

# COLLECTING AND CONSERVING EARLY AUSTRALIAN MAPS

Anthoni van  
Diemens Landt  
ontdekt by de Schepen  
Hermskerck en Zeeha  
den 24. November  
An 1642  
Fredrick Hendricks by  
Water plaats  
Suyper  
Eylanden  
Maeyden  
Eylanden  
Storm Bay  
Tasmanijs Eylanden  
Stemp Teem  
Pedra Branca

Schouwen Eyl.

Marias Eyl.

Zuyd Caey

Tasmanijs Eylandt

Ex cognitis latitudinis, et Longitudinum differentia reperitur locorum  
distan

Latitudo A. a. B. 2  
cahr 25. 6. Longitudo  
pr. Is 36. Item trium  
vi. 3. Lat  
6. Aus  
itudin  
6. 4. Gr  
sors i  
horus  
D. et illi  
fiatque N.



Radius Df. Sin. Dr. 56. 56.  
CD. K. ut Ch. ad HL. 9. 6. Cudo  
HL. 9.  
CK. 9.  
Different. CL. 27. 1.  
CL. 2. 2.  
IC. 2. 2. F. 2. 35.  
Differ. IL. 1. 1.  
IL. 2. 2.  
HL. 9.  
Summa HL. 9. 27. 1.  
B. et 46. 1.  
FA. 9.  
AG. 9. 27. 1.  
Sum FG. 9.  
Subtendentis que sue distantie.

**PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM**  
**Saturday 15 July 2023**

AMSTEDAMI Apud IOANNEM BLAEV. 1659.

# **Collecting and Conserving**

## **Early Australian Maps**

Saturday 15 July 2023

Arts West Forum Theatre, The University of Melbourne.

10am

### **Welcome**

Prof Robyn Sloggett – Director, Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

10:10am

### **SESSION 1: Why collect maps?**

Moderator: Ms Penny Tripp, General Manager, Grimwade Conservation Services, University of Melbourne

Speakers: Dr Martin Woods  
Erica Persak  
Jane Clark

Followed by 20 min Q&A with speakers

11:50am

### **Lunch break**

1:00pm

### **SESSION 2: Maps and their Materiality and Conservation**

Moderator: Ms Libby Melzer – Paper Lab Team Leader, Grimwade Conservation Services, University of Melbourne

Speakers: Libby Melzer  
Peter Mitchelon  
Briony Pemberton  
Christine Mizzi  
Marion Parker  
Victoria Thomas

Followed by 20 min Q&A with speakers

2.55pm

### **Concluding remarks**

Prof Robyn Sloggett – Director, Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

3.00pm

**End**

## 9 speakers and a world of maps

The University of Melbourne is pleased to present a public symposium exploring three of the most important early map collections maps in Australia with a particular focus on Dutch Golden Age maps showcasing recent innovations in their care and conservation.

This symposium features presentations from historians and researchers formative in the development of the map collections of the National Library of Australia, the Kerry Stokes Collection, and MONA as they discuss the history, significance, and motivation for these collections in the context of Australian mapping.

Conservators from the University of Melbourne will outline their recent award-winning journey to conserve two different copies of the rare and beautiful 17th-Century wall map, *Archipelagus Orientalis, sive Asiaticus* (Eastern and Asian archipelago), from the workshop of Master Cartographer for the Dutch East India Company Joan Blaeu, and share the insights they gained into the materials and construction of these rare, beautiful, and complex maps.

*Archipelagus Orientalis, sive Asiaticus* is the first published map depicting in detail the journeys of Abel Tasman including the sighting of Tasmania by the crew of the Zeehan on 24 November 1642, and Tasman's mapping of New Zealand; it is the first large-scale published map of New Holland and the map on which all subsequent maps of Australia were based until the additions of Cook over a century later. The National Library of Australia map has recently been added to the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

Only five complete copies are known to exist, and of these the only two wall maps are held in Australian collections and were conserved by the University of Melbourne.

# Speaker Abstracts

## SESSION 1: Why collect maps?



### **Dr Martin Woods**

**Former Director, Curatorial and Collections Research**

**National Library of Australia, Canberra**

*On a grand scale: Joan Blaeu's wall map of Southeast Asia and Australia, 1663.*

#### ABSTRACT

In an era when maps were the most sought after of artworks, wall maps were extraordinary. The immense scope of Archipelagus Orientalis was sure to impress anyone who viewed it, including Charles II to whom a copy was given. But they were not built to last. Meant for prominent display, few examples of the map have survived intact – the National Library acquired a near complete example in 2013, where it now resides among its special collections.

This once lost map is a complex mix of exceptional craftsmanship and cartography produced by the leading European publishing house, Blaeu. Part of a larger project to exalt the Dutch trading empire, beneath its lustrous surface, and the abundant riches described in its text borders, lay a deeper truth of complex alliances and global upheaval.

Yet it is a map in two halves. Above, it gives the most detailed mapping then available of the Indonesian archipelago, contrasting with a virtually blank Australian continent below, perhaps beckoning the viewer with undefined possibilities. While the map was designed to focus attention on the Spice Islands from which so much wealth poured through Amsterdam, its New Holland, drawn from the findings of Abel Tasman, gave shape to the unknown southern land on a grand scale, bringing it into view, connecting it with Europe, and inspiring territorial claims that were not to be realised for over a century.



**Erica Persak**  
**Collections Manager**  
**Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth**

*Enlightened motivations as reflected in the cartographic material in the Kerry Stokes Collection*

**ABSTRACT**

The Kerry Stokes collection has some 800 cartographic works ranging from globes, atlases, manuscript and published maps. The reasons for Mr Stokes collecting maps and other cartographic material are as varied as collectors themselves. Works in the Collection can be acquired for their rarity, size, mapmaker, aesthetic qualities (i.e. cartouches, vignettes and sea-monsters), region depicted, historical importance, colouring, provenance and of course condition. More importantly, cartographic material is collected for its association with the early discovery and exploration of Australia and specifically Western Australia. Material documents the early Dutch, French and English contacts with the western edge of the Australian continent. Collecting continues into the 20th century with the exploration of Antarctica. The collection moves between five centuries of cartography and charts our understanding of the globe before and after Magellan circumnavigated it in 1519-1522.

This paper will examine how maps in the Kerry Stokes Collection are acquired to support, supplement, and complement its collecting themes. Maps are said to provide a window into history. In the Kerry Stokes Collection, maps are considered as art, history and science all rolled together into a single object. Along with fine art, historical artefacts and documents, they are collected to show the history of global exploration.



**Jane Clark**

**Senior Research Curator - MONA  
Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart**

*Why are there maps at Mona? I'd like to tell you but I can't*

**ABSTRACT**

Mona, the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, Tasmania, is Australia's largest private museum, with a collection ranging from ancient Egyptian funerary objects and works of Australian modernism to bibliophilic paraphernalia and international contemporary art. Some very special maps, globes and atlases are relatively recent additions. Mona's is a gradualist, evolving, learning-by-doing collection; where owner David Walsh says he decided why he was building it while he was building it. The things he cares about became his motives, he says, and his (retro-fitted) justification for choosing those objects he's chosen to collect and display. Mona revolves around motivations: proximate, that we're conscious of; and ultimate, that biology generally connives to keep us unaware of, including, and importantly, how we humans assign value and meaning to things and why we make art. So, in David's own words, you should never ask someone about their motives because they themselves will be the last person to know.

## **SESSION 2: Maps and their materiality and conservation**



**Libby Melzer**

**Team Leader – Paper Conservation**

**Grimwade Conservation Services, The University of Melbourne**

*Materiality of maps*

### **ABSTRACT**

Within a relatively short time-period, the University of Melbourne's conservation group undertook the complex and large-scale conservation treatment of two of the rarest and most important maps to Australian cartography. These maps were not only exceptional for their history and significance, but as wall maps their materials, format, and scale presented unique challenges requiring collaboration between conservation scientists, and paper and textile conservators.

Maps are some of the most precious and valuable items that come through the Grimwade paper labs - they can be beautiful, functional, evocative, and always invite closer inspection. Maps come in a wide range of forms and materials dictated by their particular function, and it is often these aspects that determine how a map lasts into the future, and how it can be seen and displayed. Sometimes the materials of maps are well suited to their purpose, and in other instances they pose complex challenges. This paper presents a range of diverse maps held in cultural collections and discusses how their materials have informed and challenged their preservation and display. Finally, it introduces the complex materials and structure of the two different Blaeu wall maps, focussing on how initially similar items presented very different complex conservation issues, necessitating very different conservation innovations.



**Peter Mitchelson**  
**Paper and Book Conservator**  
**Grimwade Conservation Services, The**  
**University of Melbourne**



**Briony Pemberton**  
**Business Owner and Principal Conservator**  
**Pemberton Conservation**

*Conserving the NLA Blaeu Map*

**ABSTRACT**

This talk will focus on the conservation of the map known as *Archeipelagus Orientalis, sive Asiaticus*, held by the National Library of Australia. The map was engraved in 1659 by Dutch master cartographer Joan Blaeu and printed in 1663. Its history as a wall map meant that it had sustained quite a lot of damage over its 360-years. For example, the repeated rolling and unrolling of the map, combined with the presence of an embrittled natural resin varnish and widespread use of the corrosive pigment Verdigris, had led to extensive lifting and fractured areas of the paper. The talk will describe how a treatment protocol was developed to deal with these issues, drawing on scientific analysis undertaken by Grimwade staff, a comprehensive literature review, discussions with key National Library staff, and also extensive testing. The complex nature of the map meant the treatment had to be modified along the way and each new process needed to be approved by the relevant stakeholders. For example, the decision had been made to remove the varnish to improve the legibility and flexibility of the map, however in some areas this was not possible, so instead the varnish was “reformed” using a specially designed technique. In many respects the conservation treatment was challenging, however because of this, it also became an opportunity to develop new knowledge, skills and techniques.





**Peter Mitchelson**  
**Paper and Book Conservator**  
**Grimwade Conservation Services, The**  
**University of Melbourne**



**Christine Mizzi**  
**Paper Conservator**  
**State Library of Victoria**

*Treating Blaeu's Companion Maps*

**ABSTRACT**

After completing the treatment of the Blaeu map for the National Library of Australia, a request was made to Grimwade Conservation Services for treatment of two additional maps also from the Blaeu workshop, *Archeipelagus Orientalis, sive Asiaticus* and *Asia Descripto Novissima*. Familiarity working on the first map was very useful, but these additional maps presented new issues and challenges regarding their conservation treatment.

Both maps had painted batons and their trimmings and tassels remained largely intact but unlike the first map, these had no varnish layer allowing for the possibility of cleaning the surface directly. A wet cleaning method would provide the best result but as the application of moisture needed to be minimised around the verdigris, a way protecting this media became paramount. Gradually, through testing and experimentation, we were able to protect the verdigris pigment using cyclododecane and could embark upon large-scale gel washing. This proved to be an effective method for controlling the moisture and minimizing risk. The robustness of these two maps enabled a different mounting technique to be used and overall, this treatment provides an interesting comparison treatment to that of the first.



**Victoria Thomas**  
**Textile Conservator**  
**ArtLab Australia, Adelaide**

*Replication of the Blaeu map silk tassels: dye identification and colour reproduction.*

ABSTRACT

The original silk tassels and braid were replicated as part of the conservation of the companion Blaeu maps: *Archipelagus Orientalis, sive Asiaticus* and *Asia Descripto Novissima*. These original silk components were partially intact, but significantly faded and unsuitable for ongoing display. New silk thread was sourced and dyed with conservation synthetic dyes. Synthetic dyes are most commonly used in textile conservation for preparing support materials for their qualities of stability and reliability in terms of colour reproduction, in contrast to the natural dyes which would have produced the original bright red and yellow colours. This talk will discuss the process of matching the colours and considerations around authenticity when producing replicated components in conservation.



**Marion Parker**  
**Textiles Conservator**  
**Marion Parker Textiles Conservation**

*Textile features of the NLA Blaeu wall map.*

ABSTRACT

The National Library of Australia's wall map edition of *Archipelagus Orientalis, sive Asiaticus* contains unique and interesting textile components and artefacts of its original mounting. This presentation will include an examination of the two linings. It will focus on features that inform our understanding of their manufacture. It will also discuss the evidence of a lost textile edging which informed the decision to recreate this feature in the final mounting and display.



*Cover image: Detail of Blaeu Map conservation treatment. Courtesy of Grimwade Conservation Services, The University of Melbourne. Produced by Keep Left.*