Future GLAM:
Convergence and collaboration in the cultural heritage sector
8 June 2018

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we meet and work. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Join the Conversation

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https://www.zeetings.com/discussion123/0004-6533-0002#page

Organising Committee:
Steve Cooke (Deakin University), Katherine Howard (Flinders University), Ameila Marra (Museums Australia Victoria), Michelle Stevenson (Museums Victoria), Gillian Oliver (Monash University), Steven Wright (Monash University).

Front and Back Cover Image: White Night, Royal Exhibition Building. Reproduced with the kind permission of Meighen Katz.

Schedule

8.45am	Registration
9.15am	Welcome to Country - Uncle Ron Jones (Wurundjeri Tribe Council)
9.30am	Keynote 1: Liz Jack (LINC Tasmania/ GLAM Peak) (Chair: Steven Wright - Monash University)

'We click: connecting our digital collections'

10.10am	Session 1: Approaching convergence and collaboration (Chair: Tamson Pietch - UTS)

Mike Jones (University of Melbourne/ Museums Victoria) – Beyond Aggregation: convergence and collections in the digital age

Suzy Goss (Victoria University of Wellington) Developing digital capability – what archivists can learn from our GLAM colleagues

Helena Robinson (University of Sydney) Interpretive sustainability: convergence, meaning-making and museum collections

11.15	Morning Tea
11.35	Keynote 2: Nathan Sentence (Australian Museum) (Chair: Amelia - Marra MA Vic)

GLAM is not f**king neutral

12.15	Session 2: What does collaboration look like? (Chair: Michelle Stevenson - Museums Victoria)

Caroline Fry (University of Melbourne) and Alexis Arrowsmith (Department of Premier and Cabinet): 'War Heritage Roadshow'

Amy Tsilemanis (Federation University) and Barry James Gilson (singer/poet/actor/storyteller): Storytelling Ballaraat City

1.15	Networking Lunch
2.10	Keynote 3: Annabel Astbury (ABC) (chair: Gillian Oliver - Monash University)

'The Summer of our converged content': how the ABC works with the GLAM sector to create great Australian Stories and conversations.

2.50	Session 3: Teaching and Learning for a converged sector (chair: Tracey Avery - curator and arts and heritage consultant)

Vince Dziekan (Monash University): Design(ing) for Culture and Heritage

David Treddinick (Deakin University archives): Activating the archive: archivists initiating creative responses to their collections

3.50	Afternoon tea
4.10	Panel Discussion

Moderator: Helena Robinson (University of Sydney)

Panel includes: Justine Heazlewood, (Director and Keeper of Public Records, PROV); Joe Toohey (Executive Director, Regional Arts Victoria); Associate Professor Jennifer Barrett (Director Culture Strategy, University of Sydney); Nicole McGrath (Archivist, Museums Victoria)

5pm	Closing remarks & opportunities: Steven Cooke (Deakin University)
5.15pm	Close

Keynotes:

1. 'We click: connecting our digital collections'

Liz Jack (LINC Tasmania/ GLAM Peak)
Liz has over 20 years' experience working within the Tasmanian Government in leadership roles across a range of sectors, including small business, community development and sport and recreation. She is a current Leadership Champion with Tasmanian Leaders Inc and a former Chair and Director of the Fahan School Board. Her previous board positions include Service Tasmania, Tasmanian Leaders Inc and the Australian Innovation Research Centre. Liz graduated with an Honours degree in Modern Languages from McGill University in Montreal. She is an inductee into the Tasmanian Sporting Hall of Fame and is a member of the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women.

2. 'GLAM is not f**king neutral'

Nathan Sentence (Australian Museum)
Nathan Sentence is a Wiradjuri man who grew up on Darkinjung Country, NSW. He currently works as project officer in First Nations programming at the Australian Museum. Nathan works to ensure that the cultural and historical narratives conveyed by cultural and memory institutions, such galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) have First Nations perspectives and that First Nations stories being told are being told and controlled by First Nations people. This is to balance the biases and misinterpretations of Aboriginal culture and people that has been previously set by GLAM institutions.

3. 'The Summer of our converged content': how the ABC works with the GLAM sector to create great Australian Stories and conversations.

Annabel Astbury (ABC)
Annabel Astbury is the Head of Education at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and is responsible for the strategy and content for all educational products across all platforms. Over the past five years, ABC Education has partnered with the GLAM sector extensively in order to expose existing and new collections to the schools' audience around Australia.

Session 1: Approaching convergence and collaboration

Beyond Aggregation: Convergence and collections in the digital age
Mike Jones, the University of Melbourne/Museums Victoria

It is no accident the concept of convergence first gained traction after the launch of the web. Following a century characterised by increasing separation and professionalisation, new technologies provided the catalyst for a proposed return to so-called 'seamless' collections. But the potentially productive complexities of a more interconnected GLAM sector were rapidly subsumed by aggregators, collection digitisation, and the managerial pursuit of organisational efficiencies. As a result, collecting institutions now publish millions and millions of items online, providing distributed access to basic collections data while detailed knowledge about artefacts and specimens, their history, and their context remains comparatively inaccessible in organisational archives, personal filing systems, and the heads of expert staff.

This paper explores convergence through the dual frame of technological development and collections documentation. Drawing on examples from Australia and internationally, including Museums Victoria, the British Museum, the Tate, the Smithsonian, and the American Museum of Natural History, the author argues we need to rethink how we capture, maintain, and disseminate collections-based knowledge. At its core, this necessitates a shift in focus from aggregation to relationality, from 'seamlessness' to interconnection, and from discrete item-level description to network-based knowledge management. In this way, the GLAM sector can more fully realise the potential of convergence by providing more generous data to communities and offering new pathways for public participation, education, and research.

Biography:
Mike Jones has been involved in the GLAM sector for over a decade. This year he is working on finishing his PhD at the University of Melbourne, researching the history, technologies, and practice of managing archives in museums. He holds a Research Associate position at Museums Victoria, while continuing to work as an archivist, researcher, and freelance collections consultant. In recent years Mike has published and presented widely in Australia and internationally. His current positions include membership of the National Executive for the Australasian Association for Digital Humanities, and Co-Convenor of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Society of Archivists.

Developing digital capability – What archivists can learn from our GLAM colleagues
Suzy Goss, Victoria University of Wellington

Commentators have observed a paradigm shift within the archives profession over the past 30 years that is transforming practitioners' understanding of accepted archival values, compounded with the increasing influence of digital technologies in the wider GLAM environment.

Engagement with the emerging digital paradigm requires the formerly analogue-focused archives profession to develop its digital capability. But where should the digital-curious archivist begin, what skills would give them resilience in a rapidly changing environment, and how do organisations contribute to this?

My research asked what archivists can learn from their Gallery, Library and Museum colleagues about developing digital capability, in semi-structured interviews conducted with participants across the GLAM sector in New Zealand and Australia.

The research concluded that archivists need to approach the development of digital capability in relation to their existing knowledge, and that professional associations can support this by designing resources that meet the needs of members at differing levels of capability, while workplaces should actively resource an environment that supports digital capability development.

The research identified:

• Why archivists should pursue digital capability development

• How archivists should approach development of both soft and technical digital skills

• How organisations can support digital capability development

• Opportunities for further specific research

This information is essential not only for archivists – or any GLAM sector members – who have identified the need for improved digital skills, but also managers and staff in GLAM organisations contemplating how to increase their organisation's digital capability.

Biography:
Suzy Goss completed her Master of Information Studies (Archives and Records Management, with merit) at Victoria University of Wellington, Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui (NZ) in 2017, with research on digital capability development for archivists. A Bachelor of Resource Management from Unitec (NZ) and experience in both the New Zealand and Australian GLAM sectors inform her areas of interest: resilience, deconstructing barriers and the effects of the emerging digital paradigm. She writes a monthly "New Grads" newsletter column for the Archivists Society of Australia Victorian Branch and is published in Archifacts. Find her on Twitter @TrulySuzy and LinkedIn.

Interpretive Sustainability: Convergence, meaning-making and museum collections

Helena Robinson, University of Sydney

This paper explores the impact of convergence of museums, libraries, archives and galleries on the interpretation of cultural materials. Convergence promises to unite typologically diverse but thematically related collections to produce fresh, cross-disciplinary and locally relevant understandings of history and heritage. However, research conducted at five converged institutions administered by local authorities (four in NSW, one in New Zealand) suggests that these ideals are difficult to achieve in practice. Focussing on the impact of convergence on collection interpretation from a museum perspective, I consider ways in which a range of operational issues, including poorly conceived organisational structures, leadership bias, insufficient staff training and demanding public program schedules can impede the ability of staff to engage deeply with objects and collection information. Such constraints can diminish the creation of context around collections at all stages of the museum object life-cycle, from initial classification, provenance gathering and documentation at the point of acquisition, creation and maintenance of object files and electronic databases, to significance assessment, project-based thematic research, and the development of exhibitions. I argue that the convergence debate requires a greater emphasis on the idea of 'interpretive sustainability' to ensure that processes of meaning-making around collections are identified and nurtured as new integrated institutional models take shape.

Biography:
Helena Robinson is a Lecturer in the Museum and Heritage Studies Program at the University of Sydney. She specialises in museum history and theory, cross-disciplinary frameworks for the interpretation of material culture and collection management. Her research interests include digital and physical convergence of the collecting domains, the intersections of cultural policy and museums practice, and the concept of cultural democracy. Prior to taking up a full-time academic role, Helena worked for 15 years in museums and continues to be involved in the sector through her voluntary work as a reviewer for the Museum & Galleries NSW Standards Program.

Session 2: What does collaboration look like?

'War Heritage Roadshow'
Caroline Fry, University of Melbourne & Alexis Arrowsmith, Department of Premier and Cabinet

'The War Heritage Roadshow' is an initiative between The Victorian State Government, and the University of Melbourne's Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (GCCMC) with assistance from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Museum and the Australian War Memorial.

In 2017 the Roadshow delivered a series of one and two-day workshops across Victoria. This was a pilot project to test whether we could develop a good outreach model which would serve museums, universities and government in solving a problem and filling a gap. As museums face storage issues and restricted collecting policies, we know there is a wealth of heritage left in the community. But how is it being conserved? How do we know what is out there? And how do people know where to turn for help?

More than 600 visitors to the 'The War Heritage Roadshow' had opportunities to discuss their heritage with expert historians from the RAAF museum and the Australian War Memorial, learn how to do historical research, and meet one-on-one with conservators to learn simple preventive conservation techniques, with 'hands-on' demonstrations of cleaning, archival storage and display methods. Students were also engaged, as a learning activity and to help run the events. The final event will be in partnership with the Melbourne Museum in April.

Analysis of participant feedback indicates that community demand for conservation, history and heritage advice continues unabated, and confirms the frequently reported preference for 'meeting people on their own ground'. The model provides a replicable model for government-tertiary-GLAM partnerships to meet community need.

Biographies:
Caroline Fry is a paintings conservator at The Grimwade Centre at the University of Melbourne where she has worked for almost 20 years. She works on the treatment of paintings from various institutional and private collections. Caroline has a Bachelor of Science (University of Melbourne), Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation (University of Canberra), Grad. Diploma of Museum Studies (Deakin University) and Diploma of Education (The University of Melbourne)

In 2004 Caroline was awarded an Asialink Residency at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Hanoi Vietnam where she was awarded a National Medal by the Peoples' Republic of Vietnam, for her 'contribution towards the preservation of Vietnamese Art'. In 2016 she was selected to participate in the Royal Collections Studies program presented by the Attingham Trust based in the United Kingdom.

Ms Alexis Arrowsmith is a Senior Policy Officer with the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. She has expertise in history, and heritage and cultural policy at all levels of Government and internationally, having worked

overseas and on Australian legislation relating to the international trade in cultural artefacts, and Australian policy on the 1954 Hague Convention. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (History and Sociology), a Master of Cultural Heritage and Graduate Diploma in International Law.

Storytelling Ballaarat City
Amy Tsilemanis Federation University & Barry James Gilson, singer/poet/actor/storyteller

As part of a practice-led PhD project exploring the convergence of arts, heritage and engagement in cultural institutes, this presentation explores a collaborative case study exhibition and live event called 'Imprints: Storytelling the City' at the Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute in 2017. It is co-presented by BMI curator and PhD researcher Amy Tsilemanis and Wathaurung custodian and artist Barry Gilson, in the project's spirit of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

This creative project was a fringe exhibition in the Ballarat International Foto Biennale and invited artists to respond to the BMI's historic photography collection. In the process the BMI and its history, and the city of Ballarat more broadly, were renegotiated in the present as a way of thinking about the future. Gilson's response included song in local language, both performed live and archived as a digital record, creating a thread between past, present and future. This presentation will explore the possible reframings and revoicings of heritage collections and places through creative practice, and the value of cross-cultural learning and collaboration. There might also be singing.

Biographies;
Barry James Gilson is a Wathaurung singer/poet/actor/storyteller reviving local language, stories and songs. Recent projects include Mountain to Mouth (Geelong), Tanderrum (Melbourne) and White Night (Ballarat and Melbourne). He is passionate about the history of place and remembering of the old people's ways to bring about awareness and social understanding towards change.

Amy Tsilemanis is an artist, curator and researcher, currently a PhD candidate at Federation University across the Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History (CRCAH) and the Arts Academy. She is interested in the possibilties of storytelling and the bringing together of arts and heritage to both celebrate and challenge narratives of the past, and ways into the future.

*Note: Ballaarat is the traditional spelling of the city and in Indigenous language means resting place or bended elbow

Session 3: Teaching and Learning for a converged sector

Design(ing) for Culture and Heritage
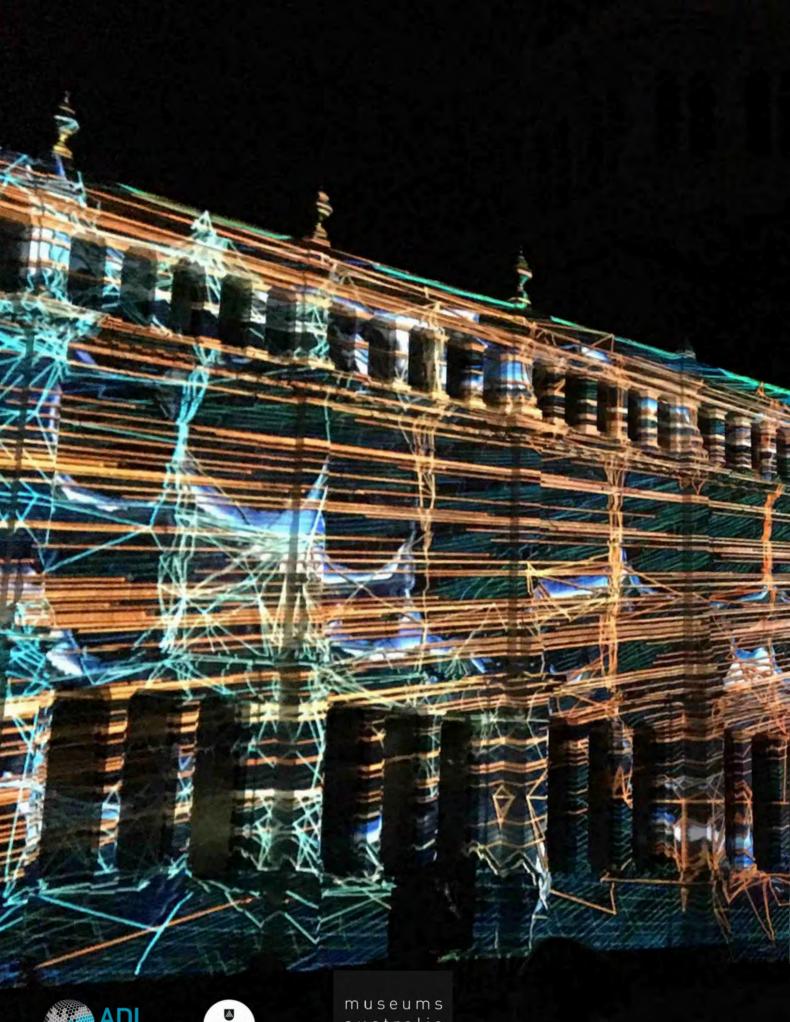Vince Dziekan, Monash University

Design plays an important role across the fullest range of activities that libraries, galleries, archives and museums engage in. In most conventional terms, design is experienced through the application of visual and spatial practices that give distinctive form to exhibitions along with a wide range of supporting visual communications. While this appreciation propagates a view of design as supplementary to the core business of these institutions, today we find design being enlisted for much more strategic, investigative, and even speculative ends. This reorientation –from product to process– is significant and reflects transformation within the discipline of design itself as much as the changes being experienced broadly in the GLAM sector. This presentation will take account of a number of recent studio projects that have engaged Communication Design students from Monash University with local and international GLAM sector partners to explore cultural and heritage themes and issues. In addition to illustrating responses that draw upon the potentials of digital technology and an ethos of "form follows narrative" to create immersive experiences, the philosophy guiding these projects –as curricular programmes that demonstrate the nexus between action-based teaching and creative research– will be discussed.

Activating the archive: archivists initiating creative responses to their collections
David Treddinick, Deakin University archives

Archivists have been lagging behind the rest of the GLAM sector in exploring creative outreach programs. Over the past two years, however, Deakin University Archives has been engaged with a number of projects to promote the collection and inspire students, researchers and artists to work with their material. Short films shot by students, an audiovisual installation in a gallery space, and collaboration on an ARC-funded project to recreate old theatre spaces in virtual reality are just some of the methods used by Deakin Archives to indicate the breadth of creative possibilities held within archival collections. Stepping outside circumscribed professional boundaries comes at a cost – time, finances, and resources are stretched, for example – but there are enormous gains to be had from pushing at the limits of the archivists' traditional role.

Biography:
David Tredinnick joined the Deakin University Archives team in early 2016, after having completed a postgraduate degree in Recordkeeping and Archives the previous year. His interest in promoting collections as sources of creative inspiration stems from his prior experience as a sessional teacher at Deakin and a 30-year career in the entertainment industry as an actor, director, radio producer and writer.