



*fairball*³⁵

TJC

fairhall

FAIRHALL IS THE MAGAZINE OF THE FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS OF THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION AND IS CREATED BY VOLUNTEERS FOR OUR SUPPORTERS.

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THANKS

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE ONGOING SUPPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF TJC TOWARDS THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF *FAIRHALL*.

TJC acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, exhibit, and celebrate art and heritage.

FROM THE CEO'S DESK



I am delighted to be writing this 'welcome to *fairhall* magazine' for the first time.

After a seventeen-year association with The Johnston Collection (TJC) as Committee Member of The Friends of TJC, a magazine contributor, supporter, and guest lecturer, it was an honour to be appointed as CEO of this wonderful organisation in July of this year. Thank you for the very warm welcome I have received from the extended TJC family. It is a delight to be supported by a vibrant, convivial, creative community who enjoy sharing ideas and beautiful things, and a privilege to lead the next exciting chapter in the evolution of TJC in partnership with such a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and supporters.

With beginnings also come endings. A heartfelt 'thank' you to my predecessor, Louis Le Vaillant (CEO|Director|Curator 2008–2023) for his incredible contribution and dedication to TJC. Louis' innovative vision brought together an inspirational group of contemporary artists and craftspeople. Their creative interventions regularly reimagined *Fairhall* as a 'House of Ideas' and opened TJC to new audiences and experiences. Under Louis' leadership, TJC was the recipient of several prestigious awards and achieved accreditation (MAP) from the Australian Museums and Galleries Association; OPENING DOORS, an important new fundraising scheme was launched; and TJC's administration building was rejuvenated to become an even more inviting space for visitors, staff, and volunteers.

Louis, thank you for the incredible legacy you have left us. I wish to add my personal gratitude for so generously sharing your deep knowledge and insights with me as I prepared for my new role. We look forward to welcoming you back to TJC very soon.

This issue of *fairhall* also celebrates the important contribution by Ambassador Robert Thomson (President of The Friends of TJC 2008–2012), whose inspirational eye for colour and design has been re-visited in our current exhibition, *A Home of One's Own*. Robert was the first professional designer to re-arrange *Fairhall* in 2008, and the current exhibition – based on Robert's 2008 re-arrangement – is again delighting visitors. I encourage you to experience this elegant, timeless exhibition before 11 February 2024, and bring a friend or two. Thank you to Curatorial Volunteers, TJC Ambassador Dorothy Morgan and Jan Heale for their support in bringing this exhibition to fruition.

2024 promises to be another exciting year for TJC, with new events, lectures, and creative collaborations for you to enjoy. We are regularly adding new programs, which are publicized in our Friends e-newsletters, and on our website: www.johnstoncollection.org. Don't forget to follow us on social media (Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter), and LinkedIn) for behind-the-scenes insights.

I'm passionate about this very special organisation that connects the past and present and I look forward to working with all of you to welcome new visitors and communities as they discover inspiring art and experiences at TJC.

Very best wishes,
Louise

INTRODUCING NEW TJC CEO: DR LOUISE VOLL BOX

In July 2023, The Johnston Collection welcomed Dr Louise Voll Box as CEO, the organisation's fifth Director/CEO. The *fairhall* editorial team met with Louise to find out a little more about her background and her ambitions for the future.

What brought you into contact with TJC?

Seventeen years ago I'd recently returned to Melbourne from several years living and working in New Zealand and was seeking an opportunity to support the Victorian arts sector. I was intrigued by the 'secret' nature of TJC and its fascinating collection and emailed TJC. Nina Stanton (TJC Director 2000-2008) telephoned me and we met the following day. Our 'introductory meeting' coincided with a scheduled Friends of TJC committee meeting. Nina made a quick assessment, and I was proposed as a new Friends Committee Member 'on the spot'.

It was a privilege to serve on the Committee for six years, and to support both Nina and Louis Le Vaillant (Director|Curator|CEO 2008-2023). Over the years I was involved in editing the precursor of *fairhall* magazine, have contributed articles to *fairhall*, and delivered lectures as part of the TJC Lecture Program.

You have an interesting combination of corporate and arts background. Can you expand upon that?

I've worked in human resources, retail and financial service management, business development, stakeholder management, and executive education. All through my corporate career, I served on arts boards and committees, and am a trustee of an arts-focused charitable trust.

Most recently I taught in the art history and Master of Art Curatorship programs at the University of Melbourne, and researched eighteenth-century visual arts and culture. I was fortunate to take up several international art research fellowships, including from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Francis Haskell Memorial Fund. Other highlights were six months working in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum as the Harold Wright and Sarah and William Holmes Scholar, and visiting country houses with the Attingham Trust UK.

I've always been the 'business-y' one at arts gatherings, and the 'arty' one amongst my corporate colleagues, so it is a privilege to bring all these experiences together in my current role at TJC. My first school holiday job was with an interior design firm, so when collaborating with Robert Thomson for the current TJC exhibition *A Home of One's Own*, I felt as if my multi-faceted career had brought me full circle.

I understand that education is important to you.

I'm passionate about learning and development. My first degree was in art history, and I subsequently studied arts management, a Master of Art Curatorship, and most recently a doctorate in art history which focused on a collection assembled by an eighteenth-century English duchess. There are many fascinating research 'rabbit holes' at TJC, and I'm looking forward to jumping into some of those!



Dr Louise Voll Box (image: Adam Luttick | Luts Photography).

What is your favourite object in the Collection?

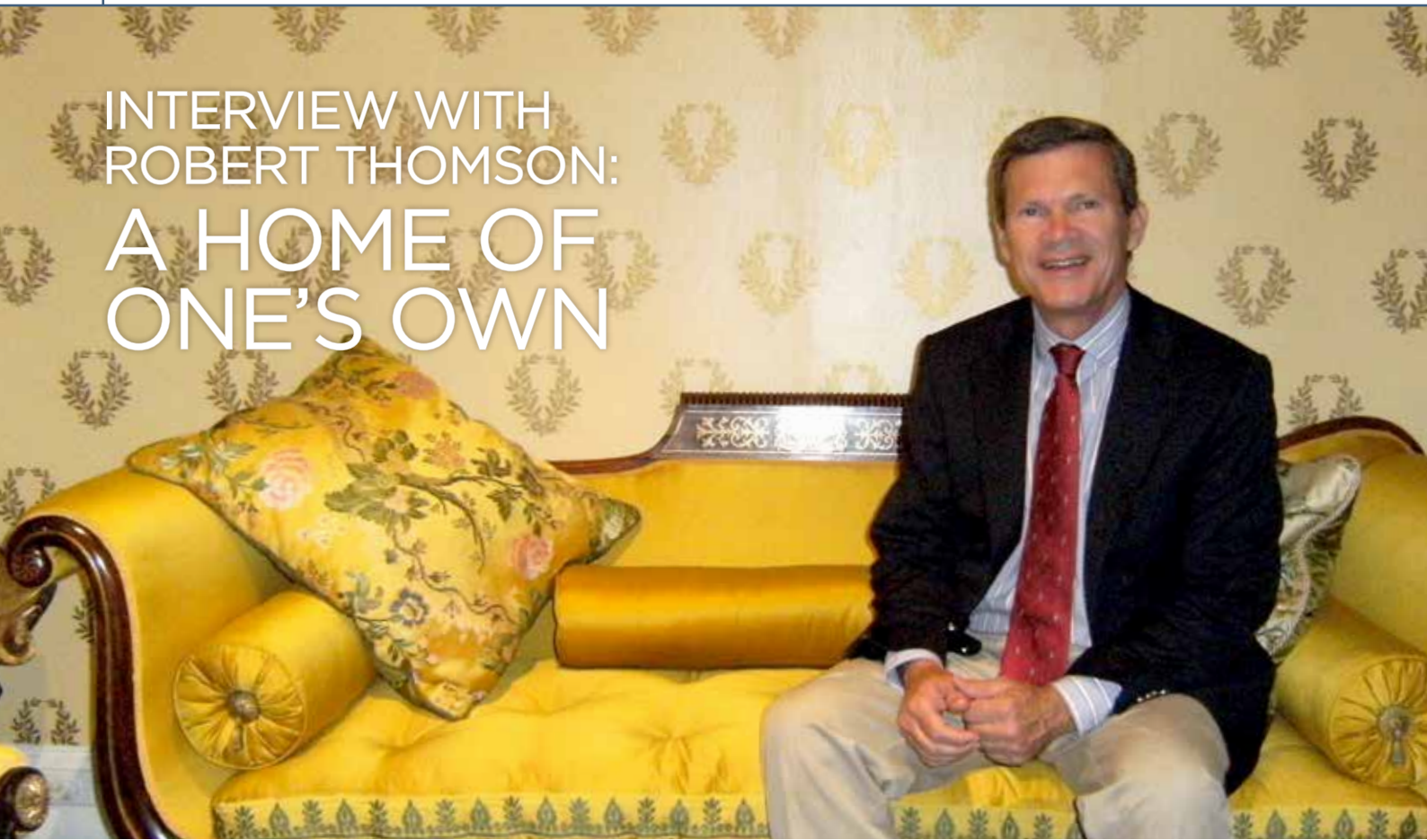
Today, it's the mahogany breakfront bookcase (in the style of Thomas Chippendale, A0001) in the Green Drawing Room. It is impressive in scale, yet the design and proportions give a sense of lightness and elegance. It expresses different moods depending on what objects are displayed on its shelves and has an interesting provenance story. 'Chippendale' was a word I heard at home from a young age – I inherited an interest in fine furniture from my father – so it also evokes family memories. I'm an inveterate bibliophile so any bookcase holds my interest...

What are you excited about bringing to TJC?

My focus is threefold: to sustain the already highly successful aspects of TJC: our wonderful people and collections; to invigorate TJC by sharing new stories with audiences and potential partners, and to inspire collaborative research and knowledge building with educators and art and design practitioners. I'm passionate about sharing stories of historical objects with new audiences; developing stronger connections with the education sector; and attracting new sources of philanthropic funding, partnerships, and sponsorships to TJC that will enable us to develop new programming, events, and activities that inspire and delight our visitors and supporters. Continuing to explore the juxtaposition of old and new – of historical and contemporary design – helps us to understand our past, present, and future.

It is a privilege to be working with such an inspiring team of Trustees, staff, Ambassadors, volunteers, and supporters, and I'd like to pass on my gratitude for the very warm welcome I have received.

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT THOMSON: A HOME OF ONE'S OWN



Our current exhibition, *A Home of One's Own | Summer at TJC*, brings together objects, collections and design inspirations that have developed over many years, but continue to resonate today. The exhibition encourages visitors to discover antiques and much-loved decorative pieces that draw on iconic designs of the past, yet create an inviting, intimate, and timeless expression of 'home'.

This special rearrangement was inspired by a 2008 exhibition at The Johnston Collection, curated by renowned Melbourne-based interior designer, Robert Thomson, former Director at design firm Riddell Marly, and now a valued Ambassador at TJC. During the last ten years of William Johnston's life, he entrusted Robert to undertake special projects for him at *Fairhall*.

Visitors to Robert's 2008 exhibition commented, 'how fantastic... this gives so many great ideas for your home'. It is a testament to Robert's skill that the rooms he designed look just as fresh and timeless today. 'A Home of One's Own' speaks to the longevity of good design, whether from the eighteenth century, recent decades, or today. Antiques, inherited pieces, and objects collected over time not only give warmth and character to our homes but support our renewed focus on sustainability and creative re-use.

Our new CEO, Dr Louise Voll Box recently met with Robert to reflect on his career, his design philosophy, his support of TJC, and his work with Mr Johnston. Louise and Robert have known each other since 2007, when they were both appointed as Committee Members of the Friends of TJC. Both have much in common: they were educated in country Queensland (Toowoomba) and at the University of Queensland; both worked with Myer early in their careers; moved to Victoria 'for a year or two' and have since called Melbourne home; and both became involved with TJC at the invitation of Nina Stanton (1948-2009),

TJC Director from 2000 until her retirement from ill health in 2008.

Robert, how did you start your career in interior design?

I originally studied law at the University of Queensland but was always interested in interior design and felt that was really where my passion and future career should lie. It's a career change I've never regretted. I first worked as an interior designer with Myer in Brisbane, where I developed a reputation for sourcing unique European fabrics for clients, including some very special textiles from Austria. A few years later I was fortunate to have an opportunity to move to Melbourne to work with Reg Riddell, an important figure in the design world at that time. I thought I'd stay for 'a couple of years' but Melbourne really felt like home. I started a branch of Riddell's in Balwyn (in my own name), and later became a director of the combined firm of Riddell Marley until my retirement in the mid-2000s.

Do you have any particularly memorable projects?

I was fortunate to work with many wonderful clients over the years, mainly through referral from other clients and architects. It was the people I worked with over the years that are most memorable for me – it was such a privilege to help clients with their properties in the country, in town, and near the beach. Most of my work was focused on residential and small

commercial projects, but I did consult with the Melbourne Cricket Ground on the selection of colours for some of the key structural elements of the facility – certainly something a little different!

How would you describe your design philosophy, and what were some of your design inspirations?

My focus is very much on ‘old mixed with new’, and creating a restrained elegance that draws people into a space and makes them feel comfortable. I want clients and their guests to experience an air of excitement as they explore each room, for their home to be a repository of treasures. I’ve always been interested in antiques, and haunted auction houses over the years in search of interesting pieces. I enjoy beautiful fabrics and am especially fond of French toile. History and the stories behind objects intrigue me. Extensive European travel has sustained me and inspired my work, and I’ve particularly enjoyed visiting the great country houses of the UK and Europe.

How did you meet William Johnston?

Judith Conroy, a Trustee of The Johnston Collection, introduced me to William Johnston in the late 1970s. He was seeking advice on re-making some curtains he had purchased for *Fairhall*. Initially he didn’t want to follow my guidance, but he eventually came around and was very pleased with the outcome. I later gave him ideas on colour, suggestions for upholstery, admired his antiques, and we got on very well. He recommended interesting flea markets in Paris to me, and a wonderful hotel on the Right Bank that I stayed at several times. He sometimes referred his own clients to me. I liked the interesting mixture of modern furniture and antiques he created at Fairhall. Some of the modern pieces he lived with at that time still look timeless today. He blended old and new very well.

How did you become involved with The Johnston Collection?

Just as I was concluding my career with Riddell Marly, I received a phone call from the then TJC Director, Nina Stanton. She said, ‘I’ve heard you are retiring soon and you’ll be looking for something to do, so why don’t you join our Friends Committee’. She was certainly persuasive! I don’t think she knew about my work with William Johnston at that time, so that was a nice connection. She soon invited me to rearrange The Collection, and I did this for several exhibitions, one under my own name (in 2008) and on other occasions as well.

Your interior designs have been described as ‘timeless’.

What do you think makes a great room and arrangement?

It’s important to take away the fussiness, to aim for restrained elegance. Mixing periods and patterns, using quality European fabrics, and cleverly integrating colour all bring a room to life. Careful colour choices can make such a difference – sometimes a bold colour is right for a room, but subtle combinations such as beige and white can also be very elegant.

What is the best way to integrate antiques into homes today?

Even just a few antique pieces can transform a contemporary room. They don’t need to be expensive, but pieces with character give a room meaning, warmth and authenticity. Working with quality, interesting, exquisite fabrics (even on just one side of a cushion, if that is all you can afford) can elevate a room into something special. The combination of modern paintings and lighting with Persian rugs, antiques, beautiful fabrics, glass – it’s exciting to see old and new working together to create a special space.

‘A home becomes. It takes time’

Victoria Alexander



Green Drawing Room, Mr Thompson Re-arranges Mr Johnston's Residence. 10 May – 30 June 2008. (Image Mirek Rządowski)

We are grateful to Robert Thomson for permission to again draw on his inspired ideas and expertise for our Summer 2023-2024 rearrangement. The sense of past and present, and Robert’s refined sensibility for colour, placement, and the selection of objects – drawn from a lifetime of international inspiration – resonates through this exhibition.

Dorothy Morgan, TJC Ambassador and Curatorial and Collection Volunteer, created volunteer guide notes for Robert’s 2008 exhibition, and has played a critical role in exhibition planning this year. She commented, ‘overall, the focus on black and white decorative pieces and the containment of ‘prettier’ porcelain within bookcases, has contributed to Robert’s aim of making the house appear more masculine’. The relationships between objects and the exquisitely mixed furniture of different periods demonstrate how a collection may grow over time and continue to have special meaning for collectors.

Over the last fifteen years, TJC has acquired many exquisite objects, most recently the significant connoisseur’s collection of over 700 outstanding pieces: silver, ceramics, furniture, glass, clocks, watches, paintings, miniatures, and *objet d’art* from the collection of Mr Roger Brookes (1929–2020). His generous bequest was featured in *Fairhall 33* and many objects from his collection have been incorporated into this rearrangement. The blue and white porcelain in the kitchen from The Brookes Bequest, and the introduction of some feminine objects in the bedroom – including a lady’s worktable – create some different narratives from those originally developed by Robert.

Overall though, references to Robert’s design philosophy and his approach to creating comfortable and inviting spaces with timeless appeal have been maintained. Visitors will experience how fine and decorative artworks from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be enjoyed in today’s homes, and how they create comfortable, liveable, individual spaces that speak to elegance, re-use and sustainability. These themes also connect with stories about William Johnston and his approach to collecting, dealing, and living with fine and decorative arts. We are indeed fortunate to re-experience some of these themes at TJC, as interpreted through the skilful eye of Robert Thomson.

FASHION BEYOND CLOTHING

Fashion is transient, short-lived, and fragile, yet it is also mutable and open to translations and transformations across media and genre. It was the circulation of prints, drawings, models, written and verbal instruction, but primarily prints, that permitted the circulation and spread of ideas about fashion and fashionability in the era before photography and film.

This was the case not only in the West but also in Eurasia: Japan and China. The enormous expansion of European trade, conquest, and colonization from the sixteenth century onwards generated a raft of new fashions for all concerned not limited to clothes and textiles but encompassing spatial environments modified with new textiles. Trading companies engaging in European and intra-Asian trade commenced with the Portuguese and included also Dutch, English, French, Swedish and Danish concerns. They traded in an incredible range of goods, many of which were promoted as new fashionable pastimes – tea, coffee, and chocolate taking – and which introduced new visual registers to European eyes.

Asian exported goods from chintz to parasols transformed European fashion in the early modern period, and European goods and technologies including oil painting, timepieces, mirror glass, and lenses were adapted in China and Japan. Fashion itself, particularly the design and colours of the textiles of which it was crafted, influenced the formats, colours, and designs of adjacent artifacts ranging from French porcelain coffee services to Japanese lacquer lunch boxes. Scenes of fashion were frequently depicted on porcelain and pottery tea wares and figurines, lacquer, enamels, and reverse-painted glass in the early modern period. In the case of porcelain, images of fashionable people sometimes provided the very form of the object. Although not always yielding up their certain meanings or intentions, for Europeans they often inferred the novelty and excitement of new fashion products and encounters.

Silk occupied a particular point of prestige and preference for fashion in the early modern period. Chinese silk had since antiquity astonished Europeans for its lustre and complex brocaded designs. The first patterned silks woven in Europe date only from the thirteenth century and were manufactured first in Lucca. Despite East India silks being



banned in England from 1699 and Chinese silk in France from 1702, they were not prohibited in Holland and were much re-exported. Many simpler, unpatterned silks were imported into the Netherlands throughout the eighteenth century. In some cases entire garments of expensive local silk were shipped to Europe from China. Anne Maria Bogaert, the daughter of an Amsterdam merchant with Batavian connections, was married in a formal mantua gown of cream Chinese silk in the mid-eighteenth century. Made to measure from six lengths of silk in China, the dress was also embroidered there (its rich embroidery surface has no interruption at the seams), and onward-shipped to Europe as part of the '*pacotille*' or privilege of a private trader on board an East India Company vessel.

Both dress and upholstery silks were subject from an early date to precise fashion directives. European agents worked with Chinese go-betweens and brokers to develop woven textiles that suited European consumers. Different textiles conveyed different moods and materialities. The glossy Chinese silks were very



Design for woven silk from the 'Leman Album', pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and bodycolour on laid paper, by James Leman, Spitalfields, 1710-1711. Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchased with Art Fund support and the National Heritage Memorial Fund. E.1861:106-1991

suitable for the making up of women's dresses and were used widely in France, England, the Low Countries, and colonial North America. In 1773 the Dutch sent out a precise order for dress fabrics: '100 painted lustrings in a new taste: half the order should be with small coloured stripes. Both types have to be nicely painted with small scrolls, not too coarse and the pattern not too large.' Palettes changed after 1770 from colours such as green, ochre, dark red, and pink to white, grey, dark blue, and other cool colours, reflecting new tastes in art and design and also a new conception of the body in which more was revealed. The neo-classical body could not afford to be swamped by very large pattern repeats.

Europeans also coveted Chinese painted silks for men's banyans (T-shaped 'undress' garments worn by European men, akin to a dressing gown) and room hangings. Such textiles were cheaper but not inferior versions of the most expensive format, Chinese embroidered silk, that were also used for clothing and upholstery. These two categories of silk were made for export in the same factories in Canton and designs were often provided to the Dutch East India Company by Chinese artists, not Europeans, as was generally the case with ceramics. A Dutch East India Company report noted in 1786: 'Anthonij the painter will prepare new designs for the painted textiles in order to enable us to select the most beautiful and fashionable patterns'. 'Anthony' was the famous Chinese artist, also known as Antonio the Deaf who both created designs for others, and also painted textiles himself. Such a strong statement indicates the appeal of designs drawn with a strong Chinese character: Europeans particularly liked the way in which the Chinese painted colourful flowers, birds, and insects which suited the bucolic mood of mid-to-late eighteenth century taste.

Designers of silk were actively encouraged to seek out inter-connections between fashionable things. In 1765 the Lyon silk designer and manufacturer Joubert de l'Hiberderie (1725-73) published his commentary on French silk. He noted that it was a pity that women were excluded from this profession as they would have made great contributions due to their proximity to fashion. He neglects here the famous exception of Anna Maria Garthwaite (1688-1763), Spitalfields Silk designer, noted for her brocaded floral and ribbon silks with contrasting textured grounds, which would have looked well when moving with the body. She worked from engravings and precise drawings provided by botanists of local as well as exotic specimens.

Textile production in urbanized cultures often revolved around the sharing of pictorial sources relayed by a variety of intermediaries including merchants and manufacturers, some of whom came from accomplished artistic circles themselves. This was the case for both Europe and Japan. Fashion in Japan was generated within specific visual codes and networks that linked textile and clothing design to other visual arts, including screen painting, porcelain, metalwork, lacquer, and architecture. As Christine Guth notes of Japanese Momoyama (1573-1615) textiles: 'Close personal ties between artists involved in textile production and those in other media fostered much artistic cross-fertilization'. In the Japanese Genroku period (1688-1704) The characteristics of multi-coloured Japanese *Imari* (the name of the port from which ceramics of this name were exported) could be found on dishes, brocades, and screens. The *kinran-de* (gold brocade) subcategory of *Imari* porcelain, embellished with gold, was directly inspired by the textiles used in Japanese ceremonial, theatrical, and fashionable life. All played a role in a performative enactment of luxury and aesthetics. At the same time, in Mughal India, European modes of 'scientific' botanical representation spread by the importation of 17th century botanical prints or 'herbals' influencing the design of Mughal architecture, manuscript illustration, and printed and painted cottons depicting flowers.

In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, European urban centres began to demand clothes that were literally 'easier' to wear than those worn at court (more loosely cut, more



Mantua Court Dress, ivory coloured Chinese silk, c.1747, Kunst Museum Den Haag | Hague Art Museum, Object Number: 1006296

easily bundled up for women, shorter skirts for men's waistcoats and jackets, giving an ability to walk and to work but remaining 'in fashion'). A concentration of workers in the 'appearance industries' permitted the skills, practices, and fashionably attuned air of mercers, tailors, hatters, milliners, wigmakers, hairdressers, glovers, stay-makers, and domino (paper patterns for cards and linings) printers to creatively merge with the new commercialization of leisure and the public space. Fashion was activated by the public spaces of the theatres, assembly halls, amusement venues (Vauxhall Gardens, the Pantheon, and Ranelagh in London), permanent and open-air shops and markets, and parks and gardens suitable for walking, to create a dense and diverse fashion culture that could be observed by a wide range of people not permitted in the older, exclusive court circles where a fashion of magnificence had reigned. A similar engagement between the consumption of new textile imports, desired by fashion conscious urban traders and often worn in leisure districts, also coalesced in contemporary Japan.

Images of fashion seem to be everywhere in the past. Yet early modern audiences, with no photography or film, had a different relationship to the visual culture of fashion than 19th, 20th, and

21st century viewers. We are used to thinking about fashion of the early modern period, whether it be for a Japanese kimono design or to serve as model for a piece of Chinese porcelain, engendered new abilities to 'read', replicate, and generate fashion. Design often proceeded from complementary sources, approaches, and insights that were constantly remade in a global setting that went beyond the notions of copy or influence to create a supercharged environment for fashion in a world before mass consumption.

PETER MCNEIL

Dr Peter McNeil is Distinguished Professor of Design History at the University of Technology Sydney. He writes and lectures across design, fashion, textiles, interiors and domestic life and has published monographs including *Luxury: A Rich History*; and *Pretty Gentlemen: Eighteenth-Century Dress and The Macaroni Fashion World*. Fashion and furniture is a long term interest of Peter's and he is regular contributor to TJC's lecture program.

Abridged from a chapter Copyright Peter McNeil, 'Fashion beyond clothing: Early Modern Visual Culture of Eurasian Dress', *Global History of Fashion*, Vol. 1, ed. C. Breward, B. Lemire and G. Riello, 314–362, Cambridge University Press, 2023



OUR NEXT GUEST CURATOR: VINCENT JENDEN

We are delighted to announce that Vincent Jenden, founder of Vincent Jenden Design (VJD), is the guest curator for our next exhibition, opening in February 2024. Vincent is a New Zealand-born, Australian-based interior designer with a passion for combining antiques with contemporary styling.

Vincent's thirty-year design career has taken him from New Zealand to London and then to Melbourne, where he has been based since the mid-2000s. Vincent divides his time – and his collection of antiques and art collection – between his home in South Yarra and his 1860s Colonial/Georgian-revival country property in Blackwood, an hour from Melbourne.

VJD works with private clients and has also been commissioned to provide interior installations for public spaces. In 2019, *Como By Design* invited Vincent to restyle the interior of one of Melbourne's iconic nineteenth-century estates, *Como House*, South Yarra. Vincent's reinterpretation of the Grand Billiard Room evoked an eclectic, lavishly layered interior showcasing the spoils of an eighteenth-century Grand Tour.

Earlier this year, Vincent collaborated with members of the AAADA (Australian Antique and Art Association) to curate an interior arrangement juxtaposing antiques and contemporary pieces in the foyer of the AAADA 2023 *Antiques and Art Fair* at Malvern Town Hall. The space was dominated by an eighteenth-century French tapestry, and featured silk-velvet sofas, an ocelot upholstered day bed, tortoiseshell objects, and blackamoors.

"It is a special honour to be invited to walk in the footsteps of William Johnston and some of Australia's leading creative and design specialists who have reinterpreted the Collection over the years", he said. "I'm looking forward to bringing the VJD Vision to The Johnston Collection".

As a self-confessed 'maximalist' we look forward to Vincent's interpretation of *Fairhall* using objects from William Johnston's collection.



Left | Vincent Jenden and his installation at the AAADA 2023 Antiques and Art Fair at Malvern Town Hall.

A TABLEAU OF SUGAR AND PORCELAIN: SPINNING A STORY

Addressing origin stories whose veracity is questionable and debunking entrenched but inaccurate colonial ideas of history is an area in which curators can effect an influence with novel and creative approaches to the presentations of the collections under their purview.

The curator is in a unique position to encourage the reinvestigation and better understanding of what artefacts might mean to their original communities of origin in a way that is beyond institutional bodies and governing boards. To this end, it is the preserve of the curator to encourage enquiry, interrogation, and better education in spite of any historical grievances, unpleasantness, vested interests or agendas.

British industry and trade transformed during the 17th and 18th centuries through the development of a consumer economy that was based around a system made possible by naval power which enabled commercial interests to flourish. Slave plantations were central to this. As the British taste for sugar drove up demand, the British colonies in the Caribbean were converted into 'sugar economies' and thus its by-product, a huge trade in slaves. Indeed, the very popularity of tea and tobacco was made possible through the dominance of the British slave network.

In this context, the reach and import of exhibitions such as Dorothy Morgan's installation in 'The Green Drawing Room' on the dining room table entitled: *A Tableau of Sugar and Porcelain 'Spinning a Story'*¹ go way beyond their direct subject matter, drawing on the objects exhibited to highlight both the contemporary state and evolution of prevailing social movements and class dynamics.

Juxtaposed against the changes in the social order signified by the use of these materials for those in the wealthy and upper middle class was the extreme poverty of the poorer classes. In a period that marked one of the greatest divides between the rich and poor, with industrialisation driving drastic changes, the advent of factories - typically operated by low paid workers, many of whom were women and children - saw a boom in people moving to the cities and forced to live in extremely poor conditions.

As mentioned above, the wealth of the Empire during this period was largely dependent on slave labour in the colonies; as consumer needs grew so did the desire for affordable sugar and so the sugar industry propelled a transatlantic slave trade and encouraged a reliance upon slave labour in other colonial industries.

When considering the objects placed upon the table for *The Real Deal*, and the period in which they were produced, the

exploitation of others to service the desires of the aristocratic European palate presents a challenge to the curator of collections aimed at a contemporary audience. Often finding their origins in slavery and the exploitation rooted in colonialism, existing collections represent a dark side to the story of 17th and 18th century dining. Considering also the presentation of items overall, it pays to note that today's classical museum setting was oriented towards educating audiences - only it did this by drawing on a narrative geared towards western sensibilities. This goes to the question of who gets to tell history and from whose perspective.

Cue the role of the curator. The Fitzwilliam Museum's 2018 exhibition *Flux: Parian Unpacked* represents an attempt by the institution to acknowledge and confront the problematic origins of its holdings - a recognition that the artefacts in its collection were acquired by virtue of imperialism, their existence coming about through questionable circumstances.

'The exhibition seeks to question why Museums and society celebrate the lives of some people, but not others, and to challenge established notions of British history and colonialism.'

Flux curator Matt Smith was charged with 'unpacking' the newly acquired Glynn collection - presenting it in a novel way that would introduce new stories into the museum. The collection comprised 363 portrait busts of popular figures from the height of British Empire, such as Queen Victoria. Made of Parian, a Victorian era invention designed to mimic marble and used by pottery makers to mass-produce sculptures quickly and cheaply (thus making collecting available to the middle class), the unstable nature of this material allowed Smith a reflective platform through which to examine changing views and attitudes to history and to the individuals depicted: to explore how our understanding of the establishment, these historical figures and history, especially colonial history and the abuse of power, is in a state of perpetual flux.

For his takeover of the museum Smith displayed the busts spilling out of their packing boxes, giving visitors the impression that this was the first time the museum itself was seeing the newly acquired collection, conveying the state of flux of an exhibition not yet fully set-up. The busts meanwhile, of celebrated and immortalised historical figures, allowed Smith to tell the less





above | detail showing the installation *A Tableau of Sugar and Porcelain 'Spinning a Story'* seen in 'The Green Drawing Room' as part of *THE REAL DEAL* | WILLIAM JOHNSTON: *His Residence & Collection*, 16 March 2022 - 11 September 2022. In centre: Meissen porcelain factory (German, est.1710), *figure group (Bacchanalian scene)*, Meissen, circa 1845–1850, porcelain, polychrome enamel decoration | 359 x 279 x 355 mm, The Johnston Collection (Foundation Collection, 1989, A0928)

positive stories of Empire. The exhibition was set in a room papered with a newly commissioned colourful *toile de jouy* design, frivolous in style, a throwback to the English Country House and its colonial affiliations, except that it depicted the grim realities of Empire, such as the British Army's occupation in India and the Irish famine.

As a material, Parian is an unglazed porcelain that mimics marble and was accessible to a variety of classes. 'It is an unstable material, and the unpredictability of it provides a platform from which we can examine our changing views of history and our changing opinions of those individuals depicted – accepting that our understanding of the past is always in flux'.

Thus Smith drew on this medium not only to tackle the museum's colonial past but also to represent the voices of those not included in the museum. The exhibition investigated themes of mass production, celebrity, colonialism, and our notion of history, and highlighted the disparity in our institutions' storytelling, challenging the prevalence of these deeply rooted ideas of British history and colonialism.² In addition to the Parian ware, Smith created new works which challenged the viewer to reconsider the museum's permanent collection in a new light.

In a novel extension of the exhibition, Smith worked with Glynn's Parian of Narcissus to introduce an element of reflection, using mirrored pools to reflect not only the works, but also the museum visitor, and beyond that the backdrop of the museum and its architecture, so that the viewer saw themselves physically placed within the setting. Here, Smith was asking of audiences: who feels as if their histories are being told within the museum and who feels as if their stories are excluded because of the way museums have traditionally dealt with history and with objects?

The reverberations of Empire and colonialism are evident today across myriad examples of curatorial intervention, whereby a dark by-product of the prevailing tastes and desires for the exotic is that nearly every museum and gallery have among their holdings, artefacts and items with strong connections to plantations and slavery.

Rather than relegating problematic and difficult items and aspects of history to the archives, the obligation on the part of institutions in acknowledging such items and creating dialogue around them, presents an opportunity for the contemporary curator.

REBECCA THOMAS

1 *THE REAL DEAL* | WILLIAM JOHNSTON: *His Residence & Collection*, 16 March 2022 - 11 September 2022.

2 Matt Smith, Flux Catalogue, Accessed 16 July 2022; <http://mattjsmith.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Flux-Catalogue-Final.pdf>.



THE ROMANTIC AND HEALTH-GIVING PROPERTIES OF NATURE

Before the Georgian Age the sea was regarded as untamed and dangerous, especially as very few people could swim, so it was only in the late 18th century that an increasing number of people were attracted to the sea for its romantic and health-giving properties.

The benefits of sea bathing had long been known as was the restorative quality of sea air, especially for those with consumption. In the 1730's visitors to Scarborough on the Yorkshire coast, who came to drink the mineral waters at the spa, were also encouraged to swim in the sea - the colder the water the more beneficial, as Horace Walpole may have discovered when he travelled there in 1734 with the hope of curing his gout! Brighton (Brighthelmstone) began developing as a resort in the 1750s following the publishing of a local doctor's book on the benefits of sea water, particularly for children, and was already popular with visitors when the Prince of Wales (later George IV) began to holiday there in 1783. The medicinal benefits of drinking seawater (adding milk was supposed to make it more palatable!) and/or bathing in it were thought to cure complaints ranging from rheumatism to melancholy madness, scrofula, constipation and infertility. Sea water could also be mixed with ground ingredients such as roasted crab's eyes, snails and woodlice then taken as a pill!

In the early years both sexes shared the beach entering the water at the same time with early morning being considered the most beneficial time for bathing, but propriety soon ensured separation of the sexes, especially as men bathed naked. In 1786 the eastern part of Brighton beach was given to the female bathers whilst in Torquay their bathing beach was screened by bushes. For most women, who wanted the benefits of sea bathing, their ordeal would have started by entering a bathing room on the fore shore. They would write their name on a slate and whilst waiting until a bathing machine was available would have access to refreshments and newspapers. Once inside the horse-drawn wooden beach hut, clothes were removed with the help of a female assistant and replaced with a long, high necked, long-sleeved loose-fitting shift made from linen or green flannel for warmth and protection in the chill water. Leather head bags or oiled silk caps gave long hair some water protection whilst those with short hair relied on linen caps to filter out the sand.

Once ready the vehicle lurched across the beach into waist or chest deep water. A telescopic awning was released, and the bather would then descend the steps before fully immersing themselves in the water, aided by an assistant known as a 'dipper'. For a Georgian gentlewoman to have been buffeted by the waves for the first time must have been an alarming, exhausting yet exciting experience. Margate was the first resort on the Kent coast to have bathing machines and by 1780 had seawater baths on the Parade, used by both sexes. However, despite Londoners having an alternative to a long jolting carriage ride by using the 'Margate Hoy', a low-slung barge on the Thames, it was overtaken in popularity by neighbouring Ramsgate, which was visited by Jane Austen in 1803. By the end of the century many of the bathing rooms had been converted into indoor pools with both hot and cold sea water and the horse drawn huts began to disappear from the beaches.

As it had become fashionable for Georgian families to leave the polluted air of London to spend several weeks of summer on the south coast, towns such as Eastbourne, Hastings, Margate and Worthing – which may have been the inspiration for *Sanditon* after the author's visit – had become increasingly popular. These resorts also flourished due to European travel being restricted by the Napoleonic wars, despite the risk of invasion. The popularity of a resort was increased if it had easy access to historic buildings, pleasant countryside, or coastal views where a picnic lunch could be enjoyed – weather permitting! The warmer climate of the south-west attracted many families to towns such as Torquay, Sidmouth, Lyme Regis (popular with fossil hunters) and Weymouth with its fine, sandy beaches where children played under the watchful eyes of their nursemaids. Weymouth received royal approval when George III and his family holidayed there from the 1780s making the resort fashionable and expensive well into the 19th century. Resorts were places where the upper classes could spend time promenading in their most fashionable clothes whilst visiting friends and the shops, a change of scenery and fresh air being considered beneficial to the spirits and

to the mind. Socialising took place at the Assembly Rooms, attending theatrical performances and balls and at the subscription libraries which by the early 19th century were to be found in every resort. Margate had one of the finest libraries whilst Sidmouth had one of the most famous – it specialised in educational toys as well as children's books. Seaside resorts also offered inexpensive rented lodgings for weeks, even months, throughout the year for those who couldn't afford or were too unwell to travel abroad. Lyme Regis famous for its Cobb and a favourite of Jane Austen, was seen as such a resort (N.B. the fictional injured naval officer, Captain Harville, in *Persuasion*). The long term health problems of Jane's mother saw the family also taking holidays in Devon, visiting Sidmouth in 1801 and in the following year Dawlish, where Jane complained that the library was "particularly pitiful and wretched!"

Many seaside resorts, such as Sidmouth and Torquay, held regattas as the highlight of the season, which also attracted many day trippers who might also enjoy a brisk walk along cliff tops armed with picnics and sketch books. One of the most notable regattas was at Weymouth which benefited from its harbour and sheltered waters whilst Cowes on the Isle of Wight (reached by packet ship) held its inaugural race in 1826 with George IV presenting the Gold Cup to the winner. J.M.W. Turner travelled to Cowes for the Regatta in 1827 resulting in the painting *East Cowes Castle...the Regatta Beating to Windward*.

The seaside wasn't for everyone and during the Regency period leisure travel around the UK was increasing, not only due to the difficulties of travelling overseas and the improvement in roads but to the growing appreciation of the beauty of Britain's rugged and mountainous landscapes which became associated with the idea of 'romantic sensibility'. A quality to which well-educated members of Regency society aspired! Favoured destinations initially being the Lake District of Cumbria, the Peak District of Derbyshire, the Yorkshire moors and the lowlands of Scotland but increasingly to Wales and to the Scottish Highlands after the publication of Walter Scott's novel *The Lady of the Lake* in 1803. William Wordsworth's *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* was published in the same year bringing tourists who wished to go on walking or sketching tours to discover the "picturesque". Tours of these regions might also include visits to country houses (as in *Pride and Prejudice*) or to ruined castles – a practise which continues today!

DENISE FARMERY



Unknown, England *Garniture*, mantle, (trio) centre vase "Cirencester Church" and two side vases of seaside resort "Hesketh Crescent, Torquay", England, 19th century, porcelain, transfer print decoration. The Johnston Collection, A1389, Gift of Christine Bell, 2016.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH

This popular meal has been around since the early 1800s (and perhaps earlier) when ploughman's wives sent their husbands off to plough the fields with a packed meal. There are records of it mentioned in 18th century literature.

Food which would keep without refrigeration would be included. Traditionally, the cheese, bread, and pickles would be made by the wives, making the meals inexpensive but substantial. In the middle of the 19th century there were other foods added to this lunch. For example, ham, stilton cheese, scotch eggs, and a small salad could be added. This style is more like what would be served at an English Pub today.

BRANSTON PICKLE

INGREDIENTS

260g carrots, peeled and cut into small chunks
300g swede or 150g potato, cut into small chunks
4-5 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
140g dates
1 small cauliflower, cut into small florets
2 medium onions, peeled & finely chopped
2 medium apples, peeled & finely chopped
2 medium zucchini, unpeeled & finely chopped
15 small cornichons, finely chopped
285g dark brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons lemon juice
360mls malt vinegar
1 teaspoon Keen's mustard
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 teaspoon ground allspice

METHOD:

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Cool for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for about 1 hour or until the liquid is well reduced. Spoon into sterile jars and seal. Leave for 2 weeks to mature. Serve with bread, cheese, cornichons and some cold meats, if you prefer.

ROBBIE BROOKS



PICKLES

Although pickling has been around since the 18th century, helped by the growing industrialization of the printing industry, house management handbooks and cookery books ensured the tradition continued. Hannah Glasse the renowned published cook of the day, had much to say about methods of food preservation techniques. The concept of soaking foodstuffs in a highly acidic (vinegary) environment to protect the food from spoilage remained unchanged, but the recipes and methods varied greatly. The types of pickled foods were diverse as well. Throughout the western world, pickles were made of locally prized ingredients. The multitude of spices in these pickling recipes is fascinating. Ginger, sugar, mustard and Jamaica pepper (known today as allspice) are influences of how global colonialism affected all aspects of British culture.

THANK YOU TO LOUIS LE VAILLANT

After fourteen years of distinguished and committed leadership, Louis Le Vaillant stepped down as CEO of The Johnston Collection in June 2023.

His service to TJC was celebrated at two events: *Volunteers' Night Out* at historic *Bishopscourt*, hosted by The Most Reverend the Archbishop of Melbourne Dr Philip Freier and Mrs Joy Freier OAM; and at a 'Thank You' celebration at Mr Peter McKeon and Mrs Maureen McKeon's residence in East Melbourne. We are grateful to our generous hosts who opened their homes for these events.

Louis' tenure was marked by many achievements. Under Louis' leadership, TJC was the recipient of prestigious awards (including Australian Museum and Galleries Association (Victoria) (AMaGA) Awards; Museums Australia (Victoria) Awards; and Museums and Galleries National Awards (MAGNA)), that recognised TJC's engagement with artists and curators, and acknowledged the exceptional contribution of TJC staff and volunteers. (See TJC website under 'Awards' for more information).

In 2019, TJC achieved museum accreditation via the AMaGA (Victoria) Museum Accreditation Program (MAP). The Accreditation panel were "particularly impressed with The Johnston Collection's temporary exhibition and lecture series and its extensive work with community groups."

Louis' work with the community was typified by the many wonderful Christmas exhibitions developed in collaboration with artisans and crafts people from all over Victoria; the establishment of an ongoing relationship with the Embroiderer's Guild of Victoria; a highly successful lecture program; and collaborations with creatives and designers including: Akira Isogawa, Romance Was Born, James Broadbent, Barking Spider Theatre, Pascale Gomez McNabb, Hecker Guthrie, Jamie Allpress, Barb and Alex Brownlow,

Martin Allen, Francis Dunn, Richard Nylon, Rosslynd Piggott, David McAllister, and Janet Lawrence.

Louis led significant projects such as: the renovation of 152 Hotham Street to include new office, library, collection storage, retail, and visitor experience areas; cataloguing the Collection to make it fully accessible online; and re-negotiating the terms of our City of Melbourne permit to allow TJC to welcome visitors every weekend (thus fulfilling William Johnston's initial vision). Louis developed collaborative relationships with organisations such as Open House Melbourne, PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival and Melbourne Food and Wine Festival which brought new visitors to TJC.

Under Louis' leadership, TJC met the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, responding with a range of online lectures and virtual visit opportunities that took the Collection to new local and international audiences. These initiatives brought TJC into the twenty-first century. More recently, Louis also led the process of accessioning the extensive and significant Brookes Bequest, a major contribution of wonderful new objects now so admired by our visitors.

Chair of the W R Johnston Trust, Dr Graeme Blackman AO, paid tribute to Louis, and thanked him for the "energy, creativity, and commitment he brought to his role. I have greatly enjoyed working with Louis, and seeing his passion, dedication, and creative vision to make TJC more relevant and exciting to new audiences whilst retaining the more traditional ones. He has led the organisation through numerous changes and the most challenging of times. Through all this TJC has emerged stronger than ever".

Thank you, Louis, for all you have contributed to TJC.



Kate Rohde & Louis Le Vaillant



Dr Louise Voll Box & Louis Le Vaillant



Hugh Rattan, Robert Thomson, Dr Graeme Blackman AO & Paulene Blackman



Sai Wai Foo, Louis Le Vaillant, Roslynd Piggott



Past and present TJC staff



Peta Johnston, Fleur Johnston, John Johnston, Lisa Arrowsmith, Heather Johnston, Jack Weissenfeld



Robert Craig, Anne Neri, Fil Natarelli



Felicity Cook & Dr Heather Dalton



Dennice Collett & Robyn Ives



Louis Le Vaillant & Lisa Arrowsmith



Mary Ryllis Clark, Maureen McKeon, Jill Fenwick



Shane Carmody & Christine Bell



Bernard Crosbie, Robert Colvin, Julie Nicholson, Cathy Trinca, Helen Hunnwick, Dr Louise Voll Box

LOUIS AT 14

After fourteen years of significant and dedicated leadership as Director | Curator and CEO of The Johnston Collection, Louis Le Vaillant decided it was time to pursue other interests.

When Louis joined the organisation in 2008 as Director | Curator he said that TJC is a “living, changing museum which represents one of Melbourne’s most remarkable secret places” and “a beautiful bijoux museum”. Under Louis’ leadership TJC continued to transform into an engaging place for connection, celebration, inspiration, and creating conversations.

“I have been delighted to grow knowledge, share stories, and create conversations for existing and new audiences and making ‘old new again’ that has led TJC to now being a more outward looking, accessible, multi-award-winning, and critically acclaimed museum”, he said. “I couldn’t be prouder of the staff, volunteers, Ambassadors, The Friends, and *OPENING DOORS* committees. With the generosity of creatives, audiences, supporters, and donors we have achieved many great things”.

Thank you for the many wonderful memories, Louis.



Return to the City opening, 2016



Volunteer Guide training during COVID, 2021



MAGNA Awards 2016



Christmas at TJC, 2015



Richard Nylon & Louis, 2015



Boys Own Story opening, 2019



Guest artists and Louis, Christmas 2013



Melbourne Food & Wine Festival, 2018



Volunteer Guide training day, 2020



Christmas at TJC opening, 2012



'Patterns of Collecting' opening, 2018



Volunteer Guide training day, 2019



Christmas at TJC opening, 2009



Louis & Christine Bell, Government House Open Day 2023

Kit Haselden Photography

THE FRIENDS OF TJC: BECOME A MEMBER

Why not become a member of The Friends of The Johnston Collection and play a fundamental role in supporting, maintaining and developing The Johnston Collection for years to come.

Join online at www.johnstoncollection.org or contact:

THE FRIENDS OF THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION
PO Box 79, East Melbourne VIC 8002
(03) 9416 2515 | friends@johnstoncollection.org

Online booking administration fees DO NOT APPLY to current members of The Friends.

WELCOME TO THE FRIENDS NEW MEMBERS

Rosemary Ayton	Trish Reardon
Kathy Galt	Heather Law
Norman & Jane Kennedy	Warwick Loton
Rosemary Hatton	Heather Nash
Alissa Duke	Rosemary Bates
Deborah Wildsmith	Catherine Doherty
Andrew Collins	Sue Slamen
Geoffrey and Jean Rees	Irene Harding
Peter and Deborah Thomson	Danielle Ng
Pamela Carder	Mark Ni
Molly Hunter	Jennifer McCrossin
Lola Jane Quin	Gregory Wood
Anne Macvean	Robyn Abrahams
Gaye McDermott	Alison Still
Joan Shmith	Jenny Hose
Mary Hall Jeffreson	(as at 22 November 2023)

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Anthony Knight OAM (2000)	Kay Miller (2007)
Lynne Dowling (2003)	Meg Simpson (2007)
Andrew Dixon (2006)	Louis Le Vaillant (2023)
June Kenrick (2007)	

LIFE MEMBER

Elizabeth Cripps (2003)

THE FRIENDS EVENTS

We look forward to your involvement in the many upcoming events conducted by The Friends of The Johnston Collection.



Mulberry Hill
Walk & Talk
24 September
2023



Spring Country
Garden Tour
Arthurs Creek &
Shaws Road Winery
22 October



Liz Zenner & Alice Bray



Chris & Margery Renwick

The Friends
Annual Christmas
Party
2 December
2023



Dr Louise Voll Box & Robert Thomson



Robert Thomson & Hugh Rattan



Ron & Robbie Brooks



Mano Babiakakis & Patricia McKendrick



Dorothy Morgan, Peter Nankervis, Chris Symons



A Home of
One's Own
Preview Night
18 October
2023

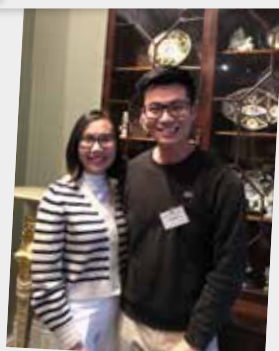


Charles Terrasson, Robert Craig, Heather Mollinson, Dr James Baxter



'Collectomania'
Afternoon Tea
2 December
2023

Claudia Chan Shaw & Dr Louise Voll Box



Danielle Ng & Mark Ni



Elspeth Riggall & Diana Renou

These events have three aims: to develop a convivial social program that brings together individuals with similar interests in the arts; to provide access to events, specialists, locations and homes that normally may not be available to the public; and to assist with support of the Collection.

RECOGNISING OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers Night Out for 2022 was held on Thursday, 22 June 2023 at *Bishopscourt*, the East Melbourne residence of The Most Reverend the Archbishop of Melbourne Dr. Philip Freier and Mrs Joy Freier OAM.

Certificates of appreciation were received by:

- 15 YEARS:** **Lisa Arrowsmith** | Opening Doors Fundraising Committee Chair (2007)
- 10 YEARS:** **Denise Farmery** | Volunteer Guide (2012)
Marguerite Bell | Volunteer Guide (2012)
Rosemary Ramage | Volunteer Guide (2012)
Julie Thompson | Volunteer Guide (2012)
Louise Kinder | Volunteer Guide (2012)

The Volunteers Night Out for 2023 was held on Monday, 13 November 2023 at University House, Professors' Walk, University of Melbourne, Parkville.

Certificate of appreciation was received by:

- 10 YEARS:** **Robbie Brooks** | Administration & Retail Volunteer (2013)

Right, top-bottom | Marguerite Bell & Geoffrey Edwards, Lisa Arrowsmith & Geoffrey Edwards, Julie Thompson & Geoffrey Edwards, Dr Graeme Blackman AO & Robbie Brooks



REMEMBERING DR SOPHIA ERREY

A much valued member of the Johnston Collection family, Dr Sophia Errey, sadly passed away on November 9, 2023. Sophia had been a lecturer with The Johnston Collection since 2015, and a volunteer guide since 2021. She was an artist, art educator and writer, with a first doctorate in architectural ornament. Research for her second PhD (by project) focussed on textiles and contemporary European fashion. Sophia was an active contributor to The Johnston Collection and to many other organisations. She will be much missed.

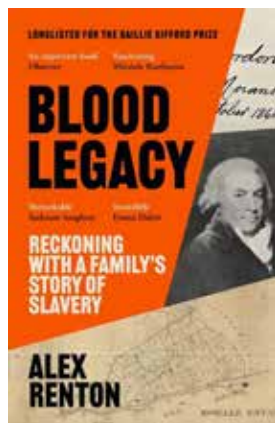
ADFAS (The Association of Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) has been associated with TJC since 1999, when our first volunteer guides were drawn from the membership of ADFAS Melbourne and ADFAS Yarra. Many of our volunteers and supporters continue to enjoy the annual program of arts talks and events offered by ADFAS. For more information about upcoming lectures and activities, please refer to:

ADFAS Melbourne www.adfas.org.au/societies/melbourne/
ADFAS Yarra (Caulfield) www.adfas.org.au/societies/yarra/

BOOK REVIEWS

BLOOD LEGACY:

RECKONING WITH A FAMILY'S STORY OF SLAVERY



When visiting a stately home or National Trust property in the United Kingdom how many of us have asked the question – where did the money come from to build this mansion with its opulent furnishing and the porcelain cups waiting to be filled with tea and sugar?

Of forty-four houses in the possession of the Scottish National Trust a third of them had connections to slavery including Newhailes House, Musselburgh once owned by the last two slave

owners in the family line of the author's mother. Alex Renton, in accessing a trove of family papers, began his own voyage of discovery into a legacy which took him to what remains of the family's estates in Tobago and Jamaica. It is a tale of good intentions and unmentionable cruelty, of an idealistic young man, James Ferguson, sent out to the West Indies in 1773 by his older brothers who like many of their Scottish neighbours were investing in sugar plantations. James however bought a remote parcel of land on Tobago where he planned to produce coffee and indigo which he believed would be less hard on the Africans he bought. He worked alongside them but refers to them in his letters as 'my people' in the sense of possessions which can be branded or sold.

Four years later James was dead leaving seventy slaves whose suffering on the plantation would only increase during the following years of war and civil strife. The plantation was run by a series of cruel, corrupt managers sent out from the family estates in Scotland with no experience of plantation life or the management of slaves - the manager's focus being on maximum profits for the owners. The enslaved people had to grow their own food, mainly to reduce the cost of feeding them.

In August 1833 the Slavery Emancipation Act was passed but the formal ending of slavery was skewed in favour of the plantation owners who were heavily compensated for the loss of their 'property' by the British Government. They were also allowed to keep as 'apprentices' former slaves over the age of six whilst many former slaves became unpaid workers on the same plantations, left in poverty without any rights.

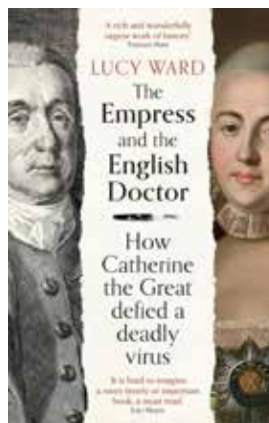
In his travels Alex Renton met descendants of former slaves and it is their personal stories which tell the past and look to the future. It is these challenging stories and the research into family letters and historical records which expose a picture of a society built on systematic brutality and questions what now needs to be done to redress what occurred. Even though we can't undo the past we have to understand it to move forward.

DENISE FARMERY

Alex Renton, *BLOOD LEGACY | Reckoning with a Family's Story of Slavery*, Canongate Books, 2021

THE EMPRESS AND

THE ENGLISH DOCTOR



Having recently experienced a worldwide pandemic in which vaccination and periods of isolation saved so many lives, this book is a fascinating insight into the early history of what came before vaccination – inoculation against smallpox which had filled the graveyards of Europe for centuries, whilst leaving survivors scarred for life. It tells how English doctors had to overcome superstition, religion, and scepticism from medical and non-medical anti-vaxxers and the importance of having leadership at the very top of society.

Well-researched and thought provoking, the book focuses on two remarkable people – the Quaker doctor Thomas Dimsdale and Catherine, Empress of Russia – who built a lifelong friendship on a remarkable act of courage which could have led to both their deaths but led to the saving of countless lives. Their story begins however with another woman, Mary Wortley Montague who imported from Turkey the practice of using a needle to deliver pus from an infected person into the veins of a small child, in most cases a mild dose of smallpox followed, then lifelong immunity.

In July 1768 Thomas Dimsdale and his son travelled to St. Petersburg for their first meeting with Catherine which set in motion the preparations for first Catherine then her son Paul to be inoculated. After a trial inoculation of two 14-year boys who, despite worrying signs initially, recovered and the preparation of Wolff House as an isolation hospital, Catherine herself was inoculated in secret at her *Tsarskoye Selo* estate. Whilst Catherine slowly recovered, she ensured that others were inoculated from her own pustules, determined to prove the safety of the procedure. After Paul's successful inoculation Wolff House was established permanently as a smallpox hospital where children of all backgrounds were inoculated and nursed until their recovery. Thomas had protected Catherine and her son; she used her inoculation as a symbolic statement of faith and a public example. Vaccination in Russia made rapid progress as it did throughout Western Europe

Twenty years later Edward Jenner's substitution of cow pox poison was a landmark step forward in the eradication of smallpox, but it was only in 1840 after an epidemic caused forty thousand deaths did the British Government provide for free universal vaccination, although suspicion remained as it did through COVID-19.

DENISE FARMERY

Lucy Ward, *The Empress and The English Doctor*, One World Publications, 2022

A LASTING LEGACY

When you leave a bequest to The Johnston Collection you generously extend a way of making a lasting contribution which will enable the Collection to benefit and inform future generations of visitors.

Bequests, no matter the size, will help to strengthen the future of The Johnston Collection. Your enduring gift will enable us to continue our quest to offer visitors a unique, intimate engagement with art, design and ideas.

Bequests are managed by The WR Johnston Trust and we are happy to discuss with you any special areas of interest.

Bequests are invaluable in the achievement of the Collection's remarkable vision.

When you leave a bequest to The Johnston Collection, you will be supporting the legacy of William Robert Johnston (1911–1986) who, on his death, endowed The WR Johnston Trust to ensure that his dream of an exhibition-house for the public's enjoyment will be sustained.

HOW TO MAKE A BEQUEST TO THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION

By making a simple decision to include The Johnston Collection in your Will, you will support the important task of ensuring that William Johnston's gift to the people of Victorian is protected for future generations.

We invite you to make a notified bequest in your Will. You can do this by:

- Writing a letter to The Johnston Collection advising of your intention to make a bequest
- Providing a copy of the relevant extract from your Will, and
- Providing a confirming letter from your solicitor

Bequests can be made in a variety of ways to suit your situation, but there are three main types of bequests:

- A set amount of money (pecuniary bequest)
- A residue or a % of the residue of your estate once other bequests have been made (residuary bequest)
- A specific asset, e.g. property, art works, shares (specific bequest)

For many philanthropic donors, the residuary bequest is the most popular. However, you can decide how you wish to support The Johnston Collection, a treasure in Melbourne's artistic and cultural landscape.

We strongly recommend that you seek professional advice from your solicitor or financial adviser in arranging a bequest.

If you are considering leaving The Johnston Collection an object from your personal collection, we encourage you to contact us first to discuss its suitability and fit within the scope of the permanent collection. The Johnston Collection only acquires objects which are compatible with its Collections Policy.

Bequests, no matter the size, will help to strengthen the future of The Johnston Collection. Your enduring gift will enable us to continue our quest to offer visitors a unique engagement with one of the most dynamic exhibition-houses in Australia.

For more information about making a donation, or to make a bequest, contact us: +61 (3) 9416 2515
donate@johnstoncollection.org | www.johnstoncollection.org

Charles Hougham (English, 1748–1793), *tea caddy* (one of a pair), London England, 1783, sterling silver, baluster form with chased and embossed floral decoration, on circular feet, with gadrooned edge to the lids and bell shaped finials, 170 x diameter 85 mm, The Johnston Collection, A1548, bequest of Mr. Clive Hele (Roger) Brookes, Melbourne, 2021, in memory of his parents Sir Wilfred Deakin Brookes, CBE, DSO, AE and Mrs. Betty (née Heal) Brookes



thanks

The Johnston Collection applauds the following individuals and foundations for their generous financial support of our OPENING DOORS campaign launched in May 2015:

Minton®	\$2,500,000 +
Adams	\$1,000,000 +
Mr. C H (Roger) Brookes + * ^ The Sir Wilfred Brookes and CH (Roger) Brookes Charitable Trust+	
Wedgwood	\$500,000 +
Chippendale	\$250,000 +
Marjorie May Kingston Charitable Trust + P. Anthony Preston^ Ms. Nina Stanton^	
Chelsea	\$100,000 +
Andrew Dixon ^	
Sheraton	\$50,000 +
Mrs. Christine Bell + ^ Mrs. Alwynne Jona OAM ^	
Hepplewhite	\$25,000 +
Sirius Foundation Ltd +	
Coalport	\$10,000 +
The Friends of TJC Lisa & Neil Arrowsmith + Jenny & John (Jack) Hamilton + Anne & Graham Hodges +	
Bow®	\$5,000 +
Louise Voll Box + Bernadette Dennis OAM + Karina & Sholto James + Robert Thomson & Hugh Ratten + Maggie Cash + Robyn & Bill Ives + Lady Primrose Potter AC +	
Worcester®	\$1,000 +
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The Johnston Collection is a vibrant and eclectic part of Melbourne's artistic and cultural landscape.

Since William Johnston's bequest in 1986, TJC has provided transformative experiences that connect people with art and artists.

As an award-winning and critically acclaimed museum, TJC is looking forward to a strong future that honours its notable past and welcomes new audiences: sharing stories, and inspiring communities.

We will achieve this with the support of our Friends, donors, and project partners.

Since its launch in 2015, our fundraising campaign, OPENING DOORS, has been opening doors to the future.

Your support through OPENING DOORS enables us to:

- Continue to undertake maintenance and revitalization of historic Fairhall
- Support an innovative, educational, and culturally rich and diverse program
- Commission new works that showcase and celebrate the unique talents and contributions of Australia's dynamic creative individuals and communities
- Encourage participation in The Johnston Collection's activities by new audiences

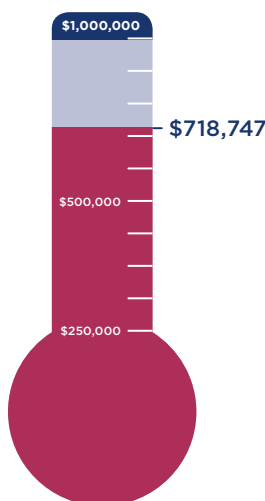
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BE PART OF TJC'S FUTURE

Your support for OPENING DOORS fundraising will be recognised among the following donor categories:

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(to 31 October 2023)

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For more information, and to make a donation contact:
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There are many ways in which you can help:

- give a one-off donation
- give a regular monthly or annual donation
- leave a bequest

The WR Johnston Trust is endorsed by the Commissioner of Taxation as a Deductible Gift Recipient organisation under Division 30 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. All gifts made of \$2 and more, other than those made via a testamentary gift, are fully tax deductible. ABN 8719 494 0961 | ACN 075 028 287

Your support will ensure that TJC continues to be a creative innovator and leader.
TJC is OPENING DOORS to the future.

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The Johnston Collection acknowledges with great appreciation the bequests it has received from the following benefactors. These bequests have been invaluable in assisting with the vision of TJC.

Mr. C H (Roger) Brookes
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The Johnston Collection acknowledges with great appreciation the in-kind support it has received from the following individuals and companies:

Mrs. Christine Bell
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Mr. Peter Gray

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Q
THE LETTER



THE CUP THAT STARTED A COLLECTION

William Johnston was given a small Minton potteries cup (circa 1815) by his grandmother when he was about 8 years old. He kept it all his life, later recalling that this cup started his passion for collecting.

Minton, Stoke-on-Trent, est. 1793 -, Thomas Minton period, circa 1809 -17, cup, circa 1815, The Johnston Collection (A0660-1989)

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TJC is proud to acknowledge and celebrate the generous support and encouragement it receives through annual giving through The Friends. Continued support from individuals is essential to develop our creative excellence and the ongoing programs of the Collection.

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Front cover: The Blue Room from *Mr Thomson Re-arranges Mr Johnston's Residence*, 10 Mar 2008 – 30 Jun 2008, Image: Mirek Rzadzowski

Back cover: The Study from *Mr Thomson Re-arranges Mr Johnston's Residence*, 10 Mar 2008 – 30 Jun 2008, Image: Mirek Rzadzowski



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