



THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION
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MEDIA RELEASE

Richard Nylon to guest-curate the ‘House of Ideas’ at Fairhall

FEATHERING THE NEST | Richard Nylon Meets William Johnston **7 July 2015 – 20 October 2015**

The Johnston Collection is thrilled to have Melbourne milliner, Richard Nylon, guest-curate the annual ‘house of ideas’ *Fairhall* tour opening on 7 July 2015.

A collaboration between The Johnston Collection and one of Australia’s most renowned and creative hat designers, the ***FEATHERING THE NEST | Richard Nylon Meets William Johnston*** house-museum tour will explore ideas around millinery, interior design and collecting.

Richard Nylon says, “*When I first visited Fairhall I was so inspired. I enjoy collaborating with designers, artists, and stylists and now the opportunity to create spectacular interiors was an opportunity and a challenge not to be missed.*”

Drawing inspiration from the Collection and William Johnston himself, Nylon will transform the interiors of *Fairhall* with his informed, bold and richly imaginative design aesthetic. Into this rearrangement, Nylon will introduce many of his extraordinary creations, showing the craft of millinery at its best, against the backdrop of William Johnston’s magnificent collection.

Nylon has a very distinctive design style, drawing inspiration from nature, music and art. He is also regarded as an unconventional hat designer with a unique approach to the art of millinery and is known for his experimentation with different materials and non-traditional techniques when crafting his hats.

Nylon brings a deep knowledge of the English Regency, the period represented in William Johnston’s collection, to his guest curation of *Fairhall*. It is a period that he has immersed himself in over the years and has often referenced in his millinery designs.

Central to The Johnston Collection’s programming, the ‘House of Ideas’ series of rearrangements, (July to October) selects creative individuals from the contemporary arts community, inviting them to use *Fairhall* as an installation site to recreate and reinterpret the Collection. The Johnston Collection is thrilled to have the exceptionally talented hat designer, Richard Nylon, continue this exciting series.

Richard Nylon says, “I am extremely proud to be part of the ongoing “House of Ideas’ series and the curatorial exploration of this important Collection. It is one of the most important

and beautiful collections of its kind in Australia and it is wonderful to be able to add to its history of exhibitions.”

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 Roslynd Piggott and Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister.

The ***FEATHERING THE NEST | Richard Nylon Meets William Johnston*** house-museum tour will bring the worlds of fashion, millinery and the fine and decorative arts together and provide visitors to *Fairhall* with the opportunity to view William Johnston’s collection through the intellectually rigorous, imaginative, and daring aesthetic of one of Australia’s most talented milliners and fashion icons.

For further information, images or interviews, please contact:

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About Richard Nylon

After undertaking a fashion course at RMIT on a whim, Richard Nylon began his career in fashion in the early 1980s with his avant-garde style quickly earning him a following and attracting the attention of the Australian fashion industry.

Originally Nylon used millinery as an accessory for his fashion designs, teaching himself how to make hats to complement the outfits he designed, however, it wasn’t long before millinery became the focus of his business.

His creations, described as wearable art, have been worn by many famous clients including Chloe Sevigny, Kate Bosworth, Megan Gale and Jennifer Hawkins.

As well as founding his own successful hat business, Nylon has also collaborated with many designers over the last 15 years, most notably with Melbourne-based fashion designer, Gwendolynne Burkin.

As an advocate for millinery, Richard Nylon wants to change the way people think about hats and would like to encourage more people to regard hats as the ultimate accessory.

About William Johnston and The Johnston Collection

The Johnston Collection is a house-museum of fine and decorative arts centred in an historic Melbourne townhouse.

William Robert 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 house-museum 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 house-museum 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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