



THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION

A museum of fine and decorative arts
incorporating

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MEDIA RELEASE

PATTERNS OF COLLECTING | FROM THE BOWER at The Johnston Collection

***An installation led by guest curator and artist
Carole Wilson, as part of our ongoing 'house of ideas' series***

***with artists Loris Button, Deborah Klein, Louise Saxton &
Carole Wilson***

Monday 4 June 2018 – Tuesday 18 September 2018

PATTERNS OF COLLECTING | FROM THE BOWER at The Johnston Collection is a touring exhibition presenting artwork and items from the unique personal collections of four contemporary Victorian artists, Loris Button, Deborah Klein, Louise Saxton and Carole Wilson. Their work – including new works created in response to the Collection - will be displayed throughout the rooms of *Fairhall* exhibition-house against the backdrop of William Johnston's own extraordinary collection.

The artists are linked by their studio practice, their regional locations and connections and their love of gleaning. Their studio collections range from curiosities, natural history specimens, memorabilia, discarded books and china, fabric, carpet and lino, and old tools of trade.

In *PATTERNS OF COLLECTING* a selection of each artist's studio collection is installed alongside and responding to items from The Johnston Collection. The exhibition draws together the individual artists along with William Johnston's collection, into one large 'bower' and creates a space in which the private becomes public. It enables the viewer to reflect upon the process of collecting, gathering and making, in the practice of these five artists.

There is a degree of commonality in the collected objects in each of the artist's studios, there tends to be some inherited objects from family members, usually a parent or grandparent and occasionally objects from their childhood, in particular dolls or toys.

Australiana and kitchenalia in all its broadest forms is represented in each collection as well, from Martin Boyd ceramics to old biscuit tins. Haberdashery paraphernalia in the form of buttons, cottons, dress patterns and sewing tins is another common element. Additionally, all the artists have treasured objects which have been collected whilst on international artists residencies, ranging from a well-worn Parisian snow dome to a set of 1920s Italian tour guide books.

Each of the artists connects with or interrogates their collection in myriad ways, at both a subtle level and more literally. For some of them, the material and objects collected from the very fabric of their art, whilst for others it is a source of their inspiration and imagery. The artists source their objects from opportunity shops, junk shops, garage sales and markets, both at home and while travelling.

Louis Le Vaillant, Director and Curator of The Johnston Collection says “*PATTERNS OF COLLECTING* tells stories about the artists and their own personal collections reflecting on who they are and what they make”.

“This very personal exhibition invites the audience to see the created environments gathered from the artists’ workspace with their collections revealing as much about the artist as their own work” he says.

An outstanding collector himself, William Johnston bequeathed his collection along with his residence *Fairhall* to the people of Victoria after his death. Now comprising more than 1,400 objects mostly from the English Georgian and Regency period The Johnston Collection is now regarded as one of the best collections of its kind in Australasia.

It was Johnston’s intention that, *Fairhall*, be regularly rearranged. Past rearrangements and guest curations includes those by fashion designer, Akira Isogawa, architect, Pascale Gomes-McNabb, fashion-house, Romance Was Born, artist Rosslynd Piggott, Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister AO, milliner and artist Richard Nylon and design studio Hecker Guthrie.

As part of the annual ‘house of ideas’ series of interventions of the permanent Collection, *PATTERNS OF COLLECTING* allows visitors to continuously see the Collection in a fresh way while exploring one of the themes underpinning The Johnston Collection, that ‘Old is New’.

***PATTERNS OF COLLECTING* is supported by FEDERATION UNIVERSITY
Louise Saxton is represented by Gould Creative, Melbourne**



For further information, images or interviews, please contact:

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ABOUT THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION

Multi-award-winning and critically acclaimed, The Johnston Collection is a national museum centred in an historic East Melbourne townhouse and is known for its superb collection of Georgian, Regency, and Louis XV furniture, paintings, ceramics and *objet d'art*.

The Collection was bequeathed to the people of Victoria by William Robert Johnston (1911-1986), a 20th century collector and antique dealer and is displayed in a constantly changing domestic setting in his former residence, *Fairhall*.

The museum partners with creatives from contemporary arts communities to re-interpret the Collection in a regular program of re-installation and interventions of the permanent collection as well as offering special exhibitions, study days, lectures and workshops throughout the year, sharing stories and inspiring communities.

ABOUT WILLIAM JOHNSTON

William Robert Johnston (1911-1986) was a 20th century collector and antique dealer who amassed an extraordinary collection of Georgian, Regency, and Louis XV furniture, paintings, ceramics and *objet d'art* over his lifetime. His collection was bequeathed to the people of Victoria after his death, and is displayed in a constantly changing domestic setting in his former residence, *Fairhall*.

Johnston was born in Lilydale, Victoria in 1911, the only child of Robert Alexander Johnston and Louise Friedrichs. His father was a boot-maker and his mother, before her marriage, worked as a scullery maid at *Stanford House*, East Melbourne.

Around the age of eight, William was given a Minton cup by his grandmother, Mary Theresa Friedrichs (nee Clarke). This became the first piece of his collection and provided the inspiration for a career in antiques that took Johnston around the world.

After an early career in window merchandising in Melbourne, Johnston relocated to London to begin a fulltime business dealing in antiques. He purchased *Fairhall* in 1952 with money made from the sale of antiques brought back from England. Originally named *Cadzow*, built in 1860 and extended ten years later, Johnston renamed it *Fairhall* and remodelled it in order to create the appearance of a late 18th century Georgian-style townhouse. The interior rooms were converted into three rental flats.

By 1972, Johnston decided to return to live part-time in Melbourne, and gathered his expanding collection of Georgian, Regency and Louis XV fine and decorative arts into *Fairhall* and other rental properties he owned in the area. At the same time he opened Kent Antiques in High St, Armadale.

Johnston's house, collection and estate were bequeathed to the people of Victoria after his death in 1986 'as a place of historical and educational interest,' is now administered as an independent not-for-profit public museum by The WR Johnston Trust. *Fairhall* was converted into the exhibition-house and a garden was designed in the English manner to highlight Johnston's love of gardening. The Trust also acquires new works for the permanent collection, which now cares for over 1400 items.

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