiting execution, Charlie Flannigan (aka Charlie McManus) sketched images drawn from his prodigious memory. He was an artist of Aboriginal and European descent and had worked mostly as a stockman, a profession that heavily influenced his drawings. His world of stockmen, country stations, landscape and ships populate his sketches. In 1892 Flannigan was tried for the murder of Sam Croker, manager of Auvergne Station, after a card game dispute. There is a poignancy to Flannigan's depictions when we consider they represent a passing parade of imagery distilled from his life, reflected upon while in gaol. Despite pleas for clemency, Flannigan was hanged in Fanny Bay Goal in 1893, the first person to be executed in the Northern Territory.

Series AA 263/01 Ramsay-Smith Collection

TOMMY WALKER – POLTPALINGINDA BOOBOOROWIE

OSCAR FRISTROM

1893
Oil on canvas

TOMMY WALKER – POLTPALINGINDA BOOBOOROWIE

OSCAR FRISTROM

c. 1890
Gift of Sir Edwin Thomas Smith KCMG
Pencil drawing

Side by side are two portraits of Ngarindjeri man Poltpalinginda Booboorowie (1830-1901) by the artist, Oscar Fristrom. Poltpalinginda or Tommy Walker, as he became known in Adelaide, was something of a celebrity known for his presence, wit and frequent court appearances. His English was very good, and he could both entertain and condemn, sometimes all at the same time. Tommy and his wife Mary were prominent Adelaide figures and he often spoke, as the newspapers reported, in 'condemnatory passages.' Tommy lived by his own rules, preferring to avoid perennial mission life and, in later years when in Adelaide, he was popular with the public, especially children.

The donor of this drawing, Sir Edwin Thomas Smith, was a prominent business and political figure and benefactor in South Australia. He was not related to William Ramsay Smith, the Adelaide physician who removed Tommy Walker's remains prior to his burial in West Terrace Cemetery and shipped his skeleton to Edinburgh University. Tommy's remains were repatriated to Adelaide in the early 1990s and he was buried at Raukkan.

AA 103/1 Fristrom Collection

MAP OF REGION EAST OF LAKE EYRE

HENRY JAMES HILLIER (1875–1958)

1904

Acquired from the Reuther family

Ink on silk

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AA 266/18 Reuther Collection

SKETCH MAP 'TRIBES' FROM ARAFURA SEA TO GULF OF CARPENTARIA AND GROOTE EYLANDT, NORTHERN TERRITORY

DR NORMAN B TINDALE AO (1900–1993)

Ink and pencil on paper

The now iconic Tindale map of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia took 50 years to research and visually document. It incorporated 250 distinct language groups and was first published in 1974. As part of Tindale's extraordinary mapping and linguistic research process a series of hand drawn sketch maps were produced. This manuscript map charts Northern Territory and demonstrates the granular level of research undertaken by Tindale in creating his comprehensive map of Aboriginal Australia.

AA 338/23/1 Tindale Collection

TRIBAL BOUNDARIES IN ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA

DR NORMAN B TINDALE AO (1900–1993)

1974

Printed document

For more than 45 years Dr Norman B. Tindale worked at the South Australian Museum and his interests and achievements in documenting Aboriginal Australia are unparalleled. Tindale's ability to examine places on his field trips using a range of skills, anthropological, geological and palaeological were unique. His field work and research meant he was able to realise his long-standing ambition to prove that Aboriginal groups related territorially to distinct regions. His tribal map of Australia, first published in 1940 and then revised in 1974, together with his encyclopaedic catalogue of Aboriginal tribal groups, was radical in its fundamental implication that prior to white settlement Australia was not terra nullius (land belonging to no one) – decades before the historic Mabo judgement. The map shows Aboriginal language group boundaries existing at the time of the first European settlement in Australia. It is not intended to represent contemporary relationships to land.

AA 338/19 Tindale Collection

YUENDUMU DOOR 12 – KARNTA-KURLU (WOMEN)

PADDY JAPALJARRI STEWART (c. 1935–2014) WARLPIRI/
ANMATYERRE PEOPLE

1983–84

Painted at Yuendumu, NT

Acquired from the Yuendumu Community by the SA Museum in 1995
Synthetic polymer paint on metal door

Paddy Stewart was a key figure in painting not only the doors of Yuendumu in 1983 but also the important earlier murals at Papunya in 1971. In 1983 and 1984 Stewart and other senior men in the Yuendumu community painted on 30 doors at the Yuendumu School, 'because the children should learn about our laws. The children do not know them and they might become like white people, which we don't want to happen.' The strong and colourful images reminded young Warlpiri of their culture and need to preserve it. The doors featuring the most important Dreaming stories were created by Stewart and four senior men of the Yuendumu community. They proved to be instrumental in spurring on the vibrant painting movement there. After 12 years, the doors were acquired by the Museum and conserved to ensure their longevity and many are displayed in the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery.

A72138

CROCODILE HUNTING STORY

MICK GUBARGU (1925–2008), KUNWINJKU PEOPLE

c.1979

Western Arnhem Land

Ochre and charcoal on bark

This impressive bark painting depicts the story of crocodile hunter Nawalabirk and his wife Djabelbel, and his young brother Njoryuwuk. Nawalabirk ties a rope to the crocodile's neck and tail but it wakes and sweeps him into the water and dismembers him. Njoryuwuk, who covets Djabelbel sings out to his brother that everything is all right and that he will look after Djabelbel and their son. This masterwork depicts the same figure at two different times, with Nawalabirk seen first tying the crocodile, and then having been dismembered. This iconic painting was included in the Museum's groundbreaking touring exhibition, *Dreamings* which toured to international acclaim in the USA in 1989.

A66795

POSSUM DREAMING

TIMMY PAYUNGKA JAPANGARDI (C. 1942–2000),
PINTUBI PEOPLE

1971

Gift of Robert Edwards AO

Enamel house paint on asbestos floor tile

Timmy Japangardi lived at Kintore and Kiwirrkura and was one of the earliest painters to work on translating dreaming stories from performance and ground paintings onto more permanent supports, such as this broken floor tile. Artists in the Western Desert area keenly adopted painting after encouragement from Geoffrey Bardon, a schoolteacher at Papunya, who introduced acrylic paints in 1971. This very early painting, depicting central possum tracks and four possum men sitting around a central campfire, was produced using enamel house paint on a discarded floor tile and recently given to the Museum by its ex-Director Robert Edwards AO. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Western Desert art movement.

A80136

DREAMINGS PAINTING

UTA UTA JANGALA (c. 1920-1990) PINTUBI PEOPLE

Acquired by the Museum in 1980
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas

This painting depicts the travels of Dreaming ancestors from the west to Kaakuratinja or Lake McDonald on the Northern Territory-Western Australian border. The travelling ancestors are part of the Tjingari ceremonial complex. Much of this complex is secret; in general, Tjingari is a series of stories, related songs and dances concerning a group of mythical characters who travel vast distances across the western desert, moving from waterhole to waterhole. In this particular segment the Tjingari men have tracked and killed an emu. Kuningka, the Native Cat Ancestor and owner of the country on which the Men were hunting, became angry because they had not asked his permission to get meat on his land. He chased them to the east where they were killed by a huge hailstorm brought by the Rain Ancestor while they were sleeping. The concentric circles are campsites at particular waterholes and the connecting lines the paths travelled by the Tjingari group. The background dots refer to the surrounding countryside's vegetation, as well as to ceremonial body painting. This painting was a key work in the first major exhibition of Aboriginal art, held in Australia in 1980, and has been exhibited all over the world.

A66889

DAISY BATES' JACKET, HAT AND SEWING KIT

Daisy Bates (1863-1951)
Donated after Daisy Bates' death in 1951

Irish-born Daisy Bates CBE was a controversial figure in her lifetime. Her work as an advocate for Aboriginal people and role as a self-taught anthropologist is overshadowed by her imperialist worldview, belief that Aboriginal people would 'die out' and her views on segregating Aboriginal people for their own good from European civilisation. Her dogged views and remarkable endurance seemed in equal measure. She lived for 16 years at Ooldea, a waterhole on the trans-Australian railway and wrote many articles on Aboriginal life for newspapers. Bates' entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography ends, 'Her achievements remain the subject of sustained controversy.' Here we see her clothes, long worn and scrappily mended with her trusty sewing kit, as good a metaphor as any for her long life in outback Australia.

AA 23/5/3 Daisy Bates Collection

EMBROIDERY FROM HERMANNSBURG

Mid-20th century

Unknown Arrente maker

Hermannsburg, Northern Territory

Gift of Mary Bertelsmeier, 2001

Embroidery on cotton

Arrente women at Hermannsburg were encouraged by the Lutheran missionaries to produce handicrafts rather than painting watercolours and wooden artefacts like their male counterparts. This partially was for cultural reasons. Embroidery and rug-making were both undertaken and the level of execution in their embroidery, produced for sale through Lutheran congregations in SA and to tourists was considerable.

GYPSUM PIPE WITH BIRD'S CLAW AROUND THE BOWL

c. 1913

Gift of E R Mitchell, Oodnadatta, 1963

GYPSUM PIPE WITH BIRD'S CLAW AROUND THE BOWL

c. 1913

Gift of Stephanie Schrapel, 2015

GYPSUM PIPE WITH MAN'S FACE ON BOWL, RESTING ON A FOOT

c. 1913

Gift of Stephanie Schrapel, 2015

GYPSUM PIPE – CARVED HORSE HOOF

c. 1913

Gift of Mrs C E Klotz, 1953

Erlikilyika or Jim Kite (Arrente people)

Charlotte Waters, Northern Territory

Erlikilyika or Jim Kite was a southern Arrernte man from Charlotte Waters. He accompanied the ethnologists Spencer and Gillen on their groundbreaking Central Australian expedition in 1901–02. Jim Kite was not only a very important intermediary between the researchers and the Aboriginal people they encountered, due to his language skills and knowledge, but he could also eloquently express his world view in art. In the Museum's collection are remarkable drawings made on the expedition and numerous carvings made from kaolinite. These inventively and expertly carved pipes are visually clever and almost surreal in their subject matter combinations: a man's head balanced on a foot, a bird's claw grasping a pipe bowl and an upturned horse's hoof.

WAX CYLINDER RECORDING OF SONG ABOUT NGURUNDERI

1932, Dr Norman B. Tindale AO

Recording of Clarence Long (Milerum), Tanganekald people
Coorong, South Australia

In 1877 Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, a machine that could record and reproduce sound. The sounds were recorded on hollow cylinders made from wax and measuring about 5cm in diameter and 11cm in length. Each cylinder could record sound for up to two minutes.

During the Board for Anthropological Research Expeditions, anthropologist Norman Tindale recorded oral histories of Aboriginal people including kinship data, tribal distributions and ceremonies. The recording method Tindale used involved making two recordings of each song, the first was played back to the Aboriginal person/people, who then sang it again. Transcriptions of songs were made at the time of recording or soon after.

WOOMERA – AMIRRE

1941, Albert Namatjira (1902–1959)
Hermannsburg, Northern Territory
Gifted to the South Australian Museum, 2014
Watercolour on wood, spinifex resin, sinew

Albert Namatjira's name and that of Hermannsburg are inseparable in Australia. The Hermannsburg Mission west of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) was established by Lutheran missionaries in 1877.

Namatjira learnt watercolour technique from the artist, Rex Battarbee (1893–1973) whom he met in 1932. He produced evocative images of his country which were reproduced endlessly as prints and on household items when his copyright was sold after his death by the Northern Territory Trustee to Legend Press denying his descendants control over the use of his images. Whilst assumed by many to be European views of mythologised and dramatic often arid landscape scenes, more recent readings of Namatjira's work have suggested he was hiding cultural knowledge in plain sight.

A79235

PART OF THE FIRST ABORIGINAL FLAG PROTOTYPE

1971
Cotton

This simple circular piece of cotton was donated to the Museum by Sandy Hanson, a former Museum employee and the seamstress responsible for sewing the first Aboriginal flag. Hanson constructed the piece at the request of her Aboriginal colleague Harold Thomas and she retained this remnant after removing the black and red bands from behind the central yellow sun motif. This offcut is perhaps all that remains, as the whereabouts of the original flag are unknown.

The Aboriginal flag was first flown in Tarntanyangga (Victoria Square) in Adelaide on the 12 July 1971, on what was then called 'National Aborigines Day'. Over the last 50 years, the iconic black, red and yellow design became a symbol for Aboriginal people's strength and connectedness to country. The black represents Aboriginal people, the red the earth and the yellow the sun. In 1995 the Aboriginal Flag was recognised by the Commonwealth Government as an official flag of Australia.

A69402

ULURU HANDBACK POSTER

CHIPS MACKINOLTY (BORN 1954)
REDBACK GRAPHIX/JALAK GRAPHICS

1985

Donated by Gerald Whewell (Superintendent at Uluru)
Screenprint, editioned

When the Hawke government handed back the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to the Anangu in October 1985, it ended decades of lobbying by the traditional owners to have their land rights recognised. Inspired partly by the Wave Hill Walk-Off by Aboriginal stockmen in 1966, and witnessing the effects of pastoralism, mining, tourism and the desecration of sacred sites, the Anangu had long lobbied the Northern Territory Government for the return of their lands. In 1977, when the area was declared the Uluru-Kata Tjuta (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) National Park, it was excluded from the Aboriginal Land Rights Act of 1976. In 1983 the Hawke government announced that the Act would be amended and the title for the National Park was transferred to the Anangu. On 26 October 1985, Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen handed over the title in a public ceremony at the base of Uluru. The poster commemorates this occasion and uses the Aboriginal flag as its inspiration, substituting the iconic profile of Uluru for the sun.

AA 805 Whewell Collection

COLLECTING
DEEP TIME

COLLECTING DEEP TIME

The Museum enables the visitor to travel through time. Not just decades or centuries but through deep time – millennia and billions of years into the past. Back to the beginning when the planets were forming and their offshoots, meteors, exploded through space and time. To look at a meteor billions of years old is to realise how short our life span is in the history of the universe. To see a piece of Mars which fell to earth in Egypt in 1911, but was not recognised as such until after the Mars Rover visited the red planet in 2012, tells us of the advances in both space travel and knowledge, and how museums create new knowledge and share it with the world.

Before any European set foot in South Australia, Aboriginal people were collecting and using minerals and also observing and mapping the heavenly constellations.

From ochre to tin, copper and gold, mining in South Australia has been central to the State's prosperity. Gold was discovered in Australia for the first time at Montacute in 1846, only a decade after settlement. The first nugget mined is in the exhibition, along with objects fashioned from gold by other cultures. Copper mining on the Yorke Peninsula created great wealth and record dividends for shareholders. It also created moments of great tragedy such as the loss of the SS Admella which traded between Adelaide, Melbourne and Launceston. In August 1859, early in the morning, the ship hit a submerged reef near Mount Gambier and broke up while carrying 93 tons of copper. Only 24 of the 113 passengers on board survived.

Finally, the Museum's opal collections are unsurpassed and the Virgin Rainbow featured in the exhibition, is considered the finest example in the world.

KINGSTON ON MURRAY METEORITE

1985, Kingston on Murray, 4.5 billion years old
Found by Harold Pope at Kingston on Murray in 1985; donated the Museum in October 2019.

Meteorites are very rare things – only around 70 have been found in South Australia, with around 70,000 extant world wide. Although this is the Museum's newest meteorite, it was found in 1985 by farmer Harold Pope ploughing his field at Kingston on Murray in the Riverland. It wasn't until late 2019 that it was recognised in the farmer's shed as a possible meteorite and brought to the Museum. Under South Australian law, any meteorite found in South Australia belongs to the Crown and must be lodged with the Museum. This is an "oriented" meteorite – the striations on the surface of the meteorite are flow lines that formed as the outer surface melted as it entered the Earth's atmosphere.

MET 184

FRAGMENT NAKHLA METEORITE FROM MARS

1911, Nakhla Egypt

Originated in volcano on Mars 1.3 billion years ago; fell to earth on 28th June 1911; acquired by the Museum in 1980

Almost all meteorites found or seen to fall to Earth originate in the Asteroid Belt that lies between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter – but not all. In 1911 a meteorite landed in Nakhla Egypt, the small piece on display here is a fragment from a much larger meteorite which came from Mars, a fact that was not discovered for over 70 years. It wasn't until 1983 that NASA scientists discovered gases within the Nakhla meteorite were identical to those in the atmosphere found and analysed on Mars by the Viking landers in 1976 proving that the Nakhla meteorite was from the Red Planet. So, here is a real piece of Mars on Earth!

PYRITE IN SHALE

2018, Brukunga, South Australia

Specimen collected by Bob Major of the Field Geology Club of South Australia

Pyrite was collected and traded by Aboriginal people across the South East of Australia as far back as 5,000 years ago as part of fire lighting kits. This Pyritic shale is from Brukunga in the Adelaide Hills where an open cut mine operated from 1955–1972, producing sulphur used in superphosphate fertiliser. In the local Permangk language, Brukunga means 'place of fire'.

THREE UNCUT DIAMONDS

Mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo; purchased for the Museum with funds from the Hon. Diana Laidlaw AM in 2010

Uncut diamonds can look remarkably unlike their faceted future selves, as can be seen here. These diamonds were mined in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of the world's largest diamond producers. The largest diamond weighs 60 carats (i.e. 12 grams). Most natural diamonds have ages between 1 billion and 3.5 billion years, and were forged under the incredible heat and pressure found deep in the Earth's mantle, usually between 150 to 350 kilometres but sometimes up to 800 kilometres below the surface. They were carried to the surface millions of years ago in ancient volcanic eruptions that cooled into igneous rocks known as kimberlites. Here they have lain until eons of erosion revealed them to prospectors and miners.

G33661,2,3

THE VIRGIN RAINBOW

2003, Coober Pedy, South Australia

Early Cretaceous, around 100 million years ago

Purchased in 2013 with the assistance of the Australian Government through the National Cultural Heritage Account.

Opalised belemnite

Found in Coober Pedy, this 72 carat opalised belemnite is the finest quality crystal opal ever unearthed, and part of the Museum's exceptional collection of opals which includes the large uncut Fire of Australia, on display in the Mineral Gallery. Found in September 2003 at the Brown's Folly field at Coober Pedy in South Australia, it measures almost 70 millimetres in length and is composed of extremely rare black crystal opal with large patches of full spectral colour against a natural dark background. Not only is it the finest stone to be recovered from Coober Pedy, it is also the finest quality opalised fossil to have been unearthed anywhere to date. Originally a 100 million year old fossilised belemnite 'guard' – similar to a cuttlebone – it has been polished to reveal the magnificence of its opal replacement.

G34296

OPALISED COCKLE SHELLS

1950s, Coober Pedy, South Australia

Early Cretaceous, 110 million years ago

Donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program in 2005 by Murray and Ros Thompson

Australia is famed for its opalised fossils and the Museum's collection is the finest in the world. During the early Cretaceous Period, Australia lay near the South Pole, joined to Antarctica as part of the ancient supercontinent Gondwana. At that time much of inland Australia, including the opal fields of Coober Pedy, was covered by the Eromanga Sea, a large, shallow body of water home to a wide variety of marine life. Over time these cockles were buried with sediment which eventually turned to rock, fossilising the shells. Much later, as Australia broke free from Antarctica and started moving north, acidic ground water percolated through the sediments, dissolving the fossils and leaving shell shaped cavities which filled with opal. These small and exquisite opalised cockle shells were found in Coober Pedy in the 1950s and have been polished, revealing them to be of the highest quality.

G30518

COPY OF GREEK GOLD COIN

c. 500 BCE, Western Asia

Acquired in Mumbai, early 20th century

Prof. T Harvey Johnson Collection

This 'gold' Greek drachma features an image of Alexander the Great on the obverse, and the Athenian Owl and 'AOE' on the reverse. On further examination at the Museum, the coin was found to be a fake, it was hollow, with a hole drilled into its side and filled with lead. Had it been genuine, the rarity of a coin of this period would guarantee its value to be over \$250,000. Fakes have plagued museums for centuries and great pains are taken to ensure the authenticity of objects when they are acquired today. This coin was probably acquired in India many years ago by the donor who was tricked.

A43780

BRONZE AGE GOLD PENANNULAR

Bronze Age, 3,300 to 1,200 BCE

Excavated in Bishopstone, Wiltshire c.1900

Presented by F.P. Dibben to the Museum

There is divided opinion on whether such penannulars were used as currency or a form of jewellery.

They might be both. The ancient Egyptians produced gold rings as a form of currency in the Bronze Age period and African communities historically used ring money too. It is possible such items were used as a convenient medium of payment or exchange.

Whatever its purpose, this small piece is one of the oldest objects in the collection made by human hands. Such items may also have had some symbolic or ritualistic role. This Bronze Age penannular was found on a farm in Wiltshire, England in the early 1900s, probably by J.H. Dibben and then carried to Pinnaroo, South Australia by a relative, F.P. Dibben, in 1911 and then presented to the Museum.

A50523

SPECIMEN FROM AUSTRALIA'S FIRST GOLD MINE

Victoria Gold Mine, Castambul, South Australia Mined between 1846-51

Donated by the Mineralogical Society of South Australia in 2008

This gold specimen is from the first gold mine in Australia, 18 km northeast of Adelaide. The Victoria Gold Mine, at Castambul near Montacute produced Australia's first gold, five years before the gold rushes in the eastern colonies.

The mine promised much for the colony which was struggling economically only ten years after European settlement, yet it delivered very little with only a paltry 24 ounces of gold produced in the five years of mining before it closed down.

G32924

GOLD NUGGET

Late 19th century, Argosy Mine, Birdwood, South Australia
Donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program
in 2012 by C. McGregor

Gold was first discovered in alluvial diggings in the Birdwood area 1869, and the total recorded production was 622 kilograms. Production, which ceased in the 1930s, came mainly from quartz reefs but the large alluvial diggings also yielded considerable amounts. The main mines to produce gold were the Argosy, Hynes Reef, Lucky Hit and the Black Snake. While commercial operations have ceased gold is still found today in the Adelaide Hills by keen metal detectorists. This beautiful gold nugget was mined at Birdwood and given to the Museum in 2012.

COPPER INGOT FROM THE WRECK OF THE SS ADMELLA

Produced 1856, Kapunda Mine, South Australia
Retrieved from the wreck of the SS *Admella* in the 1950s.
Discovered in an antiques store in Goodwood in 2016.

This rare copper ingot was produced at the Kapunda mine in 1859 and was part of a cargo of 93 tons of copper on board the steamship *Admella*, travelling from Port Adelaide to Melbourne. In the early hours of the morning on 6 August 1859, the steamship struck a reef off Carpenters Rocks sustaining catastrophic damage and breaking apart into three sections. Only 24 of the 113 passengers survived as rescue attempts lasted more than a week. This is one of only five known ingots retrieved from the wreck. The Kapunda Copper Mine claims many significant firsts in Australian mining: it was the nation's first copper mine opening in 1843, it was Australia's first mining town, and from 1867 housed the country's first large scale open cut mine. It closed in 1877, having produced 14,000 tonnes of copper.

C.E. FIRNHABER BROOCH

1870s, Charles Eduard Firnhaber (1805–1880)
Barossa Valley gold and Burra malachite brooch
Donated by Gerard McCabe in 2012.
Gold, malachite

Coinciding with the discovery of valuable metals in South Australia was the arrival of designers and makers who could exploit its mineral wealth. Charles Firnhaber was one of the first German settlers to reach Adelaide, arriving from Bremen in March 1847. Firnhaber most likely started working for established Adelaide jewellers, George Griffin, (est. 1840), and John Henry Pace, (est. 1841) before establishing his own business in 1849. He was regularly commissioned by prominent South Australians and businesses to design and make presentation, civic and ecclesiastical objects as well as fine jewellery including this beautiful Barossa gold brooch featuring Burra malachite. Gold was first discovered in the Barossa in 1868 with a total of 50,000 ounces extracted over just two years. By late 1870, the gold rush had subsided and less than 100 miners remained.

OBSERVING THE WORLD

Depiction of specimens is a given in any natural history museum collection. This can take a variety of forms. Today we use photography and digital scanning, but in the past illustrators made painstaking watercolour or pencil drawings. The impetus to create images based on nature is timeless, driven by the influence of the surrounding natural world and the desire to replicate it and learn from the process. What better way to memorialise new discoveries than to draw them quickly, before colours changed and forms desiccated?

Illustration generally had to be quick work, and many curious and talented women sought to capture these moments for the scientific record. Talented artist Rosa Fiveash (1854–1938) was born, studied and lived her life in Adelaide and later taught art here. She was an accomplished painter of plants and completed numerous images for *The Forest Flora of South Australia*, published serially from 1882. Fiveash went on to work for Edward Stirling, the Museum's Director (1889–1912), and illustrated his Royal Society of SA paper on the newly discovered marsupial mole, as seen in the exhibition, along with images of the Lake Eyre toas. Skilled and adaptable, Fiveash seemed able to turn her hand to painting anything put in front of her, including insects and orchids, in which she later specialised.

The role of Aboriginal people in creating a rich record of natural history is also recognised here. Aboriginal people often recorded the species and stories around them. The subtlety with which they could render images of plants, trees, animals and birds, especially in sometimes very difficult circumstances, is outstanding. Untrained in Western notions of perspective or representation, artists such as Jim Kite – Erlilkilyika, or the unknown Larakia man from Port Essington in the mid-19th century, demonstrate acute powers of observation, knowledge and illustration. As seen in the exhibition, images created by these artists transcend the representation of familiar species to become timeless art.

MARSUPIAL MOLE

NOTORYCTES TYPHLOPS STIRLING, 1889

June 1933, collected by N.B. Tindale and C.J. Hackett
Registered 1936

Marsupial moles or *itjaritjari*, as they were known to the Arrernte people, live in the sandy deserts of central Australia and spend most of their time 'swimming' through the sand and rarely venture to the surface. The presence of these elusive moles can be determined by digging trenches along sand dunes and waiting for a day or two for the exposed sand to dry. If a tunnel intersects the wall of the trench it will dry more quickly than the surrounding more compacted sand and become clearly visible as a circle. The mole lacks eyes and has only tiny holes for ears which, along with its blonde fur and spade-like front claws, give it an enigmatic appearance. They have a backwards facing pouch, to avoid it filling up with sand while they move through the dunes.

M4081

MARSUPIAL MOLE (NOTORYCTES TYPHLOPS)

ROSA CATHERINE FIVEASH (1854–1938)

c.1891

Presented by Mr E.S. Booth, 31 March 1954

Watercolour

This sensitive watercolour sketch of the elusive marsupial mole was painted by Adelaide-born artist Rosa Fiveash. The marsupial mole was first described by the Museum's former Director Edward Stirling in 1888, and the Museum's specimens were among the first to be obtained by any collection. Fiveash was a skilled natural history painter and worked for Stirling, providing illustrations for his Royal Society paper on the newly discovered mammal. There are more than 200 works by Fiveash in the Museum's collection. Fiveash is also credited with introducing china painting to Adelaide and produced beautiful, illuminated addresses. She lived for 75 years in her North Adelaide family home, working in her studio, dedicating her life to capturing the flora of South Australia on paper and tending to her garden filled with Australian wildflowers.

SAMA 970/3 Fiveash Collection

SKETCHBOOK OF TREES/PLANTS

1901–1902, Erlikilyika or Jim Kite (c. 1860–c. 1930)

Acquired by Herbert Basedow from the Erlikilyika exhibition, Adelaide 1913

Pencil drawings in sketchbook

Aboriginal artist Jim Kite or Erlikilyika was a prolific and skilled sculptor in kaolin and wood, and an accomplished artist and draftsman which is evident in this sketchbook exhibited in Adelaide in 1913. While working with anthropologists Spencer and Gillen on their 1901–1902 transcontinental Australian expedition, Kite was offered the opportunity to draw images in Gillen's journal, an offer he took up enthusiastically. This remarkable series of tree drawings resulted from another, unknown opportunity for Jim Kite to provide imagery to support the expedition. Most of the trees depicted are given Arrernte names as seen here. This one appears as Gumulla and as Kite depicts it a number of times it may have had some personal significance to him. In this inventive sketch he appears to show three stages of the development of the tree – leaves, flowers and new shoots emerging – and the distinctive bark patterning.

AA 108/1/1 Gillen Collection

LORD HOWE ISLAND STICK INSECTS

DRYOCOCELUS AUSTRALIS

1916, Arthur Lea, Lord Howe Island

Lord Howe Island stick insects, also known as ‘tree lobsters’, were common on Lord Howe Island in 1916 when South Australian Museum entomologist Arthur Lea collected this drawer of specimens.

Sheltering within hollow trees were large groups of immatures, females and males (and check out the extraordinary development of the males’ hind legs).

But introduced rats invaded Lord Howe Island and exterminated all the tree lobsters’ and the species was assumed to be extinct. Luckily, a tiny remnant population was eventually discovered in 2001 on a neighbouring, steep and rugged island. Thanks to a successful captive breeding program, plus the eradication of rats from Lord Howe Island, this unique insect now has a more secure future.

PLATE 48: SOUTH AUSTRALIA ILLUSTRATED – ENTOMOLOGY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ORTHOPTERA, &C.

1847

Hand-coloured lithograph

George French Angas (artist 1822–1886) W. Wing (engraver)

This is one of 60 coloured lithographs featured in the 1847 edition of *South Australia Illustrated* created by the artist George French Angas. The centrepiece is the splendid giant stick insect (*Eurycnema goliath*). In 1850 Angas and his wife emigrated to South Australia, where his father had settled two years earlier. He opened a studio in Adelaide and later was appointed Secretary of the Australian Museum in Sydney, where he acquired a considerable knowledge of conchology (shells). He returned to South Australia in 1860 and was chairman of the District Council of Angaston in the Barossa Valley. In his later years his main interest was in natural history rather than art and he was an active member of the Zoological Society and the Linnaean Society.

DRAWINGS OF NATURAL HISTORY SUBJECTS

c.1800s

Artist unknown – ‘Port Essington native’

Pencil on paper

These delicate and beautiful pencil drawings were found in the Museum’s Archives held in a small envelope and appear to have been produced in Port Essington, the failed British settlement in the Northern Territory which was abandoned by 1849. The name of the artist is unknown but the images depict fishing for turtles and sketches of birds, lizards, snakes, crocodiles, various fish, an echidna, a kangaroo and a native cat (quoll). The drawings selected here, from top left clockwise are: a dugong and jelly fish; a bird (possibly a chicken) and a fish; a fish trap, a fish and a catfish and finally the ‘Devil devil.’ Clearly, while the artist has drawn these creatures in a schematic way, they appear to record details which are both significant and of importance in representing the species. Interestingly, the artist has observed creatures both dorsally, as is common in some rock art and later bark painting styles, and also side-on.

DUCKS AND IBIS SKETCH

ILON-TEREBA OR JEMMY MILLER (c.1851-?)

c. 1880–1890

Donated by John George Knight, Deputy Sheriff, Palmerston

Pencil, coloured pencil on paper

This drawing was part of an important series of 18 images comprising *The Dawn of Art*. They were exhibited by John George Knight, Deputy Sheriff, Palmerston and, later, South Australia’s Government Resident in the Northern Territory. The display, part of the huge Melbourne Centennial exhibition in 1888, featured works by various Aboriginal artists imprisoned or living in Darwin and their skill was acclaimed. Eminent Victorian painter George Folingsby declared ‘[they] were all worthy of being made honorary members of the Australian Academy of Arts’. Ilon-Tereba was a Wulwulan man convicted of manslaughter in 1881 and sentenced to life imprisonment in Fanny Bay Gaol where he produced several drawings.

‘CYPHOCRANIA GOLIATH, GRAY’

ROSA CATHERINE FIVEASH (1854–1938)

1909

Watercolour on paper

Sent to the Museum by Mrs W. Knick in 1909 from Broome, Roebuck Bay, Western Australia

Collected by N Holmes, 9 October 1987

When compared to her watercolour of the marsupial mole, this image of a giant stick insect by Rosa Fiveash demonstrates her range and abilities as a natural history painter. Skilled and adaptable, Fiveash seemed able to turn her hand to painting anything put in front of her, including insects and orchids, in which she later specialised. This drawing is inscribed, *Sent by Mrs W. Knick and rec'd at Museum 17.05.09 in almost fresh condition... Broome, Roebuck Bay, N.W. Australia.* This image is due to the efforts of two women, one a collector, the other an artist, creating a chain of information across a vast distance, via a superb specimen and a skilled rendering by a talented artist. This is wonderful image of the giant stick insect which is the second largest Australian insect measured by length with mature females reaching lengths of up to 25 centimetres.

SAMA 970/1 Fiveash Collection

TOAS

1904–1906, various Diyari makers

Coopers Creek, Killalpaninna Mission, South Australia

Purchased from Rev. J.G. Reuther in 1906

Ochre on gypsum wood

Toas were small, composite painted artifacts made by members of the Diyari people and collected by Lutheran missionary Johann Reuther at the Killalpaninna Mission. Reuther claimed they were used as ‘signposts’ by Aboriginal people vacating a camp to tell those following where the makers had gone. Seen in this way each toa represented a particular place, by way of its carved shape and painted detail. These objects seem to have been made as an entirely new, visual form of the placenames which Reuther was documenting, triggered perhaps by his interest in ethnographic objects. In 1906 Reuther retired and sold his entire collection, including 385 toas to the Museum for £400 – a considerable sum at the time. There are more Toas on display in the Museum’s Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery.

A6260, A6273, A6274, A6275, A6291

ROSA FIVEASH COPIES OF HARRY HILLIERS' WATERCOLOURS OF TOAS

ROSA CATHERINE FIVEASH (1854–1938)

1908

Watercolours pasted onto paper (book artwork)

Rosa Fiveash did not limit her watercolour practice to only natural history subjects but was able to produce illustrations of museum objects in order to illustrate scientific papers and research publications on the collection. These are miniature watercolour versions of the Toas acquired by the Museum in 1906 and are copies of works originally made by Harry Hillier, who drew up the Dieri (Diyari) map for Reuther also featured in this exhibition. Hillier made coloured drawings carefully documenting each toa. Fiveash then copied these for publication in Edward Stirling and E.R. Waite's *Description of Toas or Australian Aboriginal direction signs in Records of the South Australian Museum*. The published article lists 322 of the 385 toas acquired.

ADULT AND BABY DIPROTODON HUMERUS (UPPER ARM BONE)

Adult found by Stirling and Zietz or possibly Hurst at Lake Callabonna in 1893

Baby discovered by George Hurst at Lake Callabonna in 1893

Fossilised animal remains

Here we see a comparison between the bones of an infant Diprotodon and those of its mother. The infant Diprotodon's humerus was found (along with other bones) in the pouch region of its mother's skeleton during one of the Museum's earliest expeditions to Lake Callabonna. Unfortunately, the baby bones were not kept with its mother's and this led to confusion between the two forms of Diprotodon found, that is, whether they were of different sexes or different species, a question which was not resolved until much later. Australian megafauna became extinct about 46,000 years ago. The Museum's collection of the remains of megafauna is remarkable. A complete Diprotodon skeleton is on display on level 2.

DIPROTODON

1907, Charles Howard Angas (1861–1928)

Watercolour

Charles Howard Angas was the grandson of the business man and philanthropist George Fife Angas and a nephew of the prominent artist George French Angas, whose work can also be seen in this section of the exhibition. Charles Angas shared an interest in science and natural history with his uncle and was known in South Australia as both a patron of arts and as a practising artist. His slightly naïve watercolour of the extinct Diprotodon was completed in 1907 and seems to show the large marsupial plant eater near what could be Lake Callabonna, the discovery site of Diprotodon and other megafauna skeletons. The skeletons had been found in 1892 by an Aboriginal station hand named Jackie Nolan. Charles Angas was also a pastoralist, loved cricket, greyhound racing, horses, and was a prominent member of the Royal Agricultural Society. He was also member of the Children's Hospital board and followed his father and grandfather as a generous financial supporter.

SAMA 1087 Angas Collection

EXTINCTION, LOSS AND DOCUMENTING THE WORLD

EXTINCTION, LOSS AND DOCUMENTING THE WORLD

Museum collections are the litmus test by which species loss is measured. The Museum's collections enable us to view species long gone and those more recently lost. From Crinoid fossils which emerged in the mid-Cambrian period (300 million years ago) to the megatherium, diprotodon, elephant bird, the dodo and the thylacine, species loss can be charted across time. More recent losses of species of birds and small mammals can be seen here alongside the continuing presence of some remarkable species which still persist, sometimes against the odds.

Building the Museum's collections over decades has relied on scientists working in the field to gather evidence of the past and their present. Important discoveries have been associated with particular scientists and curators. The talented Frederick George Waterhouse (1815–1898) was the first full time curator at the Museum from 1860, and though underpaid and lacking in space for his many acquisitions, he managed to shape the Museum's collections. He acquired the first recorded specimen of the Princess Alexandra parrot (*Polytelis alexandrae*), seen here alongside the paradise parrot and the elusive night parrot.

Climate change and species loss can be witnessed in the decline of native rat populations since European settlement. Rats polarise people – pet or pest, or food source? To Burke and Wills, starving in the outback, rats were inedible on principle and they perished. To the local Yandruwandha people, who sang to attract them in times of plenty, they were a source of sustenance.

From the depths of the oceans and our inland waterways come some surprising fish and marine invertebrates. Creatures which on earth might be tiny can be giants on the ocean's floor. The role of the scientist in defining new knowledge and sharing it is represented here by items collected by the early French explorers accompanying Nicolas Baudin. The scientist's role in problem solving is exemplified by the inclusion of the tiny typhus mite, which caused many deaths in wartime Papua New Guinea, and also the lethal box jellyfish. Both of these potentially deadly species were researched at the Museum and this knowledge has saved many lives.

THYLACINE SKIN

THYLACINUS CYNOCEPHALUS

c. 1955

Skins are often used for scientific enquiry.

These thylacine pelts are still rich in colour in good condition and unfaded, unlike the mounted specimens that tend to fade as they are often on public display. The Museum holds many animal and bird skins, and these inform scientific research about extinct and extant populations, evolutionary biology, and relationships between animals and the environment.

DESERT RAT KANGAROO OR OOLACUNTA

CALOPRYMNUS CAMPESTRIS

c. 1955

The Desert Rat Kangaroo, or oolacunta, is a small, now extinct marsupial similar to wallabies and kangaroos. It was scientifically described by John Gould in London in 1843, after South Australian Governor George Grey sent him three specimens. Hedley Herbert Finlayson, the Honorary Curator of Mammals at the Museum from 1930–1965, reported chasing an oolacunta for more than twelve miles, saying that they “paused only to die.” Finlayson was aided greatly in the bush by Jimmy Naylor Arpilindika, a Wangkangurru man who he regarded as his ‘mainstay’ and ‘king pin’ when searching for the oolacunta. The last sighting of the oolacunta had been in 1878, but Finlayson established that the species was still alive in 1931. However, its final sighting was by Finlayson in 1935 and then the oolacunta became the only Australian species to be rediscovered and then become extinct.

M3256

LONG-HAIRED RAT OR MAYAROO

RATTUS VILLOSISSIMUS

29 September 1969

This native Australian rodent was considered a plague rat by early European colonists. In times of plenty the rats would breed to colossal numbers, and these irruptions would wreak havoc across the landscape until their numbers reached a critical mass and they started eating not just everything around them, but also each other. Explorers Burke and Wills, who had been attacked by the rats on their travels, when dying in the outback refused to eat cooked rats offered by the local Yandruwandha people as they believed (wrongly) that the native rats were diseased and not fit for consumption. They soon died.

M9559

NUMBAT OR WALPURTI

MYRMECOBIUS FASCIATUS RUFUS

1863

Numbats are insectivorous marsupials. They were once present across southern Australia but are now exclusively found in the wild only Western Australia and are considered an endangered species. They have been reintroduced to protected reserves in South Australia. Of the two subspecies, one was described by Honorary Museum Curator Hedley Herbert Finlayson – *Myrmecobius fasciatus rufus*, which are sadly now extinct. Only the subspecies *Myrmecobius fasciatus fasciatus* is still extant. This odd looking taxidermied specimen, with eyes that don't match, was one of the first to enter the Museum's collection in 1863. Its condition reflects the relatively inexperienced capacities of the early Museum preparators to recreate life-like mounted specimens.

M1024

HERPETOLOGY [REPTILIA AND AMPHIBIA] REGISTER

South Australian Museum Archives collection
Ink on paper

For most of the Museum's history the contents of the collections were recorded in a series of registers like this one. Collection managers would painstakingly transcribe the details of every item or specimen collected or received. It is interesting to note that the first specimens entering the Museum's Herpetology collection were brought into the Museum by a Miss Krismann from Narraburra, NSW. The first item registered was a gecko. Today, the Museum mostly uses a computerised collection management database for the same purpose which makes searching for collection items far more efficient. This register shows specimens R1–R3564.

AA 298/47/1

COMMON THICK-TAILED GECKO

UNDERWOODISAURUS MILII

Entered into the collection by Miss Krismann, Narraburra, NSW

Geckos are an incredibly diverse group of small lizards, with around 1,500 known species across the world. Most are nocturnal reptiles with soft skin, adhesive pads on their feet, and a striking vocal call that ranges from a chirp to a bark. This gecko, with the registration number R1, is the first entry in the Museum's Herpetology collection, and was collected by a Miss Krismann from Narraburra, NSW. Women working across a number of fields – collectors, illustrators, scientists, researchers and collection managers have contributed greatly to the Museum's collections and research efforts over the past 165 years.

CHITON

ISCHNOCHITON ELONGATUS BLAINVILLE, 1825

King Island, Bass Strait

Peron and Leseuer Collection, Baudin expedition

The French expedition captained by Nicolas Baudin, and authorised by Napoleon, resulted in the discovery of more than 2,500 new species and exquisite natural history illustrations of Australian terrestrial and marine life. The small chiton specimen seen here was collected on that historic expedition and is one of the oldest items in the Museum's Marine Invertebrates collection. Chitons are in the phylum Mollusca, and are related to snails. It was collected in 1802 from King Island in Bass Strait, by the expedition's naturalists François Peron and Charles-Alexandre Lesueur.

PARADISE PARROT

CALOPRYMNUS CAMPESTRIS

Received in exchange from Museum Victoria,
collected Moreton Bay, QLD.

Cast

The Paradise Parrot was native to the grassy woodlands along the Queensland/New South Wales border and was first described in 1845 by John Gould the English ornithologist and illustrator as *Psephotus pulcherrimus* – the latter, Latin for very beautiful. In 1844, the ornithologist John Gilbert joined Ludwig Leichhardt's Port Essington expedition as a collector for Gould. While on the Darling Downs, Gilbert collected the first Paradise Parrot specimen and was so impressed that he asked Gould to name it in his honour, a request that was refused.

Last seen in the wild in 1927, the paradise parrot became extinct most likely due to habitat loss, agricultural practices, introduced predators and, possibly, from being hunted by bird and egg collectors. Paradise parrots made their nests in hollowed-out termite mounds.

B24316

NIGHT PARROT

PEZOPORUS OCCIDENTALIS

Gawler Ranges, SA
Mounted specimen

The Night Parrot is possibly the world's most elusive and mysterious bird. Unusually for a parrot, it is nocturnal and ground dwelling and extremely difficult to find and was assumed to be extinct for around 100 years. In 1979 South Australian Museum ornithologist Shane Parker saw a flock of Night Parrots in northern South Australia. Remains were found in Queensland in 1990 and 2006, and then a live bird was caught in 2015. There have been several sightings and call recordings from the Plibara and Great Sandy Desert region in Western Australia in the past ten years. The Night Parrot is currently listed on the IUCN Red List as Endangered, having previously been listed as Critically Endangered. The Museum has two Night Parrot skins, collected in the 1880s in the Gawler Ranges.

B24172

PRINCESS PARROT

POLYTELIS ALEXANDRAE

First collected by FW Waterhouse for the South Australian Museum

The Princess Parrot is recognised as a nationally Vulnerable species, and due to its elusive nature and remote habitats, very little is known about its ecology. It is highly nomadic and occurs across the arid inland western deserts of Australia. The Museum's first Curator, Frederick William Waterhouse, was the first to collect a specimen of the rare Princess parrot, *Polytelis alexandrae*, during Stuart's first expedition to inland Australia. On his return to Adelaide in 1863, Waterhouse sent the specimen to the naturalist John Gould for identification. Gould named it after Princess Alexandra, the wife of King Edward VII.

Unregistered specimen

DEATH MASK OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

AMBROSE LEWIS VAGO (1839–1896)

c.1890

Presented by Dr. Edward Angas Johnson

Patinated, plaster of Paris

In 1800, Napoleon Bonaparte approved a French mapping and scientific expedition to New Holland (now Australia), one of the remotest places on Earth. Two decades later he died in exile, on the even more remote island of Saint Helena. The original cast was made by Dr Burton, an English military doctor at the island's garrison. It was taken about 40 hours after Napoleon's death with the assistance of the Emperor's private physician.

Today there are four known bronze death masks, and a number of plaster versions. This is signed 'A L Vago'. Born in London, Ambrose Lewis Vago worked as a modeller and phrenologist from c.1861 until his death. He published a number of texts on phrenology (the pseudo-scientific study of the shape of the human skull, in the mistaken belief it was related to mental traits) and made phrenological model exhibits. He had access to a death mask of Napoleon and produced this patinated plaster model.

M.174

MURRAY RIVER CRAYFISH

EUASTACUS ARMATUS (VON MARTENS, 1866)

Murray River, South Australia
Donated in 1926

The Murray River crayfish is the second largest species of crayfish in the world. It can grow to 50 centimetres in length and can weigh up to 3 kilograms. Extremely slow growing, the female can only reproduce after 8–10 years, and can live up to 28 years. This remarkable species was once common in the lower Murray River regions of South Australia, as well as in Victoria and New South Wales, but it has not been sighted in South Australia since the 1980s. While it is considered an endangered species, it is more likely to be locally extinct due to the increased salinity in the river and the effect of Murray River barrages. This is the only representative of the species from South Australia in the Museum's collection.

GLASS SPONGE

WALTERIA FLEMMINGII SCHULZE, 1886

Collected in 1993. Donated in 2018

This Hexactinellida sponge has an open skeleton of glass that supports a thin layer of living tissue that traps tiny particles washed through the latticework. Its solid base attaches to a hard substrate, holding the sponge in the deep-water current. The sponge forms a symbiotic relationship with Stenopoidid crustaceans that enter the lattice work in larval form, and as a mating pair grow within the bounds of their 'cage' where they remain trapped at adult size. They clean sediment from the sponge and eat particulate matter – this benefits both organisms; the sponge is kept clean and the stenopoidids receive safety from predators and easy access to food. This example comes from the ocean south-west of Port Lincoln at a depth of 1,000 metres.

ELEPHANT BIRD BONES

AEPYORNIS HILDEBRANDTI

Femur, tibiotarsus, tarsometatarsus bones

Elephant birds were members of the Aepyornithidae, an extinct family of giant birds found only in Madagascar. The species only became extinct around 800 to 1,000 years ago as a result of human predation. These birds stood around three metres tall and weighed about 730 kilograms and lacked wings. Recent research by University of Adelaide geneticists showed that, unexpectedly, their closest living relatives are the New Zealand kiwis, not ostriches, their near neighbours in Africa.

P48605

DODO BONE SPECIMENS

RAPHUS CUCULLATUS (LINNAEUS, 1758)

Mauritius and Reunion Islands

c. 17th century

Tibiotarsus, tarsometatarsus bones

The dodo has become a potent symbol for species extinction worldwide. It was a flightless bird endemic to the islands of Mauritius and Reunion and was last sighted in 1662. Dodos were in the family Columbidae, which comprises the pigeons and doves. Around one metre tall and weighing around 15 kilograms, the flightless dodos had no natural predators. Dodos were quickly hunted to extinction by Europeans and the feral animals introduced to the islands. What little we know about dodos now is drawn largely from paintings and written accounts of the time.

Image: Roelant Savery (1576–1639), Edwards' Dodo, late 1620s, Collection of the Natural History Museum, London

P48608

SCRUB TYPHUS MITE

LEPTOTROMBIDIUM DELIENSE (WALCH, 1922)

27 August 1943
Buna, New Guinea

This extremely small mite approximately 0.3mm long, usually goes unnoticed even when it bites. Found in northern Australia, Papua New Guinea and South East Asia it can transmit the microorganism that causes the dangerous tropical fever scrub typhus (Japanese river fever). Scrub typhus is a rickettsial disease can produce severe debilitation and sometimes death. Although local people in Papua New Guinea had always lived with, and surely knew of this disease, it was not seriously scientifically investigated until World War II. With some infestations affecting hundreds of soldiers at a time, understanding the disease, and exactly which of the hundreds of similar species of mites can transmit it, became an urgent scientific goal.

ELEPHANT BIRD EGG

AEPYORNIS HILDEBRANDTI

Cast

Elephant bird eggs are estimated to have been up to 34 centimetres long weighing around 10 kilograms. The volume of an elephant bird egg was approximately 160 times greater than that of a domestic chicken's egg. European visitors to Madagascar in the early 1800s still found giant eggs well after living Elephant birds had disappeared.

WEEBILL EGGS AND WEEBILL SKIN

SMICRORNIS BREVIROSTRIS

The Weebill is the smallest Australian bird. They lay their tiny eggs in small pendant-shaped nests, where the female incubates the eggs for 10–12 days, after which both male and female parents care for the chicks.

B33392, B27333

ICHTHYOSAUR SKULL (PREPARED JAW, UNPREPARED JAW AND SKULL)

Early Cretaceous, 100 million years old
Boulia, Queensland
Donated to the Museum by J. and R. Suter in 2009

Ichthyosaurs were large fast-swimming marine reptiles that lived 200 to 90 million years ago in oceans around the world, and particularly in South Australia when it was covered by the Eromanga Sea. Ichthyosaurs were very similar to dolphins in appearance. These distant relatives of lizards and snakes (lepidosaurs) were the most highly specialized aquatic reptiles, but were not dinosaurs. The Museum's staff work tirelessly to unearth vital finds and clean and preserve them for study and display. This Ichthyosaur jaw was originally encased in limestone but careful and slow preparatory work with acids slowly dissolved away the rock, revealing the bones within.

P44323

CRINOID FOSSILS

JIMBACRINUS BOSTOCKI TEICHERT, 1954

Permian period, 290–283 million years old

Gascoyne District, Western Australia

Donated to the South Australian Museum by Mr Jefferey Rondello under The Cultural Gifts Program, 17 May 2016

Crinoids are ancient marine invertebrates, belonging to the phylum Echinodermata along with sea urchins, sea cucumbers, starfish and brittle stars. This fossil shows three exceptional crinoid specimens. In each specimen, a columnal stalk attaches to a cup-like central body known as a calyx. This calyx extends into five arms, each with feathery structures called pinnules. Crinoids are suspension feeders, filtering planktonic particles from the water.

P54507

EDIACARAN FOSSIL

DICKINSONIA COSTATA SPRIGG, 1947

Ediacaran period, 635–541 million years old

Flinders Ranges, South Australia

Donated in 1958 by V.H. Mincham and B. Flounders

This *Dickinsonia* is an iconic fossil of the Ediacara biota. Ediacaran fossils are the oldest complex organisms on Earth, having been preserved as impressions in sandstone. Ediacaran fossils were first discovered in the Ediacara Hills by the late Reg Sprigg AO and later throughout sites in the Flinders Ranges, north of Port Augusta and south of Marree. They give their name to the Ediacaran Period, the first new major time division to be defined in 120 years and the first based on rocks found in the Southern Hemisphere.

P12749

MOOROWIE REEF FOSSILS

DICKINSONIA COSTATA SPRIGG, 1947

Lower Cambrian, Botoman age, 517–510 million years old
Mt. Chambers Gorge area, Flinders Ranges, South Australia
Collected and described by Dr. Trevor J. Mount, 1970
Donated to the South Australian Museum by Dr. Mount
and Tula C. Mount 2019
Fossiliferous limestone

This specimen from the Moorowie Formation in the Flinders Ranges shows the abundance of ancient life, preserved in rock for over 500 million years. This piece includes sponge-like creatures with elongate cones and circular sections known as archaeocyaths, with red-white encrusting growths of algal-like *Renalcis* and *Epiphyton*. The infills of red-brown lime mud (geopetals) in some archaeocyath cups show that the creatures had been broken off by waves and were lying on the sea floor. This limestone holds some of the earliest examples of probable ancestral corals. The fauna here is evidence for one of the first shallow reefs formed during the rise of complex life on Earth.

P58193 a, b

AUSTRALIAN BOX JELLYFISH OR SEA WASP

CHIRONEX FLECKERI SOUTHCOTT, 1956

1955, Collected by Inspector E. Anthony from Cardwell.
Donated by Dr. Hugo Flecker

The Australian box jellyfish is one of the world's most venomous marine animals. It injects toxins via tiny harpoon-like stinging capsules (nematocysts) on its tentacles. A sting can cause excruciating pain, scarring of the skin, low blood pressure, heart attack, and death.

After witnessing people being stung in Far North Queensland, Adelaide physician and zoologist Ronald Vernon Southcott studied box jellyfish specimens, taking copious notes and diagrams, as seen in his original documents here. During these investigations, it became clear to Southcott that the Australian box jellyfish had not been described previously. He published a scientific paper in 1956 describing a new species: *Chironex fleckeri*.

H12 HOLOTYPE, H3456, H3457

SELECTION OF SPIRIT PRESERVED FISH

BONY BREEM, *NEMATALOSA EREBI* (GÜNTHER, 1868)
DESERT MOGURNDA, *MOGURNDA LARAPINTAE* (ZIETZ, 1896)
SILVER CATFISH, *POROCHILUS ARGENTEUS* (ZIETZ 1896)
DESERT RAINBOWFISH, *MELANOTAENIA SPLENDIDA TATEI* (ZIETZ, 1896)
DESERT GOBY, *CHLAMYDOGObIUS EREMIUS* (ZIETZ, 1896)

Collection date unknown
Central Australia

Many of the items at the South Australian Museum were collected on scientific expeditions across Australia. The Horn Scientific Expedition of 1894 travelled across Arrente and Luritja country in central Australia, discovering and collecting previously undiscovered species including this set of central desert fish. Most were described by the Museum's zoologist and palaeontologist A.H.C. Zietz.

PENIS, SPOON AND PEANUT WORM

PRIAPULIDA, *ECHIURUS ANTARCTICUS* SPENGLER, 1912,
SIPUNCULUS ROBUSTUS KEFERSTEIN, 1865

Great Australian Bight 2015 / Antarctica 1989 / Point Turton 2001

Priapulid worms are named after the Greek god of fertility, Priapus. A god of animal and vegetable fertility, he was caricatured having a dramatically enlarged phallus. These three species of 'penis worms' are similarly very phallic in appearance, but not closely related genetically. Remarkably, the difference between these species is like comparing humans to a starfish. Priapulida worms are found to depths of 90 meters in marine environments, burrowing into muddy sediments, and can tolerate harsh environments.

DEEP SEA SLATER

BATHYNOMUS GIGANTEUS A. MILNE-EDWARDS, 1879

Collection date unknown (21st century)
US Virgin Islands

The giant isopod (*Bathynomus giganteus*) is an excellent example of deep-sea gigantism seen in other marine animals (squid, crabs, fish) where they have evolved to become much larger than their relatives living in shallower environments. The giant isopod is a crustacean and is closely related to the common slater seen in our gardens. This specimen comes from the US Virgin Islands in the Caribbean, although there are species from the same genus known in deeper waters off Australia. They are skilled at finding food in the resource-poor deep-sea environment and are able to capture crabs, squid and shrimps as well as attack fish trawl catches and scavenge whale falls. They are also able to exist for long periods of time without food and will gorge themselves to near capacity when they come across it.

C10247

COLLECTING
THE WORLD

COLLECTING THE WORLD

The Museum's off-site store is an Aladdin's cave of objects from all over the globe and through different time periods. While it might appear obvious to any regular visitor to the Museum that there is a large and important Pacific collection already on display, there are even more wonders to be found in storage.

The Sepik River female birthing figure from Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the 1807 Alexander Shaw tapa cloth book, produced in London, are radically different objects representing different cultures and periods of collecting, but both items are of international significance and such objects are rarely held in museum collections. Ritual objects created for a wide range of purposes, from a painted Bainang Fire dance mask to the representation of the ever-popular Phantom on a PNG war shield, give a sense of the breadth, richness and timespan of the Museum's international collections.

Objects from across the globe are featured here. The items on display represent not only different cultures, but the many and varied forms of fabrication, that are evidence of innovation and adaptation in crafting objects around the world over centuries. From weaving, metalsmithing, carving and painting, to tapa cloth fabrication with its exquisite painted designs – the Museum's representation of the world is astonishing.

KANIPU OR AIAI (DANCE COSTUME WITH MASK)

19th century, prior to 1887

Unknown maker, Namau Language group

Purari delta, Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Theodore Francis Bevan 1885–1887

Bark cloth, fibres, feathers, ochres⁷

A wealth of cultural material from the Gulf of Papua was collected by Theodore Francis Bevan (1860–1907), an explorer and writer who made no less than five visits to Papua New Guinea between 1885 and 1887. The collection of items he amassed was truly remarkable and from one of the 'frontiers of the known world' at that time. Pieces were exhibited at the Queen's Jubilee Exhibition in Adelaide in 1887. Around 100 objects were purchased by the South Australian Museum with other parts of Bevan's collection finding their way to Dublin and elsewhere in the world.

PIG FIGURE

20th century

Unknown maker, northwest of Angoram, Sepik, Papua New Guinea

Acquired (by exchange) by Stephen Kellner, 12th Jan 1968

Exchanged for New Ireland Malangan figure, crayfish, A10873

A flying pig! In Papua New Guinea and Melanesian societies, the pig is regarded as a good food source, a form of living wealth and a tradable commodity. The pig is one of the most important domesticated animals of the region and was often considered a sacred animal used for sacrifice or exchange in many rituals. The transposition of body parts from pig to art is common and teeth, tusks, bones and heads were all included in the manufacture of ritual objects. This is a large pig sculpture used in ritual dances, these pigs, made of painted tapa cloth stretched over a bamboo framework, were fabricated in huge sizes and their bulk a visual demonstration of the importance of the animal in the lives, beliefs and prosperity of the tribal group.

A59230

PHANTOM SHIELD

c. 1980

Unknown maker, Minj Village, Western Highlands Province,

Papua New Guinea

Wood, paint

Collected by donor Johan Wierda in 1988 and donated to the Museum in 2007

A cartoon hero crime-fighter, created in America in 1936, *The Phantom* has been translated into 15 languages including Tok Pisin, a form of Pidgin English recognised as one of three official languages of Papua New Guinea. When tribal fighting broke out in the 1980s in the Western Highlands, the Wahgi people revived and repainted old battle shields with new designs many featuring the Phantom and other popular culture references. Also known as 'the ghost who walks' this shield features the Phantom's masked head and the words 'MAN INO SAVE dai' that roughly translate to 'a man who can't be killed'. The intent was to frighten your opponent into thinking that you and your shield were imbued with the Phantom's power and gift of immortality.

A78336

KAVAT MASK

c.1970

Unknown maker, Kairak Bainang people

New Britain, Papua New Guinea

Donated by Ian Carman

Collected by donor's sister, K.A. Carman about 1974

Bamboo, tapa, pigment

The Museum has several magnificent Bainang *kavat* fire dance masks in its vast Pacific collection. These startlingly painted barkcloth masks are the centrepiece of lengthy dance ceremonies which can continue for hours. A dancer manoeuvres the mask while wearing it on their head and peering through the mouth. As the dance progresses, the dancers, usually male, will walk on fire, seemingly impervious to the heat and danger. *Kavat* masks come in many different styles with each depicting a spirit linked to the natural world surrounding them. The two earlike pieces on this mask perhaps suggest a spirit that lives in the forks of trees. The dramatically painted eyes and protruding beaks of these masks would catch the eye and imagination in the evocative half-light of a Bainang night ceremony.

A67747

TEMA PENDANTS – SOLOMON ISLANDS SHELL ORNAMENTS

AMBROSE LEWIS VAGO (1839–1896)

19th-early 20th century, unknown makers, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands

A17805 donated by Dr D. E. Deland in 1929, A39481 purchased from Mrs Scrymgour in 1948, A40597-8 donated by Mrs R. M. Turnbull 1950

Clam shell, turtle shell, fibre

Throughout the Solomon Islands and in parts of Papua New Guinea, adornments of filigreed turtle shell and polished white clam shell, commonly known as *kap kap*, are worn as signs of prestige and authority. While the clam shell is always circular, the intricate turtle shell section takes many forms. In some regions they are worn on the head, however, these Tema from the Santa Cruz islands were made to be worn as a pendant upon the chest. Their turtle shell designs are unique to this region, the lower section represents a stylised frigate bird with its wings and tail extended outwards, above this are representations of fish, mostly likely the bonito. Both species are important for these maritime communities.

A17805, A39481, A40597, A40598

SOUTH AFRICAN BEADED NECKLACE

Late 19th century, unknown maker, Zulu people, possibly Ndebele,
South Africa

Acquired from Mrs B. E. Jenner 1970

Glass bead, medal, cotton

This object is a fusion of two very different cultures. In 1887 Queen Victoria celebrated her golden jubilee, the 50th anniversary of her reign and the Golden Jubilee Medal was instituted in 1887 by Royal Warrant as a British decoration to be awarded to participants of the celebrations. Clearly, this medal made its way to the colony of South Africa where it was inventively redeployed as the focus of a beaded necklace by a Zulu woman. The medals were issued in gold, silver and bronze and this one is the latter. It has had a hard life, battered and tarnished, but still forms an intriguing link with South Africa's colonial past embellished, beautifully as it is, with six different colours of beading.

A60401

ANKLETS

Late 19th-early 20th century, unknown makers, Afghanistan

Donated by Mr Gunnarsson-Hagman 1976

Brass, glass, printed paper

Afghan craft traditions are deeply rooted over centuries and their production of silver and metalwork, textiles, weaving, carpet making, and woodworking are quite distinctive but also subject to the proximity of traditions near them or which have passed through the much-contested area. These anklets were a gift to the Museum in 1976 and seem to be cast bronze, simply ornamented and solidly formed.

A64907

NAVAJO BLANKET

Late 19th century, unknown maker, (Diné) Navajo people,
Arizona/New Mexico, USA
Collected in New Mexico, USA and donated to the Museum
by L. M. Nilsson 1960
Woven wool, aniline dyes

Navajo weaving in the southwest of America has existed for centuries, with techniques originally borrowed from the neighbouring Pueblo peoples who first wove cotton, and then later wool, after the arrival of the Spanish. Navajo people originally wove for utilitarian purposes creating blankets to sleep under, to wear as cloaks or dresses, or for saddle blankets on horses and mules. Densely woven, the blankets were also fairly water resistant. Later, Navajo weavers began to trade them with the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Ute people and in the 20th century most of the rugs produced for sale are sold to tourists or for export.

A53380

RAT 'DISTRACTER'

Pre-1970
Unknown maker, Aibon, Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
Donated to the Museum by Stephen Kellner in 1970
Wood, paint

This decorative but functional object was used to deter rats from houses in the Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea. The circular object would be suspended from the centre by a rope from the ceiling and would hover above the food so that a rat attracted by the prospect of a potential meal would climb down the rope, lose its grip on the painted surface and then topple to the ground dazed instead of making off with a free dinner. This object is from the Aibon in the Eastern region of the 1,126-kilometre-long Sepik River, which is Papua New Guinea's longest river and is often referred to as its 'cultural heart' because it is so rich and varied in the tribal cultures that live alongside it.

A61796

SIAPO MAMANU

1920s

Unknown maker

Samoa

Barkcloth, pigments, charcoal

Donated by David Bray under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts program 2009

The Museum's collection of tapa or barkcloth is huge and varied, though most is rolled in storage due to current display space limitations. This beautiful piece of siapo mamanu, meaning Samoan handpainted tapa, is a freer design than Samoan stencilled bark cloth, known as siapo elei. Siapo mamanu are now often mounted on plywood so they can be hung like paintings. This piece was given to the Donor's grandfather, Dr Fritz Glaser, as a payment for services rendered in the 1950s, however, it is believed to have been manufactured in the 1920s.

A77946

A CATALOGUE OF THE DIFFERENT SPECIMENS OF CLOTH COLLECTED IN THE THREE VOYAGES OF CAPTAIN COOK, TO THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE: WITH A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE MANNER OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME IN THE VARIOUS ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH SEAS...

Unknown makers Hawaii and Tahiti, prior to 1787

Published by Alexander Shaw (c.1749–1807) and Harry Shaw

(c.1746–1824) Purchased from Justice C.E. Herbert in 1909 for £35

This is one of only 66 books known worldwide. Not only are these exquisite volumes rare, but each is unique due to the sampling of the large tapa pieces used to create the two editions, separated over a twenty-year period. Tapa or barkcloth pieces were some of the many 'artificial curiosities' collected during and after James Cook's three Pacific voyages and later found their way into these rare volumes. Made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry and two other trees, tapa was used for all manner of purposes; wrapping newborn babies and the dead, as clothing or room dividers, or to wrap or make idols and lamp wicks. These books produced by Alexander Shaw, a Scottish natural history dealer were destined for a discrete audience of collectors, naturalists, antiquaries and Cook voyagers. The tapa samples included are mainly from Hawaii (kapa) and Tahiti (tapa). This volume contains 54 tapa samples and is a second issue assembled in 1807.

1787/1807

FEATHERED TIPPET OR PELERINE

Post-1824

Unknown maker/s, UK/Europe

Presented by Mrs W. Haswell Wood in 1893

Feathers, including peacock and guinea fowl, cotton backing

This exquisite object is a very rare small, feathered pelerine or tippet, its design most likely inspired by the visit to London of the Hawaiian Royal couple, King Kamehameha II and Queen Kamāmalu in 1824. Tragically, this visit was fatal – the couple died from measles – but the Hawaiian cloaks or *a'hu ula* they wore attracted much public interest and fashionable Regency ladies in London were inspired to have outfits made modelled on the Hawaiians' splendid feather capes. This object was probably purchased in Port Adelaide in 1848, presumably by the donor, Mrs W. Haswell Wood and given to the Museum in 1893.

1787/1807

KŌRERE - FEEDING FUNNEL

18th century, unknown maker, Māori culture

Muriwhenua region, North Cape, Aotearoa, New Zealand

Donated by Mrs P. P. King 1946

Wood

An intricately carved feeding funnel used in feeding pre-masticated food to certain persons who, for *tapu* or sacred reasons, could not handle food directly. Chiefs, whose faces were swollen after tattooing sessions and who were under *tapu* restrictions, would have relied upon this method of eating. This rare Māori artifact was among those given to the Governor of Norfolk Island (Philip Gidley King) by a Māori chief in 1793 when he repatriated two kidnapped Maori men, Huru and Tuki, to the northern tip of New Zealand.

A35469

INUIT FIGURE PADDLING KAYAK

Later 20th century, unknown maker, Inuit culture, Canada
Collected by Margaret Burton, 1957-1958
Donated under the Cultural Gifts Program, 2001
Walrus ivory and serpentine

This beautifully carved bone kayak with stone figure of an Inuit paddling blends two forms of carving and indirectly documents both the invention of the skinned kayak and the hooded polar suits worn by the Inuit people. Living in a harsh environment the hunting and fishing Inuit would carefully make use all of the animals they caught, recycling their bones, tusks, skins and fat to survive. Items like this were often traded or sold for provisions.

A72354

CARVING OF A SMALL ANIMAL

1969, unknown maker 'Jillian', Pitjantjatjara people, Ernabella, South Australia
Collected by Dr Charles Duguid
Donated by A. M. Duguid and R. L. Douglas, 1997
Soapstone, paint

In 1969, well-known Inuit artist Joanasie Salamonie (1938–1998) visited Ernabella in South Australia's Musgrave Ranges. Salamonie had been brought to Australia for an exhibition at David Jones Art Gallery in Sydney, before being taken to the Pitjantjatjara lands by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The numerous objects created during his time at Ernabella were carved mostly from soapstone, in the Inuit tradition, by Ernabella artists in collaboration with Salamonie. While the carvings had the form of Inuit animals they are decorated with the brightly coloured dot patterning of later Central Australian paintings, an interesting hybrid creation.

A72354

POLAR BEAR CARVING

1950s, possibly Henry Evaluardjuk (1923–2007),
Inuit Culture, Nunavit Province, Iqaluit/Frobisher Bay, Canada
Collected by Margaret Burton, 1957–1958
Donated under the Cultural Gifts Program, 2001
Soapstone

This carving captures the spirit of the polar bear as it sits, waiting. For the Inuit, polar bears are respected as the most intelligent animal in the Arctic, a symbol of the resilience, patience and determination needed to survive in the harsh climate. It is important culturally, spiritually and economically to Inuit people who have hunted them for generations. Its meat is a good source of nutrition, and thick skin can be used to make warm clothing and rugs. Polar bears feature prominently in Inuit mythology, spirituality, storytelling and other forms of cultural expression and traditions.

A72356

SOUTH AFRICAN BEADED APRONS

Mid 20th century, unknown makers, Zulu people, KwaZulu Natal
Province, South Africa
A56676 from the Estate of Reverend R. Mitchell
A6565 purchased from J. Jene
Gilt steel, lacquer, cotton

Practiced largely by women, beadwork has long been a highly admired form of aesthetic expression throughout South Africa. The art form experienced a renaissance in the late 20th century, particularly in rural regions, where bead workers infuse traditional forms with innovative flourishes that showcase creativity and individuality. Unmarried Zulu women make richly patterned beaded aprons like this to wear around the waist, while married men at times wear them across the hip.

A56676 / A6565

EHARO OR 'MERMAID' MASK

Elema people, Orokolo Bay, Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Theodore Francis Bevan (1860-1907)

Tapa cloth, cane, ochre

Prior to World War II, the Elema people of the Papuan Gulf held a month-long series of carnival-like performances and parades called Hevehe that included spectacular Eharo masks. Eharo masks range in their subject matter and meaning, some depict birds, sharks, people, even ships. Eharo can be comical providing a happy atmosphere to the Hevehe. The masks take months to create and are disposed of after the festivities, often destroyed or sold to visitors. This Eharo mask is one of the most exquisite in existence, taking the form of what looks to be an indigenous conceptualisation of a mermaid.

A7440

ANTARCTIC SEDIMENTARY SAMPLES

1929–1931, Antarctica

Donated by Sir Douglas Mawson

The surveys of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) collected thousands of biological and geological samples from Antarctica and surrounds, many of which ended up in the Museum's collections. When a dredge or trawl sampled a marine site, biologists on the RRS *Discovery* sorted through to pick out animals and preserved them separately. What was left was the sediment, including mud or broken up shells and other animals. These samples, taken between 1929–1931 when the continent of Antarctica had little disruption from humankind, can still give valuable information about the area they were collected. Many of these jars have not been opened, and therefore hold chemical signatures of the environment of that era.

SD94, SD192, SD281, SD107

MAWSON EXPEDITION JAR OF WORMS FROM SEAL'S STOMACH

26 January 1930, Antarctica, Southern Ocean, BANZARE Station 42, off Enderby Land, (65 50 0 S, 54 23 0 E), BANZARE (first voyage). Many worms in glass jar. Preserved in ethanol

The surveys of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) collected thousands of biological and geological samples from Antarctica and the surrounds, many of which ended up in the collections of the South Australian Museum. This bottle contains thousands of tapeworms from the intestine of a single Weddell seal, *Leptonychotes weddellii* (Lesson, 1826). The seal was collected on January 26, 1930 during the first voyage of BANZARE headed by Sir Douglas Mawson.

MAWSON BALACLAVA

c. late 1920s, unknown maker

Donated to the South Australian Museum in 2010 under the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

Knitted wool

Sir Douglas Mawson (1882–1958) was a geologist and academic, and the expeditions he led explored thousands of kilometres in the Antarctic, collecting geological and biological samples. Balaclavas were standard issue on his expeditions, typically supplied by Jaeger, but this example was hand-knitted for him by an unknown admirer. Different wool was used, but all to a pattern that is a 7 x 7 rib, perhaps for luck. The original group photograph by Frank Hurley of Mawson wearing this balaclava also partly featured on the first \$100 banknote issue.

WHALES AND BEAUTY FROM NATURE

Whaling is the oldest industry in post-settlement Australia, but well before Europeans arrived, Aboriginal people feasted on beached whales, a bounty sometimes discovered on the shores. Before roads and telegraphs connected people, whalers were successfully venturing from places, little or not long settled.

The whalers' success dangerously diminished whale stocks but led to an array of by-products: food, lamp fuel, lubricants and candles, bone for corsets and umbrellas, and ambergris used for perfumes, all harvested from these now protected species. The imaginative crafting of whalebone and whale teeth into decorative and functional objects is well represented in the Museum's collections.

Scrimshaw is the process of engraving bones or teeth with imagery and then using ink or soot to colour the image created. Sailors and whalers practised the craft and pieces may have been produced as gifts for loved ones during the long, lonely months at sea or sold on shore. Examples of scrimshaw are in the exhibition along with other items created by First Nations peoples from across the world refashioning whale or walrus bone or teeth into objects of beauty and cultural significance. Some of these artefacts were gathered in the wake of European exploration, cultural exchange and occupation across the Pacific during the 18th and 19th centuries.

This Museum also contains the best collection of ambergris in Australia. The heavily scented substance is a form of whale excreta and, ironically, also a very expensive ingredient in the finest perfumes. The collection of samples for analysis and research is still undertaken by the Museum when whale strandings occur.

PYGMY SPERM WHALE PARASITES

CRASSICAUDA MAGNA, KOGIA BREVICEPS

Whale (M25530) collected 22 August 2008 by R. Sleep near Point Bell, South Australia; worms collected by South Australian Museum staff

This is a piece of tissue from the neck of the pygmy sperm whale, *Kogia breviceps* (de Blainville, 1838). It is infected with a parasitic nematode called *Crassicauda magna* Johnston & Mawson, 1939. An entire worm has never been recovered because it is intricately entwined within the host tissues but it is estimated that a single worm can reach a length of at least four metres.

Unregistered. Marine Mammals Field Number 10.085

FOETAL PYGMY SPERM WHALE

KOGIA BREVICEPS

28 April 1937, collected by H.E.A. Edwardes
Biological specimen in spirit

This is the foetus of a pygmy sperm whale. Its stage of development is most likely around the end of the first trimester. It was collected at Port Victoria in 1937. It has been beautifully prepared in alcohol with umbilical cord and amniotic sac.

M5011

AMBERGRIS

M25608 collected on Youngusband Peninsula, South Australia,
May 1977

M26362 collected near Ardrossan, South Australia, December 2014
by Museum staff and volunteers

M27783 collected by V. Langley near Beachport, South Australia,
2006

Ambergris is a waxy substance that forms in the digestive tract of sperm whales. It is presumably formed by intestinal secretions with the purpose of protecting the lining of the intestine from sharp indigestible food remains. The rate of occurrence is rare, present in about 1–3% of whales. Fresh ambergris has a distinct faecal odour and has little value. It needs to mature in the ocean for months, even years, before it develops its unique scent and qualities which are highly valued by the perfume industry. High quality ambergris is rare and very valuable, however, some pieces may not float for very long before washing ashore. This makes every piece unique and of different value.

M25608, M26362, M27783

SCRIMSHAW WALRUS TUSK

20th century, possibly Henry Evaluardjuk (1923-2007)
Inuit Culture, Nunavit Province, Iqaluit/Frobisher Bay, Canada
Collected by Margaret Burton, 1957-1958
Donated under the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts
Program 2001
Ink on walrus tusk

This beautifully carved walrus tusk was made in Nunavit Province, and is most likely the work of the acclaimed Inuit artist Henry Evaluardjuk in the 1950s. The tusk features scenes on one side of an Inuit figure in traditional costume hunting and fishing in winter. On the reverse is a polar bear being harassed by sled dogs, some igloos and an Inuit family group preparing a sled and gathering food. The technique used to produce these images is scrimshaw, where pigment, ink or soot is rubbed into engraved lines in bone or teeth made by a knife or needle.

A72353

WASEKASEKA NECKLACE

19th century, unknown maker, Fiji
Purchased from John S Callaghan 1925
Carved whale teeth, fibre cord

Sperm whale teeth were an important part of Vitian Fijian society in the 18th and 19th centuries. Large single teeth were strung on coconut rope and exchanged at important events. Sperm whale teeth were also worn by men and women of status within Fijian communities; this example is a series of gracefully curved spikes created from carefully splitting a tooth and pairing it down into several pieces. Whales' teeth were a rare commodity and greatly valued in the early 19th century as a beached whale would have to be found in order to secure its prized teeth. However, through sustained contact with American whalers the raw material of marine ivory became widely available.

A12987

WAHAIKA PARĀOA (SHORT EDGED WEAPON)

19th century, unknown Maori maker, Aotearoa/New Zealand
Purchased from C. S. Ashley, 1955
Whalebone

This is a fine example of a *wahaika paraoa*, or whale bone *patu*, a short handled striking weapon used in close quarter combat. The principal striking edge of the wahaika is the convex distal tip and the concave point at which the end of the blade curves back towards the hand-grip. The hand-grip is enhanced by the addition of a human figure carved in high relief. Whale bone is durable, hard and dense and highly suited for the manufacturing of striking weapons.

SCRIMSHAW ON WHALES' TEETH

Unknown makers

Purchased from John Callaghan in 1925, from H.M. Stockdale in 1977, and donated by Sydney H Chance in 1953

Scrimshaw is the process of engraving or carving on bone or ivory, often traditionally on whale teeth (particularly sperm whale *Physeter macrocephalus*). These carvings show various scenes, including of knights in armour, with the text 'King Edwin and his armourer, King Richard and Robin Hood'. One tooth is described as 'a gift from a Fijian chief to Lt. Col. John Stacey in 1914'. Another shows a rural dairy view, and women in the formal dress of a bygone era. The holes drilled in the tops would have allowed the tooth to be worn as a pendant.

WUNDERKAMMER

WUNDERKAMMER: A CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

The Wunderkammer or chamber of wonders has provided the inspiration for the selection of items in this final section of the exhibition. The museums we now know grew from the impetus to assemble interesting objects, amassed into private collections by wealthy collectors of the Renaissance period in Europe. Princely collections of wonders of all kinds were created to document the world, regionally and more remotely, and to create awe and wonder in the privileged viewer and prestige and power in the perception of the collector.

The collection of objects in a less taxonomically rigorous world, meant that almost anything was fair game for inclusion, if it could be acquired. From a narwhal's tusk, masquerading as a unicorn's horn, to a badly taxidermied rare animal specimen and gemstones, handicrafts, contemporary technology and examples of the visual arts – all could be massaged into a room, or a series of rooms, often crammed floor to ceiling and with scant, if any, explanation.

The creation of these private Wunderkammern assembled by enlightened, if privileged individuals, were attempts to make sense of the world and its many mysteries. Samuel van Quiccheberg, a Flemish doctor operating in Germany in the 16th century, laid down the rules for what he believed was the perfect museum as early as 1565, in his important though little known publication, *The great theatre of creative thought*. Quiccheberg's thesis was that collecting and ordering objects could inform the owner, and those immersing themselves in such collections, to understand and best govern their realm. He also sought to offer his reader more practical advice regarding display and storage techniques.

In this final section of Wonders, you will find objects from the gorgeous to the grotesque – curios from another time and place which suggest the remarkable range of content the Museum is privileged to hold and share.

KRAKATOA PUMICE STONE

Krakatoa, Indonesia, 1888

Acquired by Amandus Heinrich Christian Zietz, (then curator, later Museum director) en route to Adelaide and gifted to the South Australian Museum

The volcanic island of Krakatoa erupted catastrophically on 27 August 1883, in what is believed to be one of the most violent volcanic events in recorded history. It is estimated the eruption ejected almost 25 cubic kilometres of rock, most of it pumice, into the ocean. Pumice is created when super-heated, highly pressurised rock is violently ejected during a volcanic eruption. Because it is full of tiny gas bubbles, pumice is surprisingly light and actually can float on water. Not long after the eruption, Amandus Zietz was travelling by ship from Germany to Adelaide to take up the position of preparator at the Museum. On the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, he collected this pumice stone from the Krakatoa eruption. If you look closely, you can see some calcareous worm tubes which bear evidence of the stone's sea voyage after the eruption.

R1718

TEVAU – FEATHER MONEY ROLL

19th or early 20th century, unknown maker, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands

Collected by Sarah Dugdale on Nendo Island, November 1992, and donated to the Museum in 2006

Bark, fibre, feathers, seeds, beads

The Tevau is perhaps one of the more remarkable forms of currency known. Each roll is several metres long, consisting of over 50,000 feathers and is kept coiled up. Money rolls were used as bridal dowries and for other major events that required an ostentatious display of wealth. The core of the money roll is a flexible banana plant fibre over which platelets of tiny red feathers are attached, like the scales of a snake. Each platelet holds a dozen or so feathers plucked from the chest of the small scarlet honeyeater (*Myzomela cardinalis*). Several thousand birds are captured, plucked and then released to create just one money roll – they are highly valuable indeed. Several specialists work together to create these rolls and on the inner side of the roll is often a maker's mark woven into the fibre.

A76802a

‘NEW CHELSEA SUSPENSION BRIDGE’

1858, unknown maker, London, United Kingdom
Scrimshaw on pearl shell

Within the Museum are many examples of scrimshaw and carved and decorated shells. Images were produced by engraving on bone, teeth and shells, using penknives or needles and filling the designs with ink, candle black, soot or even tobacco juice. Seen here is a skilful rendering of the New Chelsea Suspension Bridge, designed by Thomas Page and opened on 28 March 1858 as the Victoria Bridge by Queen Victoria. It is now known as the Battersea Bridge. The bridge connected Chelsea to Battersea, and, during excavations, workers found large quantities of Roman and Celtic weapons and skeletons in the riverbed including the extraordinary bronze and enamel Battersea Shield now in the British Museum.

ETHIOPIAN PRAYER BOXES

20th century, unknown makers, Ethiopia
All collected by Dr Ian Steven in the 1970s from markets
Silver

These delicate, filigree Ethiopian prayer or amulet boxes are made from silver and are hollow in order to house a protective personalised religious text most likely inscribed on parchment or vellum. They often feature bells to create sounds that chase away unwanted spirits. The boxes could be opened but were often permanently sealed shut to contain the good wishes and prayers for people seeking good health, happiness and prosperity. Most commonly the boxes would contain a text from the Koran to be worn as a form of talisman. These boxes are common to the Ethiopian walled town of Harar in the Hararghe province, but similar objects are also to be found in the Ogadin region of Somalia and in parts of Yemen.

ORNAMENT VIEWER PIN

Late 19th century, unknown maker, India
Purchased from Mrs M. I. Savage 1923
Carved ivory, glass lens, image

This is one of the smallest items in the exhibition but it gives the viewer a remarkably large perspective on the world. This delicate carved ivory object is a Stanhope viewer, an optical device enabling the viewing of microphotographs. Invented by Frenchman René Dagron in 1857, this device bypasses the need for an expensive microscope by attaching the microscopic images to the end of a modified Stanhope lens. He called the devices ‘microscopic photo-jewellery’ and they were displayed at the International Exhibition of 1862 in London and presented to Queen Victoria. Two years later, Dagron produced a Stanhope viewer which enabled the inspection of a 1 square millimetre microphotograph that included the portraits of 450 people. This viewer is thought to have been made in India and was probably purchased at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878. It displays a view of the exhibition when one looks inside.

A46914

CASSOWARY CLAW NECKLACE

20th century, unknown maker, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea
Collected by Pretty and Crawford
Cassowary toes, string

This rather terrifying looking object comes from Bela, a village near Mendi in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. It was acquired by curator Graeme Pretty on a South Australian Museum expedition to the Southern Highlands Province. Cassowaries are very important to the people of New Guinea, economically and ritually and they have been traded for pigs and even as a bride price for a wife or as compensation payment, especially in the highlands. Some groups hunt cassowaries for their meat which is considered a delicacy and feathers are used to decorate headdresses, and the feather quills for earrings. Its sharp claws are often placed at the tips of arrows, while the strong leg bones can be used as daggers.

A59618

BOER WAR BISCUIT NECKLACE

1901, unknown maker, Zulu people, South Africa
Acquired from Mrs B.E. Jenner, 1970
Biscuit, beads, thread

This necklace is a strange amalgam of cultures and materials. Helpfully inscribed as a 'Ration biscuit/ from Boer War/S. Africa/1900–1901' this slightly chewed artefact has been transformed by a Zulu woman to become a wearable accessory, a beaded biscuit necklace. Ration biscuits from the Boer War were known as hard tack and were unpalatable and tough enough to be repurposed as postcards and used in craft projects. This standard 49-hole biscuit resembles cardboard and probably tasted about as good. The Second Boer War between the British and the Afrikaners, lasted from 1899–1902 and Australia, as part of the British Empire, offered troops from the six separate colonies and from 1901, the new Australian Commonwealth to fight in the conflict.

A60428

TROBRIAND ISLAND CRICKET BAT AND BALLS

1974, unknown maker, Milne Bay Province, Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea
Collected by Mr Tovia Lember 1974 during the filming of 'Trobriand Island Cricket: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism'
Wood, fibre

When cricket was introduced to Papua New Guinea, it followed the standard international rules except for in the Trobriand Islands, to the country's east. A Methodist missionary from Britain, William Gillmore, first exposed Trobriand Islanders to cricket in 1903 hoping it would reduce tribal fighting and rivalry and encourage a new morality. Instead the islanders creatively adapted the sport to their needs by taking the very proper English game and transforming it into an outlet for mock warfare and tribal rivalry, inter-village competition, wild and erotic dancing, chanting and pure entertainment. The form and style of the cricket bat echoes traditional Trobriand Island material culture, providing a fine example of culture shift and creative adaptation during the colonial period.

A80083, A80085, A80084

EGYPTIAN PAPER RELIEF OR SQUEEZE

c. 1840s, Egypt

Acquired 19 April 1929 from E. Arnold

Paper

This paper relief or 'squeeze' is most likely part of a larger collection of Egyptian material acquired by the Museum from a Mrs Arnold who inherited them from her husband's uncle, the famed German artist and Egyptologist Maximilian Weidenbach. Part of the Royal Prussian expedition to Egypt between 1842 and 1845, Weidenbach was a prolific archivist who was trained to copy hieroglyphics, therefore it's very likely that he created this relief sometime during the three-year expedition.

Paper squeezes were commonly used in the 19th century to record carved surface decorations on the walls of tombs and temples. The paper is first soaked in water and then applied directly to the surface in order to adhere to the carvings. It was a destructive practice and it was phased out by archaeologists in the early 20th century.

A40472

KALAHARI INSECT CASING GIRDLE

Pre-1923, unknown San maker, San People, Botswana, Namibia and Angola

Messrs N. & L. Birks

Moth casings and string

Museum curator Edgar R. Waite wrote an article in 1923 about this fascinating object being 'An Aboriginal girdle' however it is far more likely that this was made in Africa. It is constructed from 160 moth cocoons and string and is over 2.5 metres in length. These belts were wrapped around the legs and body and used for ceremonial dancing as they make noise as the dancer moves. The term San is commonly used to refer to a diverse group of first peoples who lived as independent hunter-gatherers in the difficult terrain of the Kalahari Desert, who share historical and linguistic connections. The San are the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa where they have lived for at least 20,000 years.

A13049

JULODIMORPHA SPECIES OF BEETLES

JULODIMORPHA BAKEWELLI (WHITE, 1859), *JULODIMORPHA SAUNDERSII* (THOMSON, 1878)

South Australia and Western Australia

For male *Julodimorpha* jewel beetles from the family Buprestidae, glimpses of their own orange-brown or amber colour are highly exciting when seeking female mates. Amorous males can be lured by orange buckets and orange peel and some species are notorious for attempting to breed with discarded amber-coloured beer bottles. Curiously all these beer bottle-lovers are so far reported from just one state, Western Australia. Is there a difference in the buprestid beetles there? Or does Western Australia have better bottles? We await an interstate beetle bottle battle.

HIPPO HIDE WHIP

1909, unknown maker, Belgian Congo
Hippopotamus hide, wire, paper label with inscription

This whip was part of a large collection of material exhibited by missionaries in London in 1909 to raise money and bring attention to atrocities committed in the Congo. Lead by the Belgian King Leopold II, colonists routinely mutilated and tortured local African workers if they did not meet quotas for rubber production. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in *The Crime of the Congo* includes a graphic description of the use of the whip drawn from the diaries of a Mr Glave:-

The 'chicotte' of raw hippo hide, especially a new one, trimmed like a corkscrew, with edges like knife-blades, and as hard as wood, is a terrible weapon, and a few blows bring blood; not more than twenty-five blows should be given unless the offence is very serious... I conscientiously believe that a man who receives one hundred blows is often nearly killed, and has his spirit broken for life.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE HOLDING A POSSUM AT HUMBUG SCRUB

Unknown photographer, Humbug Scrub, 1920
Reproduction from cellulose nitrate film

While in Adelaide in 1920, Arthur Conan Doyle made time to visit the South Australian Museum, the Art Gallery and the Botanical Gardens on North Terrace. He stayed in the Grand Central Hotel, which was located on the corner of Rundle Street and Pulteney Street. Sadly, it was pulled down during 1975-76. Conan Doyle spoke highly of Adelaide, but apparently his favourite part of this journey was a visit to the Humbug Scrub Wildlife Sanctuary with then owner, Thomas Paine Bellchambers. He had read about Bellchambers wildlife sanctuary in a magazine article in the UK and had decided that he had to meet him. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote *Crime of the Congo* in 1909 – see above – critical of the terrible atrocities inflicted by the Belgians upon their slaves/workers.

A MAGNIFICENT BARONIAL BREAKFRONT BOOKCASE IN FOUR PARTS

c. 1905

Pengelley Furniture Adelaide, wood wright Carl Christian Meinzolt (b. 1861, arrived Adelaide 1894, d. 1928, Sydney)

Donated to the South Australian Museum by Dr Andrew Thomas AO under the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2015
English oak, glass, metal

This impressive bookcase is a testament to the skill of its German maker, Carl C. Meinzolt, who was active in Adelaide from his arrival in 1894 until 1908. The inclusion of an earthy proverb, in this instance, 'Learn to live ... Live to learn', is common to his surviving work. The fusion of symbolic decorative elements includes, amongst other things, theatrical masks (representing fun, entertainment) flowers (purity, rebirth), phantasmagorical beasts such as griffins (light and enlightenment), and owls (reading, learning, and wisdom). It was designed to hold and display books, the source of wisdom, learning, entertainment and history. The bookcase was commissioned by Mr S.T. Thomas, as a gift on the occasion of his wedding to the only daughter of Frederick George Waterhouse, the Museum's first Curator. The bookcase has been passed down through the family to Dr Andrew Thomas AO, Waterhouse's great, great grandson and the patron of the Museum who donated it to the Museum in 2015.

BURE KALOU SPIRIT HOUSE

c. 1865, Fiji

Loaned to the South Australian Museum in 1926 from the
Gawler Institute

Coconut fibre, bamboo

In pre-Christian Fijian culture the bure kalou were tall, imposing buildings central to a community's spiritual life. The high priest of each community would commune with deities who sometimes dwelt within the bure kalou and often they would become possessed by a deity to enact their wishes in the mortal world. Models such as this are made from many metres, if not kilometres of finely made coconut coir string, tightly bound together. This is not a model as such, rather, this miniature bure kalou acted as both an abode for a god and as a portable shrine for a priest during their journeys so the connection between worlds would be maintained.

AA356 Waite Collection

SUIT OF ARMOUR, HELMET AND WEAPONS

1880s, Gilbert Islands

Acquired c. 1889

Coconut fibre, porcupine fish, wood, shark teeth

Suits of coconut fibre armour from the Kiribati islands are among the most intriguing forms of body adornment found anywhere in the world. Their ornate materiality evokes images of pageantry and magic rather than bloodshed, and research indicates that this type of armour was primarily worn in highly ritualised one-on-one battles that resulted in injury rather than death. The panels of the armour are constructed using intricately woven coconut fibre and the addition of a porcupine fish helmet and weapons edged with shark teeth accentuate the overall dramatic effect.

This extraordinary group of objects is an example of just one of the many collection items that require urgent conservation and restoration in order to return them to display condition. Your donation to the Museum will directly support the restoration and display of this armour and hundreds of other objects in storage so that they can continue to educate and amaze generations of visitors to come.

A6522, A8588, A40717



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