



THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION
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MEDIA RELEASE

Design studio Hecker Guthrie rearranges exhibition house *Fairhall*

HECKER GUTHRIE REARRANGES WILLIAM JOHNSTON'S COLLECTION

Friday 11 March 2016 – Tuesday 28 June 2016

The Johnston Collection has collaborated with international design studio, Hecker Guthrie, in a new exhibition-house tour. ***HECKER GUTHRIE REARRANGES WILLIAM JOHNSTON'S COLLECTION*** opens in *Fairhall* on 11 March and runs until 28 June 2016.

The Hecker Guthrie studio, founded by Paul Hecker and Hamish Guthrie, is a multi-disciplinary practice, based in the inner city suburb of Richmond in Melbourne. The studio is renowned for a large body of work that integrates interiors, buildings, objects and gardens.

For their rearrangement of *Fairhall* and the Collection, Hecker and Guthrie will transform the exhibition-house with their signature style, incorporating authenticity, craft and enthusiasm and a belief in preserving the integrity and materiality of the interiors that they work on.

In ***HECKER GUTHRIE REARRANGES WILLIAM JOHNSTON'S COLLECTION*** Paul Hecker and Hamish Guthrie will create a fictional 'William Johnston's Emporium', an idea inspired by Johnston's professional life, beginning with his work as a window dresser at the Melbourne department store Buckley & Nunn's and later, as an antiques trader who loved to scour stores and markets around the world to find his next acquisition.

The Hecker Guthrie rearrangement will consider the origin, object type, materiality and scale of objects in the Collection and will present them in arrangements typical of retail spaces, that being through stacking, disassembling parts or packed up as if to be easily sold, transported or purchased.

Paul Hecker says "We considered taking objects in the Collection and working out ways of displaying them to give the objects more presence. We want to use the objects to create a mystique, a story, as well as to show how Johnston's antiques can exist in a contemporary way".

It was Melbourne-born antique dealer and benefactor William Johnston's wish that his East Melbourne home, *Fairhall*, be regularly rearranged. Past rearrangements have included 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 and, most recently, milliner and artist Richard Nylon.

This series of rearrangements provides an opportunity to re-imagine William Johnston's extraordinary collection in new ways. The Johnston Collection is thrilled to have the exceptionally talented design studio Hecker Guthrie continue this exciting series.

Hamish Guthrie says they enjoy the collaborative process. "It extends and refines our ideas beyond our capabilities and in the process we learn something new which benefits us as designers. We are delighted to have the opportunity to explore and celebrate this extraordinary collection. "

The **HECKER GUTHRIE REARRANGES WILLIAM JOHNSTON'S COLLECTION** exhibition-house tour will draw the world of contemporary design and the fine and decorative arts of the English Georgian and Regency period together and provide visitors to *Fairhall* with the opportunity to view William Johnston's collection through the extraordinary skills and aesthetic of an internationally renowned design studio.

For further information, images or interviews, please contact:

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About Hecker Guthrie

The studio of Hecker Guthrie is a multi-disciplinary practice, based in Melbourne Australia.

Under the direction of Paul Hecker and Hamish Guthrie, the Hecker Guthrie design studio draws on the foundations and design principles that have been developed over the last decade of practice.

Their current body of work rests within the hospitality, residential, retail and commercial sectors. The studio work both locally and abroad and each design draws on their expertise in integrating interiors, building, objects and gardens. Hecker Guthrie understands the profound relationship that all of these disciplines have on creating cohesive, honest and authentic spaces.

A 17 person staff collaboratively share design inspiration and offer a wealth of interdisciplinary skills, drawing upon several areas of expertise: Interior Design, Building Design, Industrial Design, Furniture Design and Styling. All backed up by a strong administrative support team.

Paul Hecker and Hamish Guthrie are highly respected representatives of the Australian design community, often called upon for judging and public speaking commitments. Their work is regularly published in design and lifestyle journals, books and blogs.

Hamish Guthrie

As founding director of Hecker Guthrie, Hamish Guthrie is often considered the taller and quieter of the pair. His calm demeanour lends itself to a considered approach to design

which has resulted in a strong portfolio of much publicised and well awarded projects in the hospitality, retail, commercial and residential sectors.

Hamish's creative upbringing afforded him plenty of opportunity to design and build. He broadened his design vocabulary through a Bachelor of Arts –Interior Design (Hons) at RMIT and his strong architectural and design sensibility developed over the following years with sound mentorship and personal commitment to his craft.

As a highly regarded commentator in the field, Hamish is often called upon for speaking and judging engagements. He builds trust within his clients and an aesthetic kinship with the artists and collaborators that have brought a new creative energy to a number of Hecker Guthrie projects.

Hamish has a strong interest in art, food and wine, but travel is one of his main sources of inspiration. This inspiration is often found in many varying places and forms and serves to validate his existing design ideas. Through regular travel, Hamish has formed a clearer sense of his own aesthetic enabling a more profound sense of editing the experience; capturing those experiences which appeal to his design sensitivities and discounting quickly those that don't.

Paul Hecker

Paul Hecker is one of the founding Directors of Hecker Guthrie and his enthusiasm for design and how people interact with interior spaces has only strengthened over his 20 plus years in the industry. Within the studio, Paul is a sound voice and worthy commentator on not just design, but life, fashion, politics and film.

Humor and curiosity are key ingredients in Paul's design approach, resulting in a body of work that carefully balances considered spatial planning with a sprinkling of whimsy and craft.

Paul is an inquisitive traveler and delights in the serendipity that comes with such travels, particularly when churches and cemeteries are involved. He is an avid collector of "beautiful things" with a love not only of an object but the story it tells.

When setting out to design a space, he asks not what the client wants it to look like, but how they want to make them feel.

Generous with his time and knowledge, Paul is the first to acknowledge brilliance by others, yet this harnesses a creative challenge which drives him to continue to be an arbiter of style and taste.

About William Johnston and The Johnston Collection

The Johnston Collection is an exhibition-house of fine and decorative arts centred in an historic Melbourne townhouse. 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 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,' now administered as an independent not-for-profit 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 1300 items.

This year The Johnston Collection celebrates 25 years of being open to the public, having welcomed more than 100,000 visitors to *Fairhall* during that time. The Johnston Collection displays the works from Johnston's collection in *Fairhall* in three themed exhibition-house tours each year. The Johnston Collection also incorporates a reference library, as well as a lecture space offering an active and engaging range of lectures, workshops and events for all.

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