



THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION

A Museum of Fine and Decorative Arts, East Melbourne

incorporating

Fairhall House Museum | Gallery | Shop | Reference Library | Friends | Ambassadors

Media Release

***Murmur* (mûr'mər)** noun.

1. A low, indistinct, continuous sound: *spoke in a murmur; the murmur of the waves.*
2. An indistinct, whispered, or confidential complaint; a mutter.
3. *Medicine* An abnormal sound, usually emanating from the heart, that sometimes indicates a diseased condition

An installation by guest curator, Melbourne-based artist Rosslynd Piggott as part of the annual 'house of ideas' series

Tour dates: Monday 1 July 2013 – Wednesday 23 October 2013

The Johnston Collection is delighted to welcome Melbourne-based artist, Rosslynd Piggott, to guest-curate the annual 'house of ideas' *Fairhall* tour. ***Murmur***, opens on 1 July and runs until 23 October, 2013.

It was Melbourne-born antique dealer and benefactor William Johnston's wish that his East Melbourne home, *Fairhall*, be regularly rearranged. In the 'house of ideas' series of rearrangements, past guest curators have included fashion designer, Akira Isogawa, architect, Pascale Gomes McNabb and fashion-house, Romance Was Born. The 'house of ideas' offers an opportunity to reinterpret William Johnston's collection in new ways and The Johnston Collection is thrilled to have Piggott, one of Australia's most acclaimed artists, to continue this exciting series.

Piggott is well-known for her exquisite ethereal paintings and multi-media installations as well as her work on collaborative projects with galleries and museums both nationally and internationally.

In thinking about the concept, Piggott will assemble objects, recollect memories of William Johnston and recall *Fairhall* as Johnston lived in it. Piggott will evoke the many facets of Johnston and his life - as a person, a collector and as a gardener. In her sensitive and thought-provoking rearrangement of *Fairhall*, Piggott will recapture the spirit of the house as Johnston might have lived in it.

Piggott will add to its history with images taken from the archives and layered into the interior. She will do this through the introduction of some of her own still and moving images as remembrances and responses to Johnston's life, collection and garden. With light and shadow, she will also project her own footage of Johnston's

beloved magnolias and camellias that will refract, reflect and exquisitely transform the Green Drawing Room.

Continuing with an underlying theme of her works, Piggott will create 'both a conciliation and acknowledgement of the spirits who have lived there'.

The Johnston Collection, incorporating *Fairhall* house-museum, Gallery, Reference Library and Shop is a hidden treasure in the heart of Melbourne. *Fairhall* house-museum has three guided tours daily Monday to Friday. Bookings are essential.

The Johnston Collection was bequeathed by William Robert Johnston (1911-1986) to the people of Victoria, Australia and is administered as an independent Museum by The WR Johnston Trust.

title of tour	<i>Murmur</i> (mûr'məɹ)
when	Monday 1 July 2013 – Wednesday 23 October 2013
contact	Felicity Cook or Fil Natarelli 03 9416 2515/0412 460 450 admin@johnstoncollection.org www.johnstoncollection.org

About 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 bootmaker 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 1200 items.

For over twenty years, *Fairhall* has displayed works from Johnston's collection, and is currently rearranged for three themed tours per year. Today, The Johnston Collection incorporates a reference library, as well as a dedicated gallery and lecture space offering an active and engaging range of exhibitions, lectures, workshops and events for all.

The Johnston Collection was bequeathed by William Johnston (1911-1986) to the people of Victoria in 1986 and is administered as an independent not-for-profit museum by the W R Johnston Trust

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