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The South West comes to The Johnston Collection

By Jeremy Lee

Local artists are set to go on show at this intriguing museum in Melbourne

Somewhere in East Melbourne sits Fairhall House, home to The Johnston Collection, an opulent gathering of antiques and decorative arts left to the people of Victoria by antique dealer W.R. Johnston.

The Johnston Collection

It's not your average museum, and it's certainly not your average museum experience - to see the collection you need to be part of a tour, and that involves being picked up by a bus which takes you to the house to help keep the location something of a secret.

Each year, under the guidance of Director / Curator Louis Le Vaillant, a different regional area is invited to contribute original pieces for the annual Christmas show, and this year a range of artists from the South West will be involved.

It's a challenge which the artists have relished, as Jenny Bakos from the Embroiders Guild explains 'it's taken two years ... it's been a great design brief for the Embroiderers Guild'.

Using the collection to inspire contemporary artists also helps to keep the house alive, as well as providing an unusual way for artists to have their work displayed.

Visitors to the house tour as a group, and the objects aren't roped off or labelled - the guides are briefed by the artists and provide all the relevant information to those who see it.

Regular meetings have been held between the artists involved and Louis Le Vaillant to ensure the work will fit into the house and to see how things are progressing.

Earlier this week, the nearly finished work was displayed and discussed in Warrnambool to get the final approval.

My Cup Runneth Over: Christmas at the Johnston Collection will open on the 3rd of November and continue until the 25th of February 2011.



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