

**Collecting Australian art history:  
Dr. S.A. Ewing  
and  
the Ewing Collection**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a study of collector Dr. Samuel Arthur Ewing (1864–1941) and his collection of Australian art at the University of Melbourne. Although Ewing was considered one of the leading collectors of his day, little is known of Ewing’s collecting activities or the conceptual design directing his acquisitions. This thesis provides a reassessment of the University’s Ewing Collection by identifying and analysing Ewing’s original thematic design for his collection. This thesis therefore returns the conceptual understanding of Ewing’s Collection to its creator.

I begin by contextualising Ewing’s collecting activities amongst the art collectors of his era. To address the current paucity of research on Ewing’s peers, I identify collecting trends of the day by analysing a historic, but little known, newspaper series. Through this analysis, I reposition Ewing as an eminent collector of his era.

I then utilise material cultural studies and narratology to chronologically delineate Ewing’s collecting career and postulate that Ewing collected a visual exploration of Australian art history. I then conceive art history as a broader cultural activity undertaken, in this study, through art collecting, and analyse the structural framework of Ewing’s Collection. Returning to material cultural studies, I interpret the structural framework through Ewing’s scientific background and contemporary literary histories of Australian art. By reconceiving the Ewing Collection as an exploration of Australian art history, this thesis highlights alternative cultural engagements with art histories being undertaken prior to and outside of the professional discipline in Australia.

## Declaration

This is to certify that:

- i. this thesis comprises only my original work towards the MA except where indicated;
- ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and
- iii. this thesis is fewer than 50,000 words in length, exclusive of bibliography, images and appendices.

Cathleen Rosier

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## **Abbreviation of Terms**

|       |                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| AGB   | Art Gallery of Ballarat          |
| AGNSW | Art Gallery of New South Wales   |
| AGSA  | Art Gallery of South Australia   |
| BAG   | Bendigo Art Gallery              |
| NGA   | National Gallery of Australia    |
| NGV   | National Gallery of Victoria     |
| SLV   | State Library of Victoria        |
| SLNSW | State Library of New South Wales |
| WWI   | World War I                      |
| WWII  | World War II                     |

## Introduction

Private art collecting became increasingly popular in Australia during the first half of the twentieth century. Colonial preferences for European art shifted, as collectors supported local artists.<sup>1</sup> By the end of WWI, Australian art formed the centre of private collections across the country.<sup>2</sup> In 1918 Sydney's *Sun* newspaper declared that 'a man cannot call himself an art-lover ... unless he has at least the nucleus of an Australian collection by the most notorious artists'.<sup>3</sup> Such was the growth in the private patronage of Australian art that by 1934 the preceding 30 years were described dramatically by William Moore as 'The Boom'.<sup>4</sup> Today however, Moore's robust collecting scene is shrouded in mystery. Beyond a few prodigious and very generous collectors,<sup>5</sup> little is known of the patrons and collections amassed.

One collector active during Moore's 'Boom' period was Dr. Samuel Arthur Ewing (1864–1941). Ewing was described during his lifetime as 'one of the leading collectors of Australian paintings'.<sup>6</sup> Today Ewing is instead celebrated as an art philanthropist, having donated half his private collection to the University of Melbourne in 1938. The gift of 60 paintings, drawings, etchings and one sculpture became the University's foundation art collection and was hailed by Basil Burdett, then *Herald* Art Critic, as 'more than rival[ling] the Australian section in the National Gallery [of Victoria]'.<sup>7</sup> Then University of Melbourne Chancellor, James Barrett, praised the Collection as 'developing the aesthetic side of student life to a degree not previously approached in any Australian University'.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For colonial preferences amongst collectors, see Gerard Vaughan, "Art collectors in colonial Victoria, 1854–1892: an analysis of taste and patronage" (Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 1976). For the shift in taste towards Australian art, see Heather Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system, 1890–1940* (Grays Point: Bungoona Technologies, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 142.

<sup>3</sup> "Money in Art: Picture Market Guide," *The Sun*, September 29, 1918, 3.

<sup>4</sup> William Moore, "The Boom," in *Story of Australian Art*, Vol. 2 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 25–44.

<sup>5</sup> Such collectors include Howard Hinton, Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer and Sir William Dixon. See *Munificence: the story of the Howard Hinton Collection* (Armidale: New England Regional Art Museum, 2014); D.J. Mulvaney and J.H. Calaby, "Connoisseur," in *So much that is new: Baldwin Spencer, 1860–1929, a biography* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985), 335–359; Richard Anthony John Neville et al., *Sir William Dixon: a passion for collecting* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> "A Melbourne Display," *The Australasian*, October 12, 1929, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Basil Burdett, "Formal Presentation of Gift Collection," *Herald*, April 5, 1938. Copy from Ewing Papers, 2591/6(f), SLV.

<sup>8</sup> James Barrett to Dr. S.A. Ewing, September 7, 1937, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

While three catalogues have since been published on the Collection,<sup>9</sup> little is known of the collector or the collecting practices behind one of the earliest and largest permanent art collections in an Australian university.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of this thesis is therefore to reassess the Ewing Collection through its collector, Dr. S.A. Ewing. By examining Ewing's collecting practices and his resulting collection, this thesis aims to restore Ewing's legacy as one of the principal collectors of Australian art during the first half of the twentieth century.

### **Dr. Samuel Arthur Ewing**

Ewing was born in 1864 in Fitzroy, Victoria, to a poor Irish Catholic family (fig.1).<sup>11</sup> He was the third son of five surviving children.<sup>12</sup> Ewing's father, Thomas Adam Ewing (1833–1879), was a pharmacist and led an active civic life in Fitzroy until an early death in 1879.<sup>13</sup> Ewing's mother, Frances Gertrude *nee* Brown (c.1841–1883), died soon after.<sup>14</sup> By age 19, Ewing was an orphan.

Following his father's death, Ewing maintained the family's chemist in Fitzroy and began studying pharmacy at the University of Melbourne.<sup>15</sup> Ewing, however, was shrewd and ambitious.<sup>16</sup> After becoming a qualified pharmacist, he continued to study medicine. In 1888, Ewing had gained accreditation as a general practitioner (fig. 2) and by 1901, Ewing was a specialist surgeon.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938); *The Ewing Collection* (Parkville: Ewing Gallery, Melbourne University Union, 1981); and, Chris McAuliffe and Juliette Peers, *The Full Majesty of Nature: the collection of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing* (Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Vice-Chancellor Raymond Priestly to Head of Anatomy Frederick Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1938, 558 – Union House, various, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>11</sup> Ewing was born on the 28 May 1864 and was baptised on 11 September 1864 in St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne. Baptism records, Ewing Papers, 2592/3(c), SLV. Ewing later described his childhood as mired in poverty. Athol Shmith, "Dr. S.A. Ewing," *Australia: National Journal*, no. 2 (Spring, September–November, 1939): 2.

<sup>12</sup> The Ewing family had five additional children who died during infancy. Ewing Papers, 2592/4, MS 11675, SLV. Records of the Melbourne General Cemetery, Plot Number, MGC-RC-Comp-D-No-103. See

<sup>13</sup> Ewing's father Thomas was born in Dublin and died suddenly of tuberculosis in 1879. Ewing Papers, 2591/1(a), 2591/3, Mc6: Dr.3, SLV. For information on Thomas's civic life, see Carole Woods, "Thomas Ewing and the Fitzroy Public Library," in *Fitzroy, Melbourne's first suburb* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1991), 55–60.

<sup>14</sup> Ewing's mother Frances was born in North Melbourne and died of congested liver failure in 1883. Ewing Papers, 2591/1(a), and, 2591/3, Mc6: Dr.3, SLV.

<sup>15</sup> Ewing studied at Trinity College in the University of Melbourne. Ewing Papers, 2591/3, Mc6: Dr.3, SLV. For Ewing's involvement in his family's pharmacy, see Ewing's diaries from 1884 and 1885. Ewing Papers, 2591/(a) and 2591/(b).

<sup>16</sup> In 1883, a professor described Ewing as a 'shrewd and ambitious man quite capable of carrying out any enterprise that he may take in hand'. Ewing's diary, June 29, 1884, Ewing Papers, 2591/1(a), SLV.

<sup>17</sup> Ewing Papers, 2591/3, Mc6: Dr.3, SLV.

In addition to his medical education at the University of Melbourne, Ewing trained at the leading Scottish and English medical institutions of the day, at the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cambridge and Kings College London, with additional short courses undertaken in Berlin and Vienna.<sup>18</sup> Interspersed with his overseas studies, Ewing worked as a general practitioner in rural Victoria, and as a generalist surgeon in a remote hospital on the Western Australian Goldfields.<sup>19</sup> In 1902, Ewing returned to Melbourne as an Ear, Nose and Throat surgeon and a self-made man.<sup>20</sup> In 1903 he married Ethel Godfrey (fig. 3), one of Victoria's first female dentists (fig. 4),<sup>21</sup> and over the following ten years, the couple had three children.<sup>22</sup> Ewing remained in Melbourne for the rest of his life, where he worked in private practice in Collins Street and in hospitals around the city until the 1930s.<sup>23</sup>

In 1908, after having spent over 25 years studying and practising medicine, Ewing began collecting art.<sup>24</sup> By the time of his death in 1941, Ewing had acquired over 130 paintings, drawings, etchings, sculptures, and decorative art objects from Australia and around the world.<sup>25</sup> Ewing's gift to the University in 1938 featured the majority of his Australian painting collection, with the remainder of his wider collection now residing in public institutions around Melbourne.<sup>26</sup>

## Ewing's Collection

There have been three catalogues published on Ewing's Collection since his gift in 1938.<sup>27</sup> These publications have focused on the works of art, with the artworks considered in relation

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<sup>18</sup> Ewing Papers, 2591/3, Mc6: Dr.3, SLV.

<sup>19</sup> Ewing Papers, 2591/4 (b), SLV.

<sup>20</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> "Advances of the Sex: First Four Melbourne Dentistes[sic]," *Melbourne Punch*, February 9, 1899, 19.

<sup>22</sup> The children were: Geoffrey, born in 1904; Margaret, born in 1906, and George, born in 1911. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number: 21606, 1904; 14223, 1906; 7090, 1911, accessed September 17, 2014, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>23</sup> Ewing worked in a private practice in Collins Street in the city and at the Alfred and St. Vincent's Hospitals. *The Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> For Ewing's collections see Appendices 1–6.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendices 1–6. Ewing's daughter, Margaret Cutten, donated the remainder of Ewing's collections to the IPM, SLV and NGV. See *The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr. S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> See *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938); *The Ewing Collection* (Parkville: Ewing Gallery, Melbourne University Union, 1981); and, Chris McAuliffe and Juliette Peers, *The Full Majesty of Nature: the collection of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing* (Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002).

to the oeuvres of the respective artists and the context of Australian art history. Little attention, however, has been given to Ewing as a collector or his broader collecting practices.

Ewing organised the first publication to coincide with the 1938 donation, *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*.<sup>28</sup> Ewing's close friend and then director of the NGV, James MacDonald, wrote a brief biography of Ewing, highlighting the collector's connoisseurship and generosity. The main portion of the publication engaged with the art and artists of the Collection. Robert Henderson Croll provided the catalogue essay, which he based on the catalogue from Melbourne's 1934 Centenary exhibition.<sup>29</sup> Croll expands the nationalistic concepts from the 1934 exhibition catalogue to outline a history of Australian art through the art and artists of Ewing's Collection. The second half of the catalogue consists of a brief overview of each artist's biography as part of the catalogue information of the works of art. While the pedagogical focus enhanced public engagement with the art and artists of Ewing's Collection, the 1938 *Catalogue* provided little insight into Ewing as a collector or his collecting practices.

The second catalogue was organised by Ewing's daughter, Margaret Cutten, in 1980, *The Ewing Collection*.<sup>30</sup> Here, information on the art and artists was limited to catalogue material and reproductions of the works of art, with the introduction instead highlighting Ewing as a collector. While Cutten supplied new archival material on Ewing, the introduction was too brief to consider Ewing's thematic design for the collection or to provide an in-depth examination of Ewing as a collector.

The most recent and comprehensive research on Ewing and his collection was published in 2002, *The Full Majesty of Nature*.<sup>31</sup> This catalogue was created for the purpose of a travelling exhibition and extends the format of Ewing's original catalogue with a catalogue essay, analysis of select works of art and updated artist biographies. The essay was written by Juliette Peers, who was arguably directed by the commemorative plaque Ewing composed for the 1938 donation. The plaque reads: 'That our youth may be inspired by the beauty as well as love of our country by the works of our artists'.<sup>32</sup> In her essay, Peers draws out

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<sup>28</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 1938.

<sup>29</sup> The exhibition was held in Melbourne to celebrate the centenary of European settlement in the district. See *The Centenary Art Exhibition, 1934, Commonwealth Bank Chambers, 367 Collins Street, Melbourne*, (Melbourne: Speciality Press, 1934).

<sup>30</sup> See *The Ewing Collection*.

<sup>31</sup> McAuliffe and Peers, *The Full Majesty of Nature*, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 6.

nationalistic, philanthropic and pedagogical threads from the art and artists in the Collection and contextualises Ewing's selections within Australian art history. Like Ewing's 1938 catalogue, the remainder of the publication is dedicated to contextualising the art in the artists' oeuvres. An examination of Ewing as a collector thus remained overshadowed by endeavours to engage viewers with the art and artists of the Collection.

The emphasis given to public engagement has also obscured the contextual relationship Ewing created between the works of art. Yet, Ewing's conditions when gifting his collection to the University emphasised a conceptual grouping; MacDonald stated in the 1938 catalogue that Ewing required his Collection 'not to be separated' nor 'added to save by the original donor'.<sup>33</sup> Despite these requirements, Ewing's thematic design for his collection has also remained obscured.

This thesis will reassess the Ewing Collection through the collector. I will examine Ewing's collecting activities in order to delineate the construction of his collection. Through this examination, I will then hypothesise Ewing's original thematic conception for his collection.

By shifting the focus of Ewing's Collection from the artists to the collector, this thesis will result in, as famously identified by Roland Barthes, the death of the author(s).<sup>34</sup> Instead, I will be directed by Michael Foucault's interpretation of Barthes's concept; Foucault argues that the death should direct subsequent analyses to the gap created.<sup>35</sup> By shifting attention away from the artist, focus is instead given to the relationships created by the proximity of the artworks to one another. An interpretation of the overarching theme of the collection enables a new narrative to be positioned at the forefront; a narrative that was created by the collector. Barthes's 'death of the author' is therefore followed by a rebirth, as Ewing is reborn as the author of his Collection.

## Methods

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Henderson Croll, "Some notes on pictorial art in Australia," in *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938), 9.

<sup>34</sup> Roland Barthes, "Death of the author," in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. by Nigell Wood and David Lodge (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 311–316.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Foucault, "What is an author," in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. by Nigell Wood and David Lodge (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 209.

In this thesis, I define collecting and collections as first conceived by Walter Durost in 1932.<sup>36</sup> Durost proposed that a collection consisted of items valued principally as ‘one of a series, [as] part of a whole’.<sup>37</sup> Durost’s emphasis on the ‘whole’ positioned collections as separate entities, distinguished by an overall concept. The definition of collecting and collections has shifted in recent years,<sup>38</sup> however, as Durost was Ewing’s contemporary, I have retrospectively applied Durost’s definition in this thesis in order to locate Ewing’s collecting activities within his era. As a result, I interpret Ewing’s acquisitions as contributing to a conceptual whole.

I hypothesise the theme of Ewing’s collection by analysing acquisitions made across the course of his collecting career. To identify and examine the chronological formation and development of Ewing’s theme, I integrate Durost’s emphasis on the ‘whole’ with a converging interpretation of collecting by Mieke Bal in her article “Telling objects: a narrative perspective on collecting”.<sup>39</sup> Bal utilises a literary approach through narratology to posit that collecting is an accumulated sequence which creates a narrative within the collection. By combing Bal’s interpretation of collecting with Durost’s definition of a collection as a conceptual whole, I delineate Ewing’s acquisitions as a narrative which develops thematically. I then position the selections Ewing donated to the University in 1938 as the final conceptual refinement of his collecting activities.

As limited primary material has survived to illuminate Ewing’s collecting practices, I examine the structure of his theme by evoking Ilse Bulhof’s engagement with the works of Wilhelm Dilthey in her text, *Wilhelm Dilthey: A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture*.<sup>40</sup> Through the hermeneutic notion of ‘partial expressions’, I am thus able to identify and critically engage with the structure of Ewing’s collection theme.

To engage with Ewing’s acquisition choices, I apply Jean Baudrillard’s interpretation of the content of collections through material cultural studies. Baudrillard postulates that collectors

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<sup>36</sup> Susan Pearce, “The urge to collect,” in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 157.

<sup>37</sup> Walter Durost, *Children’s collecting activity related to social factors* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932), 10.

<sup>38</sup> See Russell Belk, “Collectors and collecting,” in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 317.

<sup>39</sup> Mieke Bal, “Telling objects: a narrative perspective on collecting,” in *Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 97–115.

<sup>40</sup> Ilse N. Bulhof, *Wilhelm Dilthey: A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture* (The Hague; Boston: M. Nijhoff Publishers; Hingham: Kluwer Boston, 1980).

collect themselves, thus emphasising the importance of self within collections.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, I utilise corresponding material from Ewing's biography, which I analyse within a psychology framework as applied to collecting by Frederick Baekeland in his article, "Psychological aspects of art collecting".<sup>42</sup> Since this thesis explores Ewing's adult years, the infant focus of Freud's theories is excluded in favour of Jungian psychoanalysis, as utilised by Baekeland.

Baudrillard's conceptualisation of collecting within material culture has also directed my application of Russell Belk's Marxist interpretation of collecting as a consumer activity, as outlined in *Collecting in a Consumer Society*.<sup>43</sup> Through Belk, I consider Ewing's acquisitions within the broader collecting culture of the day.

By juxtaposing Ewing's biography with his collecting practices, I hypothesise that he collected a visual exploration of Australian art history. To position Ewing's collecting activities as an art historical undertaking, I apply a broad definition of art history as outlined by Juliette Peers in her article "The Canon and its Discontents".<sup>44</sup> Here, Peers defines art history as historical reflections in a narrative format that contain 'various forms of "sense making" around culture'.<sup>45</sup> Peers utilises the extended definition to highlight the contribution of women to early art histories in Australia, prior to the accepted foundation of the art history discipline during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>46</sup> While Peers's extension gives prominence to feminist art histories, her definition also positions art history as a broader cultural undertaking. By identifying Ewing's theme as an art historical endeavour, this thesis contributes to Peers's research by including private collecting as part of a broader cultural engagement outside of and before the accepted foundations of art history in Australia.<sup>47</sup>

Private collecting in Australia has previously been linked to art history through collector and philanthropist Joseph Brown. Daniel Thomas argues that Brown's appreciation of colonial artists, such as Eugene von Guerard, influenced art historians and thus 'rewrote the history of

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<sup>41</sup> Jean Baudrillard translated by James Benedict, *The System of Objects* (London; New York: Verso, 1996), 91.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Baekeland, "Psychological aspects of art collecting," in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 205–219.

<sup>43</sup> Russell Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (London; New York: Routledge), 1995.

<sup>44</sup> Juliette Peers, "The canon and its discontents: women artists as drivers of early art historical activities and alternative art historical narratives in Australia," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 4 (June 2011): 1–18.

<sup>45</sup> Peers, "The canon and its discontents," 3.

<sup>46</sup> Peers, "The canon and its discontents," 1.

<sup>47</sup> Peers, "The canon and its discontents," 1.

Australian art' during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>48</sup> A similar concept is present in African art history, where private collectors are positioned as central to canonical formations and revisionist histories of the region.<sup>49</sup> However, this thesis does not seek to identify or examine the influence of Ewing's collecting activities on the formation and development of the art history discipline. Instead, by reconceiving Ewing's collecting practices as an art historical activity, this thesis endeavours to highlight broader cultural engagements with art history in Australia.

The emphasis I give to Ewing's collecting activities to substantiate my hypothesis has created several obstacles for this thesis. Firstly, Ewing, like most collectors, rarely recorded his collecting practices.<sup>50</sup> To address this limitation, I utilise indirect evidence from a combination of primary sources, including Ewing's diaries and provenance records, as well as secondary sources, such as recollections from his family and friends, and material from newspapers of the day.

I also utilise this biographical material to support my hypothesis, which additionally fosters further connections with Baudrillard's emphasis on self. Fortunately, a remarkable array of material concerning both Ewing's personal and professional life has survived in various private and public institutions across Melbourne. Material relating to Ewing's personal life and collecting activities was donated to the State Library of Victoria by his daughter Margaret Cutten in 1990.<sup>51</sup> Cutten also donated the remainder of Ewing's collection comprising approximately 70 works of art to the State Library of Victoria, the Ian Potter Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Victoria during the 1980s.<sup>52</sup> Further material relating to Ewing's personal life has also been utilised from records in the Fitzroy Public Library and the Public Records Office of Victoria.

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<sup>48</sup> Daniel Thomas, "Book-Powered: Building the Joseph Brown Collection," in *The Joseph Brown Collection at NGV Australia*, Kirsty Grant et al. (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2004), 28.

<sup>49</sup> For an examination of the impact of Western-private collectors on the construction and development of canons in African art history, see Christopher B. Steiner, "A taste of angels in the art of darkness: fashioning the canon of African art," in *Art history and its institutions: foundations of a discipline*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London: Routledge, 2002), 132 – 145; and for an examination of the marginalisation and exclusion of African-owned private collections in canonical discourse in the region, see Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, *Making History: African Collectors and the Canon of African Art* (Milan, Italy: 5 Continents Editions, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> David Kaus, "Professionals and Amateurs: Different Histories of Collecting in the National Ethnographic Collection," in *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, ed. by Nicolas Peterson et al. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008): 269.

<sup>51</sup> See Margaret Cutten to Mrs. Frances Lindsay, August 23, 1990, Ewing and Cutten Files, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

<sup>52</sup> See *Ewing Gift*, 51–53.

Material relating to Ewing's arts activities, including philanthropic undertakings during his lifetime, has been sourced from the Archives of the University of Melbourne, the Melbourne Savage Club, Melbourne Grammar School, the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Further material has also been gleaned through online resources, particularly *Trove*, the online aggregate for Australian newspapers. This diverse range of archival content has enabled this thesis to both uncover and utilise previously unknown material on both Ewing and his collection.

The main difficulty that has arisen in this thesis is the necessity of accurate and complete provenance records for the entirety of Ewing's collection. While the majority survives, material relating to secondary art market purchases has since been lost. Nevertheless, to ensure that such acquisitions contribute to the hypothesis of Ewing's theme, I have relied on a written profile of Ewing's collections undertaken by artist and writer Alexander Colquhoun in 1930.<sup>53</sup> I interpret Colquhoun's profile as a record of Ewing's collection, with works not referenced representing those purchased after 1930. As a result, I have been able to create a chronological construction of Ewing's acquisitions which I utilise to argue that he collected a visual exploration of Australian art history.<sup>54</sup>

## Chapter Overview

The first chapter provides the background and context for this study, through an exploration of private art collecting in Australia from Federation to WWII. I apply Russell Belk's Marxist interpretation of collecting in order to demonstrate the lack of known complete collections in current literature.<sup>55</sup> I then present new research on Ewing's peers through an analysis of the 1930 newspaper series by Alexander Colquhoun, which I use to identify the collecting trends of the era.

In Chapter Two, I hypothesise the theme of Ewing's collection by applying Mieke Bal's narratological interpretation of collecting as an accumulated sequence.<sup>56</sup> I then examine

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<sup>53</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Dr Ewing's Collection," *The Age*, March 1, 1930, 7.

<sup>54</sup> See Appendices 1–6.

<sup>55</sup> See Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*.

<sup>56</sup> Mieke Bal, "Telling objects: a narrative perspective on collecting," in *Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by John Elsner, and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 97–115.

Ewing's acquisitions as a chronological delineation that illustrates the formation and development of his theme.

In the final chapter, I consider Ewing's theme as art history, and examine its structure by evoking ideas from hermeneutics through Ilse Bulhof's engagement with the works of Wilhelm Dilthey.<sup>57</sup> Returning to Baudrillard's notion that collectors collect themselves,<sup>58</sup> I interpret the structure of Ewing's theme through his science-based background. I begin by examining Ewing's education in popular scientific theories of the day, focusing on Darwin's theory of evolution, and conclude by analysing the influence of Frederick McCubbin's 1916 article, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art" on the overall shape of Ewing's visual art history.<sup>59</sup>

This thesis endeavours to revitalise the University's founding art collection by rediscovering an understanding of the Collection through its creator, Dr S.A. Ewing. The focus given to Ewing's collecting practices throughout this thesis repositions Ewing as an eminent collector of his day. The identification of Ewing's Collection as a visual history of Australian art expands current understandings of art historical practices prior to and outside of the discipline. This thesis therefore contributes to a broader understanding of art historical practices within Australia during the first half of the twentieth century.

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<sup>57</sup> See Bulhof, *Wilhelm Dilthey*.

<sup>58</sup> Jean Baudrillard, translated by James Benedict, *The System of Objects* (London; New York: Verso, 1996), 91.

<sup>59</sup> Frederick McCubbin, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art," in *The art of Frederick McCubbin*, ed. James S. MacDonald (Melbourne: Lothian Book Publishing Co., 1916), 82–95.

## Chapter One: Collecting Australian art 1900–1940

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background and context for the study of Dr. S.A. Ewing as a collector. Here, I provide a literature review of research conducted on private art collectors active during Ewing's era. I frame art collecting in this chapter through Russell Belk's interpretation of collecting as part of a Marxist political economy.<sup>1</sup> Belk's interpretation highlights the interrelatedness of the act of collecting and presents the possibility that related fields can contribute to an understanding of collecting studies. Incorporating research from related fields provides an avenue to address the dearth of research on collectors from Ewing's era. I therefore include research from art market studies and artist biographies as an alternative method to engage with collecting trends from this period. By correlating material from these related fields, I demonstrate that private patronage of Australian artists significantly increased during the first half of the twentieth century.

In the second half of the chapter, I directly address the scarcity of research on collectors from Ewing's era by introducing new research on his Melbourne-based peers. My research is based on a newspaper series published in *The Age* in 1930, titled 'Melbourne's private galleries'. The series was written by Alexander Colquhoun with the assistance of John Longstaff and profiled 18 leading Victorian collectors and their collections of the day, including Ewing's collection. I survey the content of the collections in order to understanding the collecting preferences amongst those buying Australian art. Thus, Colquhoun's series provides the context for the study of Ewing's collecting activities undertaken in the following chapter.

### The Australian Art Market

The growth in material culture since the Industrial Revolution has corresponded with a growth in private collecting, with objects interpreted as commodities which collectors consume as part of a capitalistic society.<sup>2</sup> Russell Belk interprets the act of collecting as a consumerist activity in *Collecting in a Consumer Society*.<sup>3</sup> Belk positions collecting within a

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<sup>1</sup> See Russell Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> See Arjun Appadurai, "Commodities and the politics of value," in *The Social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–30.

<sup>3</sup> Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, 1.

Marxist political economy, as part of the framework of production, distribution and consumption. Belk explores correlations between the framework, concluding that:

The dramatic growth of mass production, mass distribution, and mass communication ... parallel[s] ... [a] similarly dramatic growth of mass consumption, mass individual collecting, and massive museum collecting.<sup>4</sup>

Belk's identification of market synchronicity highlights the potential of research in the adjacent fields of artist biographies and art market studies to illuminate trends in private collecting.

In Australian collecting studies, William Moore evokes the concept of market synchronicity in his chapter "The Boom" from *The Story of Australian Art*.<sup>5</sup> Here, Moore utilises the production point to demonstrate an increase in consumption of Australian art over the preceding 100 years. Moore references anecdotes from artists alongside their corresponding biographies to delineate chronologically the increase in sales and prices of Australian art from Conrad Martens to Sydney Long.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent biographies of artists active during the twentieth century, such as Rebecca Andrew's examination of Hans Heysen's career, have since confirmed Moore's identification of an increase in the sale of art.<sup>7</sup>

Following the biographies, Moore identifies consumption points by listing several significant art philanthropists and private collectors active during the first decades of the twentieth century. Moore then highlights the corresponding increase in mass communication through the formation and development of the local publishing scene relating to Australian art and artists during WWI.<sup>8</sup> For Moore, increased private collecting fostered the formation and development of artists' careers, and, through the publishing scene, established and analysed artists' legacies. Hence, Moore's identification of corresponding growth areas focused on the direct impact of increased collecting on artists' careers.

Moore's positioning of artists as both the production and distribution points of art obscures the corresponding development of the secondary art market that also occurred during the first half of the twentieth century. Benjamin Thomas examines the growth of the commercial

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<sup>4</sup> Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> See William Moore, "The Boom," in *Story of Australian Art*, Vol 2 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 25–44.

<sup>6</sup> Other artists include Louis Buvelot, Julian Ashton, Arthur Streeton, Hans Heysen, Jesse Hilder, Norman and Lionel Lindsay, Elioth Gruner, and Will Ashton. Moore, "The Boom," 25–35.

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Andrews, *Hans Heysen* (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2008), 46.

<sup>8</sup> Moore, "The Boom," 35–44.

gallery sector in this period as part of his study of art dealer William Seddon.<sup>9</sup> Focusing on the sale of Australian art, Thomas concluded that growth in the sector resulted from an ‘increasing art-buying public’.<sup>10</sup> Shireen Huda also found in her examination of the history of auctions that an increase in private collectors spurred a growth in auctions of Australian art during this period.<sup>11</sup> As part of the growth, Thomas and Huda distinguish the overwhelming preference for Australian art amongst the art-buying public of the time.

Such favouring of local artists was not evident in the Australian art market during the nineteenth century. Caroline Jordan’s study of nineteenth-century art dealer Alexander Fletcher instead demonstrates that the colonial Melbourne public preferred English, Scottish and European prints and paintings.<sup>12</sup> Thomas and Huda’s research thus demonstrates that public taste had shifted by the first decades of the twentieth century, as the content of commercial galleries and auctions became resoundingly Australian.<sup>13</sup>

Thomas and Huda propose that the increase in collectors and shifting tastes resulted from a growing awareness of the commercial value of Australian art.<sup>14</sup> Huda assesses that the financial success of Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer’s auction of his art collection in 1918 and subsequent large auctions, such as Sydney-collector Leonard Dodds auction in 1922, propelled the notion of Australia art as an asset.<sup>15</sup> To support the burgeoning art market, Sydney Ure Smith founded the journal, *Art in Australia* in 1916, in an endeavour to ‘bring the artists into closer association with ... the picture buying public’.<sup>16</sup> An advertisement for a commercial gallery in the following edition in 1917 titled, “Wisdom of collecting Australian pictures”, advised readers that, ‘really good pictures increase in value as times goes on and bring a greater profit than anything one can buy’.<sup>17</sup> Articles such as “Money in Art”, published in Sydney’s *Sun* newspaper, counselled collectors to acquire art by deceased Australian artists, since, ‘the live [artist] is apt to break the market and force down prices by

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<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Thomas, “Purveyor of Taste: W.R. Sedon and Melbourne’s Sedon Galleries,” *The La Trobe Journal* 86 (December 2010): 97–113.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, “Purveyor of Taste,” 103.

<sup>11</sup> Shireen Huda, “Colonial and Early Australian Art Auctions,” in *Pedigree and panache: a history of art auction in Australia* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008), 33–51.

<sup>12</sup> Caroline Jordan, “‘Fletcher’s of Collins Street,’ Melbourne’s Leading Nineteenth-Century Art Dealer, Alexander Fletcher,” *The La Trobe Journal* 75 (Autumn 2005): 87.

<sup>13</sup> Huda, *Pedigree and panache*, 50; Thomas, “Purveyor of Taste,” 101–102.

<sup>14</sup> Huda, *Pedigree and panache*, 50; Thomas, “Purveyor of Taste,” 101–102.

<sup>15</sup> Shireen Huda, “Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer: Portrait of a collector,” *Art Monthly Australia* 219 (May 2009): 37–40. See *Mr. Leonard Dodds’ collection of valuable pictures* (Sydney: James R. Lawson, 1922).

<sup>16</sup> “Introduction,” *Art in Australia*, first series, no. 1 (1916), Sydney: S.U. Smith, B. Stevens and C.L. Jones.

<sup>17</sup> “The Wisdom of Collecting Australian Pictures: Anthony Horderns’ Fine Art Gallery,” *Art in Australia*, first series, no. 2 (1917), Sydney: S.U. Smith, B. Stevens and C.L. Jones.

rapid and unprecedented production. The dead one cannot thus interfere'.<sup>18</sup> Auctioneer James R. Lawson concluded in 1922 that, 'a good Australian picture is now a valuable asset and a good investment'.<sup>19</sup>

While artist biographies identified a general increase in private collectors, studies in the art market demonstrated that the public increasingly preferred Australian art and viewed such acquisitions through an economic mindset. These corresponding increases confirm that the Australian art market was undergoing significant expansion over the course of Ewing's collecting period.

### **Private art collecting in Australia**

Under Belk's parallel growth model, mass production and mass distribution of art correlate with mass consumption. In the Australian context, the expansion of both primary sales and the secondary art market during the first decades of the twentieth century must likewise demonstrate that patronage also increased. In studies of institutional collecting practices, corresponding growth is evident across this period. Both the AGNSW and the NGV significantly increased acquisitions in general, and particularly of Australian art, when compared to purchases from the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> However, in current studies of private collectors, the corresponding expansion is less apparent than indicated by the art market growth.

Gerard Vaughan's 1976 honours thesis presents an important investigation of private art collecting in Australia.<sup>21</sup> Vaughan examines tastes amongst art collectors in colonial Victoria by comparing sales from art dealers with evidence of general collecting from institutional loan exhibitions, and by examining specific collections through case studies of seven collectors.<sup>22</sup> While Vaughan identifies an overarching preference for European art, he also

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<sup>18</sup> "Money in Art," *The Sun*, September 29, 1919, 3.

<sup>19</sup> James R. Lawson, "Foreword," in *Mr. Leonard Dodds' collection of valuable pictures* (Sydney: James R. Lawson, 1922).

<sup>20</sup> While the institutions increased purchases of Australian art in comparison to nineteenth-century acquisitions, both continued to favour British and European art. See John Poynter, *Mr Felton's Bequest* (Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2003), and Heather Johnson, "The Art Gallery of New South Wales," in *The Sydney art patronage system, 1890–1940* (Grays Point: Bungoona Technologies, 1997), 9–37.

<sup>21</sup> Gerard Vaughan, "Art collectors in colonial Victoria, 1854–1892: an analysis of taste and patronage," (Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 1976).

<sup>22</sup> Vaughan examines the collectors William Lynch, Alfred Felton, Thomas Chirnside, Dr. L. L. Smith, F.W. Armytage, R.H. Kinnear, and T.W. Stanford. Vaughan, "Art collectors," 12–47. See also Vaughan's later, in-depth study on the Armytage collection: Gerard Vaughan, "The Armytage Collection: Taste in Melbourne in the

noted difficulties researching a collecting field where ‘very few [collections] remained intact’.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, Vaughan found that the dispersal of collections was accompanied by a general loss in archival material.<sup>24</sup> Colonial preferences for European art amongst collectors were further confirmed by Alison Inglis and John Poynter’s study of collector Alfred Felton.<sup>25</sup> However, with the loss of collections and related archival material, current research does not provide conclusions on the extent of the colonial Victorian public’s acquisition of art and neither does it detail the content of such collections.

The general disappearance of collectors and their collections continues to hamper research into Australian collectors active during the first half of the twentieth century. Proceeding chronologically from Vaughan’s period of study, Heather Johnson examined the Sydney art market between the years 1890 to 1940 in *The Sydney Art Patronage System*.<sup>26</sup> Johnson’s study spanned institutional collecting, art dealers, commercial galleries and private collectors. Her approach to private collectors in Sydney utilised a similar case study format to Vaughan’s. However, while Vaughan employed case studies to provide a close analysis of collectors, Johnson approached the format as a starting point for analysing smaller, comparative collectors and their collections.<sup>27</sup> Through this more inclusive approach, Johnson demonstrated a general increase in collecting and a shift in taste from European to Australian art by the end of WWI.

While Johnson similarly identified the dispersal of collections, she found that surviving archival material from early twentieth-century collectors concerned only the few ‘larger and more visible patrons’.<sup>28</sup> As with Vaughan’s study, Johnson’s use of institutional loan records from the AGNSW demonstrates that a broader cross-section of the public was involved in

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late 19<sup>th</sup> Century,” in *Studies in Australian art*, ed. Ann Galbally and Margaret Plant (Melbourne: Dept. of Fine Arts, University of Melbourne, 1978), 35–44.

<sup>23</sup> Vaughan, “Art collectors,” iii–iv.

<sup>24</sup> Vaughan, “Art collectors,” iii–iv.

<sup>25</sup> Alison Inglis and John Poynter, “Desirable things, the private collection of Alfred Felton,” *Art Bulletin of Victoria* 44 (Melbourne: Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, 2004):

[https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/journal\\_edition/edition-44/](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/journal_edition/edition-44/). For colonial preferences in the NGV’s collection, see Ann Galbally et al., *The first collections: the Public Library and the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1850’s and 1860’s: University Gallery, the University of Melbourne Museum of Art 14 May - 15 July 1992* (Parkville: The Museum, 1992).

<sup>26</sup> Heather Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system, 1890–1940* (Grays Point: Bungoona Technologies, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> Johnson’s five collectors are Eadith Walker, Dr. James Millar Robertson, Arthur Wigram Allen, James McGregor and Ethel Anderson. See Johnson, “The Private Patrons,” in *The Sydney art patronage system*, 124–170.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 137.

collecting.<sup>29</sup> However, as each collector lent only a select few works of art, such records cannot confirm the quantity and quality of the respective owner's collection. Like Vaughan, Johnson's study of Sydney collectors was also restricted by the dispersal of collections and the corresponding loss of archival material.

Similar issues arise overseas in studies of Western art collectors from the first half of the twentieth century. In England, collecting studies have been hampered further by the practice of destroying personal records before death, as explained by Paula Fogarty in her examination of art collector Edward Cecil Guinness (1847–1927).<sup>30</sup> Fogarty also distinguished that little was known of Guinness as a collector during his lifetime and posthumous awareness of his collecting activities only resulted from Guinness bequeathing his collection to the public. In this instance, Fogarty concluded that philanthropy ensured the survival of the collection and enabled further research to be conducted.

In North America, collector-philanthropists are central to collecting studies from the first half of the twentieth century. The most visible today are those who also funded private museums to house their collections. Anne Higonnet examined this phenomenon in *A Museum of one's own: private collecting, public gift*.<sup>31</sup> The comparative dispersal of Western art collections throughout this period highlights the role philanthropy has played in the survival of select collections.

The most visible collectors in Australia from the first half of the twentieth century are also the collector-philanthropists. Gifting collections to Australian public institutions has ensured the survival of complete or relatively intact collections.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, the institutions also valued related archival material thus also ensuring the survival of such material. As a result, research on art collectors from Ewing's era feature collectors-philanthropists, such as Alfred Felton, Howard Hinton, Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer and R.D. Elliott, as well as Australian collectors Russell Grimwade, Sir William Dixson and David Scott Mitchell.<sup>33</sup> These

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson compares the 1897 and 1918 loan exhibitions held at the AGNSW. Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 22–23.

<sup>30</sup> Paula S. Fogarty, "Edward Cecil Guinness, first Earl of Iveagh: A Collector in his context" (Masters thesis, Savannah College of Art and Design, 2013), 6.

<sup>31</sup> See Anne Higonnet, *A Museum of one's own: private collecting, public gift* (Pittsburgh: Periscope Publishing; New York: Prestel Publishing, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 137.

<sup>33</sup> See Inglis and Poynter, "Desirable things"; *Munificence: the story of the Howard Hinton Collection* (Armidale: New England Regional Art Museum, 2014); D.J. Mulvaney and J.H. Calaby, "Connoisseur," in *So much that is new: Baldwin Spencer, 1860-1929, a biography* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985), 335–359; *The Elliott collection: a catalogue of works bequeathed by R.D. Elliott and Hilda Elliott* (Mildura:

collectors were also the most ambitious of their era, creating collections consisting of several hundred to several thousand works of art. While art market studies indicate a more significant portion of the public began acquiring art during the first half of the twentieth century, current investigations of collector-philanthropists instead suggest a field that seemingly consists of a few very active collectors.

Further endeavours are currently underway to illuminate the rich variety of art collecting that occurred during the first half of the twentieth century, as indicated by the artists and the art market. Michael Moignard is currently studying several private collectors from the interwar period as part of his Ph.D. thesis at La Trobe University. Moignard intends to continue the case study format, juxtaposing collector-philanthropists with several lesser-known collectors active during the interwar period.<sup>34</sup> Gerard Vaughan is continuing his work on collectors in a soon-to-be-published book, *The Collectors*, with case studies spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>35</sup> The sustained interest in collectors from the first half of the twentieth century confirms there is still much to be discovered.

While Johnson's examination of collectors in Sydney identified an increase in collecting and a shift in taste towards local artists, studies from the art market and information on the artists themselves suggest that a broad spectrum of the Australian public became increasingly active collectors of Australian art during the first half of the twentieth century. For this study however, the current lack of detailed information on the collecting activities of Ewing's peers creates difficulties contextualising his acquisitions amongst the trends of the day. To address this and confirm Belk's parallel growth model, the remainder of this chapter will present new research on previously unknown collectors active during Ewing's collecting period.

### **Alexander Colquhoun's Art Collectors**

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Sunraysia Publishing, 1998); John Poynter and Benjamin Thomas, *Miegunyah: the bequests of Russell and Mab Grimwade* (Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2015); Richard Anthony John Neville et al., *Sir William Dixson: a passion for collecting* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 2013); and Eileen Chanin, *Book life: the life and times of David Scott Mitchell* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011). See also Alison Inglis's study of decorative arts collector, John Connell, "The Gift of John Connell to the National Gallery of Victoria," in *Great Philanthropists on Trial: the art of the bequest*, ed. Andrew Grimwade and Gerard Vaughan (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2006), 67–82. See also Heather Lowe's examination of the print collector, Robert Carl Sticht, "The Robert Carl Sticht Collection: A Forgotten Legacy," *Art Journal* 38 (1997): <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/the-robert-carl-sticht-collection-a-forgotten-legacy/>.

<sup>34</sup> The collectors include collector-philanthropists Howard Hinton, Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer and R.D. Elliott, and several lesser-known collectors. Author's conversation with Michael Moignard, December 2017.

<sup>35</sup> The book is to be published by Melbourne University Publishing. See *Trove*.

As few complete collections survive today, print media has been utilised in some studies as an alternative method to examine collecting activities. For Johnson, auction records published in newspapers provided additional means to identify the art and artists of a collection, and thus reflect on changing tastes amongst collectors.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Huda looked towards auction reports and advertisements printed in newspapers to identify market trends in Australia.<sup>37</sup> In order to contextualise Ewing's complete collection, I too have looked towards newspaper records as a method to identify collecting trends amongst Ewing's peers.

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine a newspaper series published in *The Age* in 1930. Known as 'Melbourne's private galleries', the series profiled 18 leading art collectors and their collections from across Victoria. Written by artist Alexander Colquhoun with assistance from fellow artist John Longstaff, the series provided detailed overviews of each collection and information on the collector, such as collecting motivations and collection themes. My examination extends current research by introducing previously unidentified collectors whilst also providing insight into the breadth and depth of their collections.

While there have been several publications on Colquhoun's artistic career, little research has been conducted on his writings on the Australian art world.<sup>38</sup> Between 1914 and his death in 1941, Colquhoun contributed regular articles to Melbourne's *Herald* and *The Age* newspapers. During his time at *The Age*, Colquhoun began writing a regular series on the local and international art scene, publishing 13 series between 1929 and 1941.<sup>39</sup> The 1930 art collector series, titled 'Melbourne's private galleries', was the second Colquhoun published.<sup>40</sup> One collector was profiled per fortnight between February 1 and October 11 of 1930. The series proved so popular with the Melbourne public that at its conclusion an exhibition was held in the Melbourne Town Hall to showcase select works from the profiled collections.<sup>41</sup> Ewing was the third collector profiled, with the series providing insight into the collecting trends of his Melbourne-based peers.

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<sup>36</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 142.

<sup>37</sup> See Huda, *Pedigree and Panache*, 188–203.

<sup>38</sup> See *The Colquhoun family* (Castlemaine: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 1978); *Alexander Colquhoun: 1862-1941: artist and critic* (Castlemaine: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 2004); and Jennifer Phipps, "Colquhoun, Alexander (1862 – 1941)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/colquhoun-alexander-5742>.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 7 for Colquhoun's biography and overview of his writing career.

<sup>40</sup> Colquhoun changed the title midway through the series to 'Victoria's private galleries', enabling Colquhoun to profile significant collections outside the city. See Appendix 8 (a-r) for biographies of each collector and overviews of their collections.

<sup>41</sup> See *Loan exhibition of pictures from private art galleries of Victoria: in aid of the Lord Mayor's Fund for the Metropolitan Hospitals: 3rd November, 1930, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Lord Mayor's Fund, 1930).

## The Collectors

The 18 collectors Colquhoun profiled are described as leading collectors in Victoria, with Colquhoun's reflections indicating he interviewed each collector directly and viewed the art of each collection in person. The collectors Colquhoun selects are notably all men, which suggests that Melbourne's collecting scene at the time was male-dominated. William Moore's list of collectors in *The Story of Australian Art* four years later suggests a similar scene, referencing only Dame Nellie Melba as a significant female collector of the period.<sup>42</sup> While Melba's art collection at the time was comparable to those profiled by Colquhoun,<sup>43</sup> her absence from the series is possibly due to her overseas travel between 1928 and 1930;<sup>44</sup> Colquhoun was thus unable to conduct his obligatory interview with the collector. Despite the male focus in the series, five female collectors were included in the loan exhibition of the series.<sup>45</sup> Although the exhibition provides little insight into the extent of women collectors active at the time, the presence indicates a more diverse collecting scene than Colquhoun's series suggests. The absence of women collectors in Colquhoun's series may therefore suggest that his profiles are more akin to a snapshot than a comprehensive study of Melbourne's collecting scene.

The collectors Colquhoun's selected were all active buyers, excluding George Swinburne (1861–1928) who had died two years before the series.<sup>46</sup> Swinburne's collection was in the possession of his wife Ethel, who provided Colquhoun with an interview. Prior to his death, Swinburne had been an active collector for over 30 years, positioning Swinburne as the second oldest collector profiled. The oldest collector Colquhoun profiled was a Mr. A.S. McMichael, whom Colquhoun described as the 'most inveterate of Melbourne's picture buyers', since the collector had been acquiring art for over 50 years.<sup>47</sup> Colquhoun did not consider the 22 years that Ewing had spent collecting sufficiently noteworthy to mention, nor were the collecting periods of the remaining 15 collectors referenced. The series therefore

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<sup>42</sup> Moore, *Story of Australian art*, 37.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendices 9 and 10 for an overview of Melba's art collection.

<sup>44</sup> See Ann Blainey, *I am Melba: a biography* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2008), 230–235. Melba was also ill on her return to Australia in 1930, most likely further impacting her usual involvement in Melbourne's art scene. See Blainey, *I am Melba*, 235.

<sup>45</sup> The female collectors were Mrs Love-Linay, Mrs Percy Russell, Mrs Salier, Mrs T.W. Rowe and Miss V. Oldfield. *Loan exhibition of pictures*, 9–10.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: the late Geo. Swinburne's Collection," *The Age*, July 19, 1930, 6. See Appendix 8 (l).

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. A.S. McMichael's Collection," *The Age*, September 13, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (p).

indicates that the Melbourne public involved in collecting had increased over the preceding 20 years, corresponding to findings from art market studies and Moore's identification of the post-Federation growth in private art collecting.<sup>48</sup>

Colquhoun's collectors were also predominately middle-class professionals. Of the collectors who lived in Melbourne, all resided in the south-eastern area, with one third living in the affluent suburb, Toorak. Excluding one politician and three doctors, the remaining collectors all worked in business. Colquhoun was particularly surprised by the prevalence of medical practitioners,<sup>49</sup> describing the doctors as a 'special variety of art germ'.<sup>50</sup> Similar observations regarding art patrons in the medical community had been made several years earlier by the auctioneer James R. Lawson, who noted in 1922 that, 'the largest collectors of Australian art are members of the Medical Profession'.<sup>51</sup> In 1934, Moore noted the activities of five doctor collectors but did not identify a trend.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Johnson did not distinguish the prevalence of doctor collectors in the Sydney scene.<sup>53</sup> The discrepancy between current research and Colquhoun's comments suggests that there is still more to be discovered regarding trends within the art-buying public of Ewing's era.

### **Private Art Galleries**

All the collectors Colquhoun profiled notably acquired Australian art, which featured in 16 of the 18 collections. While Colquhoun may have selected particular collectors in order to highlight Australian art, he instead notes his surprise, writing that, 'it is gratifying that the local picture buyer ... has invariably shown a keen and discriminating appreciation of the art of his fellow countryman'.<sup>54</sup> The popularity of Australian art amongst Colquhoun's collectors confirms both biographical and art market studies and is consistent with Johnson's conclusion that by the 1920s Australian art formed the centre of private collections in Sydney.<sup>55</sup> The collections from Colquhoun's series therefore accord with the perceived shift

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<sup>48</sup> Moore, "The Boom," 35–44; Thomas, "Purveyor of Taste," 103; Huda, *Pedigree and panache*, 50.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Dr. R. Wettenhall's Collection," *The Age*, May 17, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (h).

<sup>50</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Dr. E.B. Heffernan's Collection," *The Age*, August 30, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (o).

<sup>51</sup> Lawson, "Foreword," in *Mr. Leonard Dodds' Collection*.

<sup>52</sup> Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, 36–38.

<sup>53</sup> See Johnson, "Dr. James Robert Millar Robertson," in *The Sydney art patronage system*, 130–136.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Mr. J.A. Graham's Pictures," *The Age*, May 3, 1930, 7. See Appendix 8 (g).

<sup>55</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 142.

in taste from European to Australian art amongst the art buying public during the first half of the twentieth century.

However, every collector profiled by Colquhoun also owned a selection of art by English or European artists. For 15 of the collectors, international art constituted less than half of the overall collection. Of the remaining three collections, R.D. Elliott owned equal numbers of Australian and British art,<sup>56</sup> while European and English artists featured prominently in the collections of George Swinburne and Sir William McBeath.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, both Swinburne and McBeath still acquired Australian art. Colquhoun observed that, ‘even where there is an obvious leaning to the art of the old world, the [Australian artists] are never by any means neglected’.<sup>58</sup> As Swinburne was active during the latter half of the nineteenth century, his taste can be interpreted as reflecting the colonial preferences of his era, as identified by Vaughan’s research.<sup>59</sup> Colquhoun explained McBeath’s European preference as resulting from overseas travel, with art acquired from the various destinations McBeath had visited. While Colquhoun’s series confirms that Ewing and his peers preferred Australian art, an examination of complete collections also demonstrates that collectors continued to purchase European art.

Of the 18 collectors, Colquhoun identified only three who acquired art through dealers. Two collectors, Swinburne and Elliott, used London-based dealers to acquire English and European art.<sup>60</sup> Only McMichael acquired Australian and international art through a local dealer, who Colquhoun describes as the ‘old-time [art] dealer’ James W. Hines who was active ‘far back in the [18]80s’.<sup>61</sup> The remaining collectors presumably acquired their Australian art directly from artist exhibitions. While Thomas’s study of the art dealer William Sedon demonstrates an increased demand for Australian art in the commercial gallery sector,<sup>62</sup> Moore’s artist biographies suggested instead that collectors were buying art directly from the artists.<sup>63</sup> Colquhoun’s series confirms Moore’s findings, thus indicating that collectors were intimately involved in the first hand selection of works of art.

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<sup>56</sup> Elliott first acquired Australian art. *The Elliott collection*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Colquhoun, “Geo. Swinburne’s Collection”; Alexander Colquhoun, “Melbourne’s Private Art Galleries: Sir William McBeath’s Collection,” *The Age*, June 14, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (j).

<sup>58</sup> Colquhoun, “Sir William McBeath’s Collection.”

<sup>59</sup> See Vaughan, “Art collectors in colonial Victoria.”

<sup>60</sup> Colquhoun, “Geo. Swinburne’s Collection”; Alexander Colquhoun, “Melbourne’s Private Art Galleries: The Elliott Collection,” *The Age*, February 1, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (a).

<sup>61</sup> Colquhoun, “Mr. A.S. McMichael’s Collection.” Art dealer James W. Hines opened his shop in Collins Street in 1868 and sold art until approximately 1886. Jordan, “Fletcher’s of Collins Street,” 77.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas, “Surveyor of Taste,” 103.

<sup>63</sup> Moore lists amounts artists made from significant exhibitions. Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, 25–36.

The prevalence of practising Australian artists discernible in all the collections also confirms the notion that collectors were acquiring art directly from the artists. All the collectors predominately acquired works by white, male, Australian-born or based artists. All the collectors owned one or more paintings by Arthur Streeton, Hans Heysen, Blamire Young and Jesse Hilder. The other favoured artists were Frederick McCubbin, Walter Withers, Charles Condor, Charles Wheeler, Harold Herbert, and Norman and Lionel Lindsay.

Colquhoun also highlighted the repetition of artists, observing that:

there is a noticeable ... tendency to keep to the beaten track laid down by the “big” men with established reputations, and an obvious shyness of the work of the younger generation of painters whose names have not yet been stamped with the hallmark of public approval.<sup>64</sup>

Colquhoun’s descriptions of the art produced by well-established artists frequently featured landscapes, indicating that collectors favoured landscape art produced in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century styles. Johnson found that Sydney collectors similarly preferred ‘traditional-style’ landscapes.<sup>65</sup> Johnson proposed that the preference developed towards the end of WWI and concluded that once established, the style remained popular amongst collectors throughout the interwar period, as further confirmed by the prevalence of such art amongst Colquhoun’s Melbourne collectors.<sup>66</sup>

The preference for well-established artists also indicates that Melbourne collectors were avoiding younger artists and, to a larger extent, were also rejecting modernism. Only three of the collectors acquired artists practicing in modern styles. The most adventurous was Oswald Syme, whose selections included art by Max Meldrum, Frances Hodgkins, Hilda Rix-Nicolas, Dora Wilson, Violet Teague, Ethel Spowers and Napier Waller.<sup>67</sup> Despite this, modern art comprised less than one fifth of Syme’s overall collection. Tweddle’s patronage of several modern artists was also a minor feature of his collection, with artists including Meldrum, Tweddle’s wife Isabel, Arnold Shore and William Frater.<sup>68</sup> The ongoing ‘Meldrumite’ and Post-Impressionist divide which existed in the Melbourne art scene may

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<sup>64</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, “Melbourne’s Private Art Galleries: Mr. A.O. Barrett’s Collection,” *The Age*, August 16, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (n).

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 150–151.

<sup>66</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 150–151.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, “Victoria’s Private Art Galleries: Mr. Oswald Syme’s Collection,” *The Age*, June 28, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (k).

<sup>68</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, “Melbourne’s Private Art Galleries: Mr. J.T. Tweddle’s Collection,” *The Age*, May 31, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (i).

have further discouraged collectors from acquiring modern art.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, Ewing was the only collector to acquire art by Meldrum as well as Blamire Young. Colquhoun discusses the controversy in his profile of Tweddle's collection, observing that:

In the very rare event of [Tweddle] being married to a professional artist of repute [Isabel Tweddle] there exists of course, the possibility of strained relations should one happen to be a Meldrumite and the other a devotee of Blamire Young.<sup>70</sup>

As Isabel was a foundation member of the Twenty Melbourne Painters, Tweddle was most likely the 'devotee' of Blamire Young.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, Isabel presumably instigated the modern content in Tweddle's collection.

While Johnson found that Sydney collectors were also distanced from modernism, she does identify several large collectors who supported the modern art scene.<sup>72</sup> The lack of such collectors in Colquhoun's series suggests that Melbourne's tastes were comparatively more conservative. The absence confirms the significance of the Reeds' patronage of modernism at Heide, which began in 1934, approximately four years after Colquhoun's series.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to capturing debates in the art world of the time, Colquhoun's descriptions of the collections also provide historical overviews of the artists and reflect upon Australian art history in general. He describes the subject matter and painting style of works of art in order to provide brief summaries of the artist's oeuvre. In the few examples of colonial and early Heidelberg works of art, Colquhoun's descriptions become more art historical. In Ewing's profile, Colquhoun's proclaimed that a sketch by Buvelot was a, 'reminder that there were Australian painters as far back as the [eighteen] sixties'.<sup>74</sup> The fact that Colquhoun needed to remind his readers of past artists suggests that he felt that there was limited public discourse relating to Australian artists from previous generations.

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<sup>69</sup> See Tracey Lock-Weir, *Misty moderns: Australian tonalists 1915–1950* (Adelaide: Art Gallery of south Australia, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> Colquhoun, "Tweddle's Collection."

<sup>71</sup> See Juliet Peers, "Tweddle, Isabel May (Diana) (1875–1945)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tweddle-isabel-may-diana-8891>. For information on the Melbourne Twenty Painters see "History," *Twenty Melbourne Painters Society Inc.*, accessed June 15, 2017, <http://twentymelbournepainterssociety.com.au/home/history/>; and, Paul Paffen, "Art Societies and Clubs," *eMelbourne*, accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00092b.htm>.

<sup>72</sup> See Johnson, "Ethel Anderson," in *The Sydney art patronage system*, 150–161.

<sup>73</sup> See Lesley Harding and Kendrah Morgan, *Modern love: the lives of John & Sunday Reed* (Carlton: The Miegunyah Press, 2015).

<sup>74</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Dr. Ewing's Collection," *The Age*, March 1, 1930, 7. See Appendix 8 (c).

Australian art produced before the 1880s is not prominent in any of the collections profiled. Only McMichael had a more extensive selection of early Australian art than Ewing's few selections. McMichael owned a series of watercolours by John Glover, an 'early' watercolour by John Ford Paterson titled, *Edinburgh*, 1874, and several 'very early' watercolours by Streeton, which Colquhoun explained held a, 'chronological as well as artistic interest'.<sup>75</sup> Finally, Colquhoun positioned the purchase of several of Streeton's and Charles Conder's '9 by 5' works from the 1889 exhibition as financially 'fortunate' acquisitions.<sup>76</sup> Unlike Ewing, McMichael had been acquiring art for over 50 years; thus, the early selections, excluding the Glover, were most likely purchased shortly after the art had been produced. Nevertheless, Colquhoun pronounced McMichael's taste as old-fashioned.<sup>77</sup> Colquhoun's response to McMichael's nineteenth-century Australian focus indicates that the acquisition of early works by well-established artists and art produced by previous generations were unfashionable amongst Melbourne collectors at the time. In contrast to auction studies, the overwhelming preference for practising artists combined with the unpopularity of nineteenth-century Australian art suggests that the Melbourne collectors were avoiding secondary art markets.<sup>78</sup>

Beyond the general Australian focus and preference for landscapes in the 18 collections, several collectors also favoured one or two artists in particular. Harper Bell owned over 50 paintings by William B McInnes and Blamire Young, and Elliott acquired several works by the British painter William Orpen.<sup>79</sup> However, Colquhoun only identified one collector, Mr. John May, who, 'might be with fairness described as a specialiser'.<sup>80</sup> May principally acquired art by Walter Withers. Colquhoun pronounced May's collection as a 'shrine' to the artist, with the 'most representative group of [Withers's] works collected under one roof'.<sup>81</sup> While May's strong appreciation of Withers's work is noted, Colquhoun also observed that May lived in close proximity to the artist, as a neighbour, and the subsequent close friendship of 40 years was probably the main reason behind this focus.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, May's specialisation results in a collection with a conceptual overlay akin to a theme. With no

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<sup>75</sup> Colquhoun, "McMichael's Collection."

<sup>76</sup> Colquhoun, "McMichael's Collection."

<sup>77</sup> Colquhoun, "McMichael's Collection."

<sup>78</sup> Huda, "Colonial and Early Australian Art Auctions," 33–51.

<sup>79</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: The Harper Bell Collection," *The Age*, February 15, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (b); Colquhoun, "Elliott's Collection."

<sup>80</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. John May's Collection," *The Age*, April 12, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (f).

<sup>81</sup> Colquhoun, "May's Collection."

<sup>82</sup> Colquhoun, "May's Collection."

comparative artist focus evident amongst Colquhoun's collectors, such specialisations may have therefore been unusual in Melbourne's art collecting scene.

Beyond the Australian focus, collectors acquiring European and English art also preferred practising artists. Elliott's collection contained the largest contemporary selections, focusing on works by Orpen.<sup>83</sup> Swinburne was the only collector of Old Master pictures profiled, with his selections including art by Rembrandt van Rijn, Nicolas Poussin, Joshua Reynolds and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot.<sup>84</sup> In this period, European and American collectors were well-known for Old Master collections, often spending thousands of pounds and dollars on fifteenth to eighteenth-century English and European art.<sup>85</sup> The NGV was competing with such collectors at the time, spending £31,395 on Jan Van Eyck's *Madonna and Child* in 1922.<sup>86</sup> The lack of Old Master collectors in Colquhoun's series may have resulted from relatively limited finances. Johnson found that Sydney collectors spent little on art compared to their overseas counterparts.<sup>87</sup> The scarcity of Old Master collectors in Melbourne may very well indicate that while patronage had increased over this period, those acquiring art were modest buyers.

Few collectors acquired art outside these Australian and European preferences. While there was a general Australian focus within the collections, this did not extend to Aboriginal art. Two collectors, McMichael and Tweddle, owned a selection of Japanese prints, with Tweddle's including artists Toyokuni and Kuniyoshi from the Edo period.<sup>88</sup> While the limited presence of non-Western art raises questions about market accessibility, the marginalisation further confirms the conventional tastes of Melbourne's collectors.

The artistic mediums most preferred amongst all the collectors were oil and watercolour paintings. Besides this preference, less than half the collectors also owned drawings, etchings, mezzotints, and aquatints. The European etchings were predominately reproductions of art by well-known artists, including James McNeill Whistler.<sup>89</sup> The

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<sup>83</sup> Colquhoun, "Elliott's Collection."

<sup>84</sup> Colquhoun, "Geo. Swinburne's Collection."

<sup>85</sup> Fogarty, "America's money for England's past," in "Edward Cecil Guinness," 65–67.

<sup>86</sup> "Van Eyck Madonna," *The Argus*, March 14, 1923, 19. The painting is now considered to be an imitation of van Eyck. See Carl Willis, "The National Gallery of Victoria's *Virgin and Child*, by a follower of Jan van Eyck: a continuing reassessment," *Art Journal* 52, (2013): [https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/journal\\_edition/edition-52/](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/journal_edition/edition-52/).

<sup>87</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 126.

<sup>88</sup> Colquhoun, "Tweddle's Collection."

<sup>89</sup> The collectors who owned etchings were McBeath, Swinburne, Heffernan, McMichael, Rowell, Harper Bell and Ewing. See Colquhoun, "McBeath's Collection"; Colquhoun, "Geo. Swinburne's Collection"; Alexander Colquhoun, "Dr. Heffernan's Collection"; Colquhoun, "McMichael's Collection"; Alexander Colquhoun,

Australian etchings were not reproductions, but were instead an alternative artistic medium used by artists such as Lionel and Norman Lindsay, John Shirlow and Henri Van Raalte. While the overwhelming presence of paintings may reflect Colquhoun's selection of collectors, the preference may also suggest that Melbourne's major art collectors predominately acquired paintings.

Indeed, only a few collectors also owned decorative arts. Colquhoun included descriptions of these objects at the end of a collector's profile, as supplementary to the paintings. Two collectors, A.O. Barratt and Ewing, owned ceramic-ware, including vases and bowls. Five collectors, Ewing, Elliott, McMichael, Tweddle and Wettenhall, owned approximately one sculpture in bronze, relief or wax apiece. Rowell was the only collector who owned a furniture collection, which consisted of Queen Anne and Georgian furniture.<sup>90</sup> With less than half of the collectors including decorative arts in their collections, Colquhoun's series provides little insight into the breadth of collecting activities being undertaken beyond the painting medium.<sup>91</sup>

Colquhoun's detailed description of the works of art also provides the opportunity to assess the size of each collection. His descriptions indicate that the collections consisted of around 17 to 80 works. Merson Cooper owned the smallest collection, with approximately 17 paintings. As Colquhoun characterises the series as profiling only the leading collectors of the day, Merson Cooper's collection presents the possibility that interwar collections were significantly smaller than the hundreds of works found in surviving collector-philanthropist collections.<sup>92</sup>

However, there are discrepancies between Colquhoun's descriptions and the actual size of the larger collections. Colquhoun listed 80 works of art in A.O. Barratt and McMichael's collections, which thus positions these as the largest of the series. However, in Harper Bell's collection, Colquhoun stated that the collection consists of 150 paintings, yet only outlined

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"Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. G.S. Rowell's Collection," *The Age*, September 27, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (q); Colquhoun, "Harper Bell's Collection"; Colquhoun, "Ewing's Collection."

<sup>90</sup> Colquhoun, "Mr. G.S. Rowell's Collection."

<sup>91</sup> For collecting activities in the antiques and decorative arts in Melbourne during the early twentieth century, see Terry Ingram, *A question of polish: the antique market in Australia* (Sydney: Collins, 1979).

<sup>92</sup> See Inglis and Poynter, "Desirable things"; *Munificence: the story of the Howard Hinton Collection*; D.J. Mulvaney and J.H. Calaby, "Connoisseur," in *So much that is new; The Elliott collection*; Poynter and Thomas, *Miegunyah*; Neville et al., *Sir William Dixson*; Chanin, *Book life: the life and times of David Scott Mitchell*; and, Inglis, "The Gift of John Connell."

50.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, 50 works are described in Tweddle's collection, yet eight years later, Tweddle auctioned 208 works of art.<sup>94</sup> While it is possible that Tweddle was a very active buyer following the published profile, Colquhoun did observe that Tweddle's collection, 'covers all the available wall space, and overflows into the storeroom at [Tweddle's] Auburn home'.<sup>95</sup> Colquhoun's profiles may therefore be highlights of the collections rather than detailed surveys. In the instance of the larger collections, the collectors most likely owned more art than Colquhoun's profiles indicate.

However, with collections varying between 17 to 200 works of art, the leading collectors still do not compare in size to the thousands of items acquired by the few surviving collections from this period.<sup>96</sup> Colquhoun's series instead presents the possibility that while more people were acquiring art, they were doing so in smaller quantities. Indeed, Johnson's research on the institutional loan exhibitions also indicates that a broader cross-section of the community was collecting.<sup>97</sup> While a more substantial portion of the public were patronising Australian artists, Colquhoun's series demonstrates that they were doing so on a comparatively more modest scale than is currently known.

While there are evidently some discrepancies in the sizes of the collections profiled, the collectors rarely voiced concerns with Colquhoun's descriptions. Only one correction was published over the course of the series; Ewing's portrait by Longstaff was listed as by William McInnes, with Colquhoun publishing the correction in the following profile.<sup>98</sup> As there were no further corrections or letters published, the collectors were most likely content with Colquhoun's presentation of their collections.

Most of the collectors acknowledge a general appreciation for art as the motivation behind their collecting activities. Ewing was the only collector to state the intended aim of his acquisitions. Ewing lists two reasons: to 'help the Australian artist in the only practical way at [my] disposal', and to 'form a group of paintings which would endure as a demonstration

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<sup>93</sup> Colquhoun, "Tweddle's Collection."

<sup>94</sup> "Tweddle Pictures: a notable collection," *The Age*, October 26, 1937, 4.

<sup>95</sup> Colquhoun, "Tweddle's Collection."

<sup>96</sup> See Inglis and Poynter, "Desirable things"; *Munificence: the story of the Howard Hinton Collection*; D.J. Mulvaney and J.H. Calaby, "Connoisseur," in *So much that is new; The Elliott collection*; Poynter and Thomas, *Miegunyah*; Neville et al., *Sir William Dixson*; Chanin, *Book life: the life and times of David Scott Mitchell*; and, Inglis, "The Gift of John Connell."

<sup>97</sup> Johnson compares the 1897 and 1918 loan exhibitions held at the AGNSW. Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 22–23.

<sup>98</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: The H.J. Green Collection," *The Age*, March 15, 1930, 5. See Appendix 8 (d).

of the varying phases and individualities of a period in the art of the country that [I] hold dear'.<sup>99</sup> Ewing's first motivation addresses his collecting practice, while the second can be interpreted as articulating the conceptual overlay of his collection.<sup>100</sup>

Ewing's description of collecting as a charitable undertaking was also identified by Johnson in her study of Sydney collectors.<sup>101</sup> Johnson concludes that one such collector, Dr. James Robertson, acquired works of art from a perceived duty to devote part of his income to the arts.<sup>102</sup> Yet, art market studies from this period suggest that collectors were motivated by the financial potential of art as an investment.<sup>103</sup> As none of Colquhoun's collectors publicly acknowledge their art or collecting motivations in financial terms, the series may instead indicate that the Melbourne collecting scene was not asset driven.

Ewing's identification of a conceptual overlay for his collection reflects the thematic focus of May's expertise in the art of Walter Withers. However, neither Colquhoun nor the remaining 16 collectors identified any further overarching concepts within their collections. Johnson similarly did not identify themes within the Sydney collections beyond the general Australian content. Yet, Walter Durost's contemporary definition of collecting highlights the presence of a conceptual 'whole' as defining a collection.<sup>104</sup> For Durost, the value of an acquired item is based on its contribution to the thematic whole.<sup>105</sup> According to Durost's definition, the absence of conceptual undertakings in Colquhoun's series positions only Ewing and May as definitive collectors. Since the majority of collectors examined were businessmen, the absence of thematic collections may confirm that the broader public was indeed viewing art as an economic as well as an aesthetic resource.

Only two of the collections from Colquhoun's series have survived today. Similar to overseas studies, philanthropy ensured the survival of both Ewing and Elliott's collections. In 1938, Ewing gifted half of his painting collection to the University of Melbourne, founding the University's first art gallery, the Ewing Gallery. In 1958, Elliott gifted his collection to the city of Mildura, also founding the city's first art gallery, the Mildura Arts Centre.<sup>106</sup> Although

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<sup>99</sup> Colquhoun, "Ewing's Collection."

<sup>100</sup> Ewing's conceptual overlay of his collection is critically addressed in the following two chapters.

<sup>101</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 136.

<sup>102</sup> Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system*, 136.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas, "Purveyor of taste," 101; Huda, *Pedigree and Panache*, 50.

<sup>104</sup> Walter Durost, *Children's collecting activity related to social factors* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932), 10.

<sup>105</sup> Durost, *Children's collecting activity*, 10.

<sup>106</sup> See *The Elliott collection*.

Ewing's collection was divided, his remaining works of art have since been donated to several institutions around Melbourne.<sup>107</sup> Ethel Swinburne and Tweddle also gave several works of art to public institutions around Victoria. Ethel Swinburne donated two paintings to the NGV in 1941,<sup>108</sup> and Tweddle gave several paintings to the AGB, the BAG and Wesley College between 1937 and 1938.<sup>109</sup> With only four of the 18 collectors gifting all or parts of their collections to the public, Colquhoun's series suggests that art philanthropy was a less common choice for Melbourne's collectors.

The other 14 collections from Colquhoun's series have since been dispersed. Tweddle sold his 208 works of art at auction in 1937 to raise funds for his charity, the Tweddle Hospital for Babies and School of Mothercraft.<sup>110</sup> A.O. Barrett also auctioned his entire collection, selling the 67 paintings in 1938.<sup>111</sup> Harper Bell auctioned 49 paintings in 1937, with the remainder sold after his death in 1947.<sup>112</sup> Merson Cooper and Robert Green's collections were sold after their deaths in 1948 and 1953 respectively.<sup>113</sup> With no evidence of auctions for the collections of Rowell, McBeath, Heffernan, McMichael and Wettenhall, their collections most likely partially or fully remain with their direct descendants. Oswald Syme's collection stayed in the family until recently, when several works were sold through Sotheby's Australia<sup>114</sup> and Deutscher and Hackett.<sup>115</sup> As the final four collectors, Atkinson, May, Graham and Ferguson, had no direct relatives at their deaths, or organised bequests, their collections were also most likely dispersed. Colquhoun's series suggests that the collector's

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<sup>107</sup> See *Ewing gift*, 51–53.

<sup>108</sup> The two paintings are *Dorothea*, 1840s by William Etty, and *George, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Townshend*, c.1801, by Mather Brown. See "NGV Collection and Ideas," National Gallery of Victoria, accessed July 15, 2016, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/>.

<sup>109</sup> "Critic Looks at Bendigo Gallery – Much Good Art," *The Argus*, December 17, 1949, 11; Frederick McCubbin, *Landscape, spring*, 1912, oil on canvas, 40 x 74.5cm, Wesley College. See National Gallery of Australia, "McCubbin: Last Impressionist 1907–1917," accessed August 15, 2016, <https://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/MCCUBBIN/Default.cfm?IRN=189042&BioArtistIRN=15672&mystartrow=49&realstartrow=49&MNUID=3&ViewID=2>; Clara Southern, *A cool corner*, c.1918, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 61.4cm, "Collection," AGB, accessed August 27, 2016, <https://artgalleryofballarat.com.au/collection/>.

<sup>110</sup> Gardener and Lang auctioned Tweddle's remaining 208 works of art on the October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1937 in Collins House, Melbourne. "Tweddle Pictures: A Notable Collection," *The Age*, October 26, 1937, 4. Today, the charity remains located in Footscray. See Tweddle – Child and Health Service, accessed June 20, 2016, <https://www.tweddle.org.au>.

<sup>111</sup> Joshua N. McClelland, "Australian Art," *The Argus*, August 9, 1938, 4.

<sup>112</sup> "Australian Art Collection," *The Argus*, April 2, 1938, 35.

<sup>113</sup> "Sales by Auction," *The Argus*, October 13, 1948, 11; Green's collection was auctioned alongside Keith Murdoch's art collection. "Advertising," *The Argus*, August 29, 1953, 2.

<sup>114</sup> The Syme family sold one painting from their collection, *Evening, Venice*, 1908 by Arthur Streeton, in 2011. See *Important Australian art: including property from the estate of the late Dr. Jan Altmann: auction in Melbourne, Tuesday, 26 November 2013, 6.30 pm* (Armada: Sotheby's Australia, 2011).

<sup>115</sup> The Syme family also sold other paintings from their collection, such as *Swings, 1932* and *Wet afternoon*, 1929 by Ethel Spowers, in 2011. See *Important Australian and international works of art: Deutscher and Hackett fine art auction, Melbourne, 30 November 2011* (South Yarra: Deutscher and Hackett, 2011).

death precipitated the dispersal of collections. According to the average age of Colquhoun's collectors, interwar collections were therefore most likely dispersed during the 1940s and 1950s. The use of auctions by the other collectors from the series presents the possibility that further material on Colquhoun's collectors and others can be gleaned from auction house records.

Colquhoun's series was positively received by the Melbourne public. Yet the public also expressed surprise at the existence of such collections, and Colquhoun's series was described as a 'revelation' for the public.<sup>116</sup> The perception that these collections were hidden from public knowledge and access led to the loan exhibition held at the conclusion of the series.<sup>117</sup> This exhibition revealed that once known, Melbourne's private collections were valued by the public of the day.

### **Loan Exhibition of Melbourne's collectors**

At the conclusion of Colquhoun's series, an exhibition of art from the collections was held in the Melbourne Town Hall.<sup>118</sup> The display opened in November 1930 as a charity event for the Lord Mayor's Hospital appeal.<sup>119</sup> A committee of artists, consisting of Colquhoun, John Longstaff and Arthur Streeton, selected 103 works of art from 30 collections. Only 15 of the collections were from Colquhoun's series. The additional 15 collectors included collections owned by five women, the art dealer R.D. Seddon, the Yorick Club and Max Meldrum.<sup>120</sup> The exclusion of these new 15 collection from Colquhoun's profile may suggest that they were smaller than the 18 originally profiled. However, with less than three works presented from each collector, it is difficult to ascertain the more specific sizes of the additional collections.

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<sup>116</sup> In a letter to the editor, Alex Isaacson noted that: 'the knowledge that such fine collections exist will come as a revelation to many people'. Alex Isaacson, "Private Art Galleries," *The Age*, February 15, 1930, 7; Another letter to the editor by Ernest Fysh also observed that: 'The visits of your zealous art critic to the private galleries of Melbourne came as a revelation to those of us who have been content to pay an occasional jaunt to the less eclectic shades of the National Gallery'. Ernest Fysh, "Art in our private galleries," *The Age*, March 8, 1930, 6.

<sup>117</sup> Fysh, "Art in our private galleries," 6.

<sup>118</sup> The exhibition was opened on November 3 and remained opened for approximately one month. "Loan Collection of Paintings," *The Age*, November 4, 1930, 9.

<sup>119</sup> Entry fees were charged, and a catalogue sold to raise funds for the Hospital. Harold Herbert, "The Loan Collection of Paintings," *The Australasian*, November 15, 1930, 17.

<sup>120</sup> The women collectors were Mrs Love-Linay, Mrs Percy Russell, Mrs Salier, Mrs T.W. Rowe and Miss V. Oldfield. *Loan exhibition of pictures*, 9–10.

More of Melbourne's collectors offered art for the display than those who exhibited, with a note in the catalogue that:

many others [had] kindly offered contributions, and it is a matter of regret to the Committee that owing to lack of space, and to other reasons, not all of these generous offers could be availed of.<sup>121</sup>

Artist Harold Herbert reviewed the exhibition and observed that the selections represented 'merely 25 to 30 collections', thus implying that the public was more actively involved in art collecting than either the series or the exhibition suggest.<sup>122</sup>

While the newspaper series featured collections with an Australian focus and there was public interest in 'restrict[ing] ... [the exhibition to] works [of] Australian artists only, or chiefly',<sup>123</sup> the content of the exhibition was instead European. Colquhoun defended the decision and stated that such art was more commonly 'shut away ... in foreign galleries, where to view them one must be prepared for Continental travel'.<sup>124</sup> While Colquhoun had used the newspaper series to educate readers on Australian art and artists, the exhibition instead instructed viewers on the nature of European art.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I demonstrated, in line with Belk's parallel growth model, that the Australian public increasingly acquired Australian art over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. Through my detailed description and analysis of Colquhoun's series, I was able to confirm conclusions drawn from art market studies and artist biographies to consolidate Belk's parallel growth model. Although Colquhoun profiled only 18 collectors, the series confirmed the post-Federation increase in collecting, the support of local artists over European art and an awareness of the investment value of Australian art. The conservative content of the collections indicated that many of Ewing's peers favoured practising, established artists who were producing landscape paintings in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century styles. Yet, the particulars of the complete collections also revealed that collectors continued to acquire European art, albeit in smaller quantities. Additionally, the

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<sup>121</sup> "Foreword," *Loan exhibition of pictures*.

<sup>122</sup> Herbert, "The Loan Collection of Paintings." Interestingly, Arthur Streeton also reviewed the exhibition and found the lighting 'indifferent' and restricted public engagement with the art. Arthur Streeton, "Private Art Collections: The Loan Exhibition, indifferent lighting," *The Argus*, November 4, 1930, 5.

<sup>123</sup> Fysh, "Art in our private galleries."

<sup>124</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Loan Art Collections," *The Age*, November 1, 1930, 4.

overviews of each collection also demonstrated the comparatively modest scale of interwar collections than is currently known. The dispersal of almost all of Colquhoun's collections by the mid-twentieth century further highlights the difficulties that continue to shadow research in this field today. The role of philanthropy in the survival of the remaining two collections demonstrates the continued importance of collector-philanthropists to collecting studies in Australia.

As one of the few surviving collections from the first half of the twentieth century, Ewing's Collection is an essential addition to studies in this field. Through Ewing and his family's philanthropic activities, an exceptional range of corresponding archival material has also survived, enabling a comprehensive examination of Ewing's collecting activities. This foundation positions the study of Ewing and his collection as a unique opportunity to examine a pivotal growth period in the collecting and patronage of Australian artists.

## Chapter Two: Dr. S.A. Ewing and his collections

In the previous chapter, I corroborated research from fields relating to collecting studies to confirm that the Melbourne public became increasingly involved in art collecting during the first half of the twentieth century. Through Colquhoun's series, I demonstrated that collecting tastes amongst Ewing's peers were remarkably similar; the collectors favoured local, established, practising artists who produced landscape paintings in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century styles. Within these overarching trends, however, the collector's choice of artists and selection of works of art ensured each collection remained simultaneously unique. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the collecting activities of Dr. S.A. Ewing and the resulting distinctive grouping of art and artists in his collection. I will examine the chronological construction of Ewing's collection, beginning with his first acquisition in 1908 and concluding with the last in 1940. Through this examination, I will identify and analyse the theme of Ewing's collection.

Jean Baudrillard proposes that variations exist between collections because, 'what you really collect is always yourself'.<sup>1</sup> In principle, an examination of a collector would therefore provide greater comprehension of their collection, and vice versa, as each mirror the other. This concept is corroborated by T.A. Birrell, who, in the context of book collectors, makes the assessment that:

A private library is part of its owner's biography: the known facts of his life may help in the understanding of his choice of books. But the converse may also be true: his choice of books may add to the understanding of the known facts of his life ...<sup>2</sup>

For Birrell, the interplay of identity provides the possibility that when combined, the collector's biography and the objects collected can reveal insights into both the collector and the collection itself.

Birrell's schema can be extended further through Mieke Bal's interpretation of collecting as a form of narrative. Collecting for Bal is a 'subjectively focalised sequence of events [that are] presented and communicated' through each acquisition.<sup>3</sup> As collectors place value on an

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Baudrillard, translated by James Benedict, *The System of Objects* (London; New York: Verso, 1996), 91.

<sup>2</sup> T.A. Birrell, "Reading as pastime: the place of light literature in some gentleman's libraries of the 17<sup>th</sup> century," in *Property of a Gentleman: The formation, Organisation and Dispersal of the Private Library 1620 – 1920*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1991), 116, 118.

<sup>3</sup> Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. John Elsner (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 100.

object according to its relationship to the collection as a whole, each addition contributes and develops the whole. By viewing collecting as a chronology, the formation of the whole as a thematic creation can be concurrently analysed, while also providing an additional avenue to examine the collector.

In this chapter, I will use Bal's interpretation of collecting through the framework of narratology to hypothesise the theme of Ewing's collection. Working from Birrell and Baudrillard's notions of reciprocity, I will integrate Ewing's biography with a chronological delineation of his collecting career. The emphasis that Baudrillard places on identity will direct biographical analysis and correlations with acquisitions through psychology, as applied in current collecting studies. The value Ewing accorded to individual objects upon acquisition will be conceived, through the process of accumulation, as the formation and development of a conceptual whole. The shaping of value will direct the hypothesis of Ewing's collection theme, with the chronology illustrating the shifts and modulation of the theme over the course of his 32-year collecting career.

### **The Accidental Collector**

Ewing acquired his first work of art midway through his life, in 1908. Although Ewing had previously shown little interest in art,<sup>4</sup> in August that year he attended Hans Heysen's first Melbourne exhibition.<sup>5</sup> Heysen's paintings were received enthusiastically by the Melbourne public,<sup>6</sup> with the financial success of the exhibition a turning point in the artist's career.<sup>7</sup>

Ewing's out of character attendance at the exhibition most likely resulted from a men's social club he had joined the previous year, the Melbourne Savage Club.<sup>8</sup> The Club had a large artist membership that expanded Ewing's usual social milieu from the medical sciences to the Melbourne arts community.<sup>9</sup> These artists, including Alfred Vincent, may have encouraged

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<sup>4</sup> Ewing occasionally visited the NGV in his youth. On one such visit, he took a particular liking to John Longstaff's recently completed work, *Motherless*, which Ewing described as a 'most beautiful and feeling picture'. *Motherless* is now in the NGA. Ewing's diary, Saturday March 20, 1886, Ewing Papers, 2591/1(c), MS 11675, SLV.

<sup>5</sup> The exhibition was held at the Guild Hall on Swanston Street in Melbourne between August 11–22, 1908. See Hans Heysen, *Exhibition of painting*, Adelaide: H. Heysen, 1908.

<sup>6</sup> Then Prime Minister Alfred Deakin opened the exhibition on August 8, 1908. "Mr. Heysen's Exhibition: Opened by Mr Deakin," *The Argus*, August 10, 1908, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Andrews, *Hans Heysen* (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2008), 46.

<sup>8</sup> Ewing joined the Savage Club on July 31, 1907. Minutes of Committee Meeting, July 31, 1907, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900 - 1941.

<sup>9</sup> For artist members of the Club, see Graeme Williams, "A social-cultural reading: the Melbourne Savage Club through its collections," (Masters Thesis, Deakin University, 2013), Appendix 1, 162–166.

Ewing and other members of the Club, to visit Heysen's exhibition. Heysen himself was associated with the Club and may have personally promoted his show to Club members.<sup>10</sup> By the time of the exhibition opening, Ewing was indeed acquainted with the artist, with Ewing attending a private viewing of the show.<sup>11</sup> Here, Heysen provided additional details on each work of art displayed, such as the locations portrayed.<sup>12</sup> The exhibition featured 136 paintings from Heysen's recent trip to Europe, with landscapes encompassing scenery from Italy to Scotland.<sup>13</sup> For those who attended the private viewing, the additional information Heysen provided may have also encouraged acquisitions amongst potential buyers.

This was indeed the case for Ewing, who recorded the locations of two paintings that he later purchased; an oil landscape from Scotland, *Meadowsweet*, 1901 (fig. 5), and a watercolour cityscape from Italy, *Venetian Wellhead*, c.1902 (fig. 6).<sup>14</sup> Ewing noted both locations in his personal catalogue from the exhibition.<sup>15</sup> For *Venetian Wellhead*, Ewing wrote that the scene was located 'Behind Santa Maria della Salute'.<sup>16</sup> Heysen's description positioned the scene as adjacent to the seventeenth-century Roman Catholic Church dedicated to health and the Virgin Mary, on the island of Dorsoduro in Venice. Heysen had painted the scene during an eight-week sketching tour of the city in September 1902.<sup>17</sup> In the middle ground, Heysen portrays a dirty, uneven pavement and stained red marble wellhead enclosed by gothic architecture in the background as a nostalgic reminder of the past glory of Venice.<sup>18</sup>

For the second painting, *Meadowsweet*, Ewing wrote in his catalogue that the work was painted, 'On Wemyss property Fife – Wemyss close to a spring leading to opening causes its [indistinguishable] for'.<sup>19</sup> Wemyss is on the coast of Fife, across the bay from Edinburgh in Scotland. Heysen had been painting in a cottage nearby Wemyss Castle in the summers of 1901 and 1902.<sup>20</sup> *Meadowsweet* portrays a field of flowers as a decorative pattern of green

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<sup>10</sup> Heysen remained associated with the Club several years later in 1914, when he gave one of his paintings, *Boys Bathing*, to the Club to auction in order to raise funds for war efforts. Minutes of Committee Meeting, November 26, 1914, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club.

<sup>11</sup> Private views were held on Saturday August 8 and Monday August 10 before opening to the public. "Mr. Hans Heysen's Exhibition of Paintings," *The Age*, August 8, 1908, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Hans Heysen, Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV.

<sup>13</sup> The exhibition featured paintings from Italy, France, Scotland, the Netherlands and New Zealand, in addition to Australian scenery. See Heysen, *Exhibition of painting*, 1908.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Heysen, Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV. I have used the original title of *Venetian Wellhead* as listed by Hans Heysen in the 1908 exhibition. See Heysen, *Exhibition of painting*, 1908.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Heysen, Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV.

<sup>16</sup> Hans Heysen, Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV.

<sup>17</sup> Andrews, *Hans Heysen*, 30, 36, 42.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 11 for analysis of the location of *Venetian Wellhead*.

<sup>19</sup> Hans Heysen, Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV.

<sup>20</sup> Andrews, *Hans Heysen*, 30–32.

and yellow. The decorative element, limited spatial exploration and relatively modest pricing of 6 pounds may indicate that *Meadowsweet* was a study for the foreground of a larger work, such as *Meadowsweet, Scotland*, 1902 (fig.7).<sup>21</sup>

Ewing made no further notes in his catalogue. While the gothic architecture and romantic mood of *Venetian Wellhead* may have attracted a buyer, the same viewer would have had difficulty eliciting similar aesthetic reactions to the decorative exploration of *Meadowsweet*. Ewing's emphasis on the locations indicate that the concept of place drew him to acquire the two works while the notes suggest that Ewing purchased the paintings after he became aware of the locations depicted.

Nevertheless, Ewing's emphasis on location raises the question; what importance did Ewing place on both Santa Maria della Salute in Venice and Wemyss in Scotland? For Santa Maria, Ewing may have been drawn to the painting through an awareness of the church's importance to artistic circles of the time.<sup>22</sup> Heysen would have been well aware of such details and may have even referenced Santa Maria as a selling point for the painting. By 1938, Ewing described the painting as an illustration of the Santa Maria, indicating that he had since become aware of its importance.<sup>23</sup> However, Ewing's limited knowledge of the arts in 1908 makes such associations unlikely.

Ewing's biography instead provides a more likely explanation. Ewing was raised in a Roman Catholic family, with Ewing and his siblings attending the local Catholic schools.<sup>24</sup> After the death of his parents, Ewing became devout, attending Mass at the nearby St Patrick's Cathedral and St Francis in the city three to five times a week.<sup>25</sup> Catholicism was central to his family identity and was a particular comfort during his early years as an orphan.<sup>26</sup> Although Ewing was no longer practising in 1908, as a former Catholic and now medical practitioner, the depiction of a church that venerates both the Virgin Mary and health would have certainly held some appeal.

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<sup>21</sup> Andrews, *Hans Heysen*, 34.

<sup>22</sup> See Philip Hooks, "Venetian Genre," in *Popular 19<sup>th</sup> Century Painting: A Dictionary of European Genre Paintings* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors Club, 1986), 594–602.

<sup>23</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938), 15.

<sup>24</sup> See Ewing's 1885 diary, Ewing papers, 2591/1(b), SLV.

<sup>25</sup> Ewing's 1885 diary, Ewing papers, 2591/1(b), SLV.

<sup>26</sup> Ewing converted a favourite aunt to Catholicism on her deathbed. See Ewing's 1886 diary, Ewing Papers, 2591/1(c), SLV.

Wemyss also carried significance for Ewing from his youth. Ewing's first trip overseas was to Scotland, where he studied at the universities in Edinburgh and Glasgow.<sup>27</sup> Here, Ewing obtained his first certification as a medical practitioner.<sup>28</sup> As a keen sailor, Ewing may have even visited the small village of Wemyss while in Edinburgh, or nearby locations when sailing the Firth of Forth.<sup>29</sup> The lack of hesitancy in his handwriting also indicates that Ewing was indeed familiar with both the names and the spelling of Wemyss and Fife.<sup>30</sup> Such familiarity would have developed from his residence in Edinburgh.

Ewing's first acquisitions reflect his past connections to his family, the Catholic church, Scotland and the medical profession. Through the past, his current identity was reflected, as an orphan, a lapsed Catholic and a doctor. As Baudrillard has noted in general, Ewing, like many collectors, was first drawn to collecting as an exploration of his identity.<sup>31</sup>

Attendance at Heysen's exhibition and the personal associations Ewing drew from the art suggest that his entry into collecting was unplanned. In collecting studies, chance directs the beginning of most collections.<sup>32</sup> Russell Belk argues that collectors first acquire objects in an incidental or accidental manner, such as the result of a gift.<sup>33</sup> For Ewing, an opportune attendance and a chance encounter with signifiers of his past enticed him to begin collecting art.

## The Hunt

Ewing acquired his third work of art one year later, around July 1909. The work was a pen and ink drawing by Norman Lindsay, *Untitled [Dr. Death]*, c.1909 (fig. 8). As with Ewing's first purchases, the acquisition resulted from a chance encounter. This time, however, the setting was more intimate, namely the magazine *The Lone Hand*. While reading the July edition, Ewing was drawn to one of Lindsay's illustrations of a short play by Arthur H.

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<sup>27</sup> Ewing studied in Scotland between 1889 and 1900. *The Ewing Collection* (Parkville: Ewing Gallery, Melbourne University Union, 1981), 9.

<sup>28</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ewing was a keen sailor and regularly went fishing in Port Phillip Bay during the early 1880s. See Ewing's 1884, 1885 and 1886 diaries. Ewing Papers, 2591/1(a), 2591/1(b), 2591/1(c), SLV.

<sup>30</sup> Hans Heysen, Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV.

<sup>31</sup> Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 91.

<sup>32</sup> See Russell Belk, "Collectors and collecting," in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 318; and Susan Pearce, "The urge to collect," in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 158.

<sup>33</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 318.

Adams, “Doctor Death: A Morality in One Act”.<sup>34</sup> The play explores a dying artist’s encounter with the personification of Death, who is disguised as a doctor. The illustration that entranced Ewing was the moment the doctor’s true identity is revealed. The scene from the play reads:

The Man: Here, who the Devil are you? How do I know you are a doctor? What’s your confounded name?

The Doctor: (*moving behind the man’s chair, and for the first time facing the audience, who now perceive that his has a powerful, clean-shaven face, with indomitable, cold-grey eyes and a complexion sallow almost to an unearthly green*):  
Death!<sup>35</sup>

Lindsay’s illustration appears on the adjacent page (fig. 9), with a condensed version of the text positioned below the image:

The Man: Who the Devil are you?... What’s your name?

The Doctor: Death!<sup>36</sup>

After seeing the illustration, Ewing sought to purchase the original directly from Lindsay. Although Lindsay was not a member of the Savage Club, Ewing most likely utilised the Club’s artist networks to acquire the drawing. While chance still directed the art in Ewing’s orbit, *Dr. Death* became Ewing’s first purposeful pursuit of art.

Ewing’s desire to own *Dr. Death* after a perfunctory encounter is a significant moment in his maturation as a collector. Frederick Baekeland examines the concept of immediate appeal when collecting in his article “Psychological aspects of collecting”.<sup>37</sup> Baekeland argues that the ability to distinguish whether an object holds appeal is a common attribute of a collector.<sup>38</sup> The collector then determines whether or not they wish to possess the object. Ewing’s implementation of this process reveals that by his third acquisition, he had begun to exhibit the practices of a collector.

Ewing’s acquisition of art as an exploration of self can also be identified in *Dr. Death*. While Heysen’s paintings appeared concerned with the construction of self, Lindsay’s work appears instead to reflect the deterioration. Here, a doctor is portrayed as the personification of the

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<sup>34</sup> “Arthur H. Adams, “Doctor Death: A Morality in One Act,” in *The Lone Hand*, July 1, 1909 (Sydney: W. McLeod, 1907): 257–268.

<sup>35</sup> Adams, “Doctor Death,” 264.

<sup>36</sup> Adams, “Doctor Death,” 265.

<sup>37</sup> Frederick Baekeland, “Psychological aspects of art collecting,” in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 205–219.

<sup>38</sup> Baekeland, “Psychological aspects of art collecting,” 211.

force that destroys life. It is a curious image to which a medical professional should be attracted. Such an attraction may indicate that Ewing was then experiencing professional disillusionment. Two years earlier in 1907, Ewing had experienced considerable public scrutiny of his surgical skills as a result of the death of a ten-year-old patient mid-way through a standard operation.<sup>39</sup> The case was the first and only patient in Ewing's medical career to generate significant press coverage.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the professional impact, as a new father, Ewing may have been affected further by the death of the child under his care in an otherwise routine procedure.<sup>41</sup> Lindsay's painting may have therefore served as a moral reminder that a doctor could indeed bring death. Although perhaps esoteric, as a doctor, Ewing would have inherently drawn biographical associations between himself and depictions of medical professionals. Nevertheless, Ewing's acquisition of an image of a doctor demonstrates that as a collector, he remained conceptually focused on explorations of his own identity.

### **The Creeping Collection**

By 1910, Ewing was no longer relying on chance encounters and was instead actively searching for potential acquisitions. Between 1910 and 1912 Ewing attended nine exhibitions, buying between one and five painting per visit.<sup>42</sup> The exhibition setting provided Ewing with the opportunity to view several works of art by the one artist, with art spanning a variety of subjects, mediums and prices. The increased acquisitions paralleled a substantial increase in spending as Ewing became more financially invested in collecting. While Ewing's first purchases in 1908 cost 15 guineas combined, in 1912 alone Ewing spent 300 guineas on eleven works of art, reflecting an incredible 2000 per cent increase. Indeed, between 1910 and 1912, Ewing spent almost 500 guineas to create a collection of 18 paintings by ten different Australian artists.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The child had died 45 minutes into a standard operation, with Ewing the lead surgeon. "Little Boy's Death," *Weekly Times*, January 19, 1907, 22.

<sup>40</sup> The coroner report found Ewing was found not at fault, concluding that the child died from an unanticipated reaction to anaesthetic. "Little Boy's Death," 1907.

<sup>41</sup> By 1907, Ewing and his wife Ethel had two children, Geoffrey born 1904 and Margaret born 1906. They would have a third child, George, in 1911. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number: 21606, 1904; 14223, 1906; 7090, 1911, accessed September 17, 2014, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>42</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendices 1 and 2.

The increased spending and art acquired indicates that by 1912 Ewing was exerting significant effort to expand his collection. Russell Belk compares a collector's drive to add to their collection with an obsessive-compulsive activity similar to addiction.<sup>44</sup> Belk argues that the altered state of consciousness created by the search and acquisition process produces mood swings resembling euphoria.<sup>45</sup> The depression that follows re-activates the searching process, as the collector seeks their next acquisition. Each new purchase therefore constitutes a fix. Ewing's increased exhibition attendance indicates that he was actively placing himself in situations that facilitated the extension of his collection. The presence of another identifiable attribute of collecting by 1912 confirms Ewing's maturation as a collector.

By 1910, Ewing's choice of art no longer appears linked to his personal or professional identity. Having now purchased a variety of landscape and interior subjects by practising Australian artists, Ewing's selections appear instead connected by a broad theme of contemporary Australian art. Belk proposes that the presence of overarching themes in a collection is a form of specialisation.<sup>46</sup> Belk explains that the expansion of material culture during the Industrial Revolution created the need for Western collectors to narrow potential acquisition options.<sup>47</sup> Belk concludes that limitations make collecting a manageable undertaking. By 1912, Ewing's preference for recently produced art by Australian artists may indicate the beginnings of a theme.

According to collecting studies texts, collectors are positioned as identifying thematic links within collections after several items have been acquired. Susan Pearce describes the process of awareness as themes 'creeping up on people unawares until a moment of realisation'.<sup>48</sup> Belk agrees, concluding that collections themes are only 'rendered apparent on reflection'.<sup>49</sup> However, Pearce and Belk's explanation of collection themes positions collectors as passive receptors. Mieke Bal's interpretation of collecting instead highlights the intentionality of a collector's thematic identification. Bal argues that after acquiring a number of items, a collector becomes 'a self-conscious narrator [who] begins to "tell" [the collection's] story, bringing about a semiotics for a narrative of identity, history and situation'.<sup>50</sup> The reflection

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<sup>44</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 319.

<sup>45</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 319.

<sup>46</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 323.

<sup>47</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 323.

<sup>48</sup> Susan Pearce, "The urge to collect," in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 158.

<sup>49</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 318.

<sup>50</sup> Bal, "Telling Objects," 101.

becomes a retrospective ‘narrative manipulation of the sequence of events’, where a ‘series of haphazard purchases ... suddenly become a meaningful sequence’.<sup>51</sup> Bal concludes that for the collector, the beginning of a collection is not a moment of realisation but is instead a re-conceptualisation of meaning.

Ewing’s re-conceptualisation of his acquisitions most likely occurred around 1912. In September 1912, Ewing sent a letter to the Savage Club committee requesting that annual funds be set aside to ‘purchase representative works of art of Australian artists’.<sup>52</sup> While the Club ‘appreciate[d] and welcome[d] the [idea in] spirit’, Ewing’s scheme was refused, as there was already a committee acquiring art for the Club.<sup>53</sup> Although Ewing did not join the committee, the incident demonstrates that Ewing was actively encouraging the patronage of Australian artists and, through ‘representative’, that he was also interested in the notion of acquiring art that reflected an artist’s oeuvre.

### **Collecting the present**

Ewing’s request to the Savage Club also suggests that he had been pondering the idea of a permanent, institution-based collection that featured Australian art. Ewing’s desire for such a collection may have been a reaction against the NGV’s favouring of European and British artists at the time.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the idea of an Australian art collection also reflected heightened nationalism of the day. Since 1910, Australia had been experiencing a flurry of nation-based undertakings.<sup>55</sup> Symbols of nationhood were accentuated, and the creation of a local identity was fostered. A written history of Australia was organised, resulting in Ernest Scott’s publication, *A Short History of Australia*.<sup>56</sup> The nationalistic wave was felt amongst

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<sup>51</sup> Bal, “Telling Objects,” 101.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Dr. S.A. Ewing, Minutes of Committee Meeting, September 25, 1912, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Dr. S.A. Ewing, Melbourne Savage Club.

<sup>54</sup> For NGV acquisitions see John Poynter, *Mr Felton’s bequests* (Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2003).

<sup>55</sup> In 1910, Andrew Fisher led a socialist Federal Government under Labor, and instigated a number of national undertakings. The location of nation’s capital was decided upon, and the building of Canberra began. The Australian Navy was created, and compulsory military training was introduced for men aged 18 to 21 years old for a period of six weeks. The Commonwealth Bank was established alongside a national currency which was launched in 1910, the Australian pound. A railway from the Nullabor to Western Australia was put in, linking up the country. The Federal Government also took over control of the Northern Territory from state control by South Australia. Alison Bashford, and Stuart Macintyre, *The Cambridge History of Australia* (Cambridge: Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 35–36.

<sup>56</sup> In 1911, President George Henderson of the Australasian Association for the Advancements of Science delivered an address at the first gathering of historians to promote an Australian history text. Henderson proclaimed that ‘the time has arrived when the history of the Commonwealth should be undertaken in a systematic and scientific way, and institutions through which that might be done are the universities. The historical work done there at present is preparatory, and should find fulfilment in research’. In 1912, the

Melbourne's art scene, where, in 1912, artists banded together to form the Australian Art Association.<sup>57</sup> The movement away from the colonial past and towards a national identity can be seen in Ewing's determination to support artists Australia-wide as a distinct category.

The idea of patronising local artists and acquiring representative examples of their work is notably evident in Ewing's own collecting activities of the time. By 1912, Ewing owned only Australian art and ensured that his acquisitions supported only local, practising artists. His choice of artists at the time were stylistically encompassing. During 1910 Ewing favoured Heidelberg School artists and preferred landscape subjects, as evident in *White gums*, 1907 by Walter Withers (fig. 10), Penleigh Boyd's *The Backwater*, 1910 (fig. 11), and Frederick McCubbin's *A Frosty Morning*, 1910 (fig. 12). During 1911, Ewing acquired Rupert Bunny's Whistler-inspired *The New Step*, c.1908–11 (fig. 13), and several of Blamire Young's decorative watercolour landscape, including *Myrtles and pines, Tasmania*, c.1912 (fig. 14). While Ewing's selections were stylistically varied, all the works of art were purchased within several years of production. His support of practising artists accordingly resulted in a contemporary Australian art collection.

Baekeland argues that the preference for contemporary art by collectors throughout history stems from a desire to support practising artists.<sup>58</sup> Ewing later stated that one of his collecting objectives was, 'to help the Australian artist in the only practical way at his disposal'.<sup>59</sup> For Ewing, collecting contemporary Australian art was therefore also a nationalistic act of benevolence.

Ewing's focus on the concept of Australian art also extended his previous exploration of self to a type of national, collective analysis. However, the nationalistic element can also be explained through Ewing's own past. Baekeland suggests that some people, particularly men, are drawn to collecting as a result of an intergenerational transfer.<sup>60</sup> Baekeland explains that

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University of Melbourne sought a Professor to write such a history. Ernst Scott was hired and in 1915, Scott published the text, *A Short History of Australia*. Stuart MacIntyre, *A history for a nation: Ernest Scott and the making of Australian history* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 55.

<sup>57</sup> The organisation was also a revolt against the Victorian Artist's Society. Edward Officer led the formation. The Australian Art Association organised exhibitions for Australian artists and was based in Melbourne. Juliet Peers, "Officer, Edward Cairns (1871–1921)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/officer-edward-cairns-7884>.

<sup>58</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 217.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Dr. Ewing's Collection," *The Age*, March 1, 1930, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 215.

male collectors are likely to have fathers who collected in a different but related field.<sup>61</sup> Notably, Ewing's father Thomas was considered a bibliophile with an interest in Australiana.<sup>62</sup> Beyond the immediate reflections of individual and national identity in Ewing's collection, his decision to collect and focus on Australian art can also be interpreted through his past.

Ewing's concept of nationalism is evident through the selections of artists he patronised at the time. Towards the end of 1912, Ewing added two works by the New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins to his collection, *Rosamund*, c. 1909–12 (fig.15) and *Dejeuner at the Hotel du Lion d'Or*, c.1908–1912 (fig.16). Although born in New Zealand, Hodgkins had been based in England and France for the previous ten years. While in Australia and New Zealand between 1912–13, she held exhibitions in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Wellington.<sup>63</sup> The two works Ewing chose portrayed women in interior scenes, one of Hodgkins's favoured subjects at the time.<sup>64</sup> The brushwork in *Rosamund* signals the linear explorations that Hodgkins would increasingly focus on, as evident in the later painting, *Dejeuner*. In *Dejeuner*, Hodgkins's technique of applying watercolour paint on wetted paper and rapid brushwork emphasises the linear movement in the background and contrasts with the stillness of the figure. Ewing's patronage of a New Zealand artist with little connection to Australia indicates that he conceived national boundaries through a colonial mindset.

Beyond the concept of a nation-based art collection, Ewing's request to the Savage Club in 1912 also proposed to select art according to a notion of 'representative' examples. Ewing's collecting activities of the time also reflect this idea, with 'representative' art conceived as an exemplary example of an artist's work, such as a particular style or subject matter. This concept is evident in purchases made in July 1912, at Heysen's second Melbourne exhibition. The show was Heysen's most financially successful exhibition thus far.<sup>65</sup> Ewing purchased three watercolour paintings, *La terre*, 1912 (fig. 17), *Gums in morning light*, c.1912 (fig. 18),

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<sup>61</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 215.

<sup>62</sup> When Thomas Ewing died in 1879, he owed 25 pounds in books debts. During his lifetime, Thomas was instrumental in the formation of the Fitzroy Public Library and acted as the librarian from 1877. Immediately before his death in 1879, Thomas sought the purchase of Australiana literature for the Library. Ewing's son George also became a collector in the related field of Chinese ceramics. Thomas A. Ewing, 19/676, Probate and Administration Files, VPRS 28/P0002/226, Public Records Office of Victoria. See Carole Woods, "Thomas Ewing and the Fitzroy Public Library," in *Fitzroy, Melbourne's first suburb* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1991), 55–60. See also *Ewing gift*.

<sup>63</sup> Alexa Johnston, *Frances Hodgkins: femme du monde* (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2009), 89–91.

<sup>64</sup> Johnston, *Frances Hodgkins*, 89–91.

<sup>65</sup> Andrews, *Hans Heysen*, 46.

and *Moonlight*, c.1904–8 (fig. 19).<sup>66</sup> The subject matter and quality of the selections were in stark contrast to the two paintings Ewing had purchased four years earlier. Ewing tripled his expenditure and instead of choosing art that reflected his past, Ewing chose art that mirrored Heysen's current practice. The three paintings featured Australian landscapes, and particularly, gum trees. Both *Gums in morning light* and *Moonlight* exemplified Heysen's renowned portrayal of gum trees as silent monoliths framing the landscape. The acquisitions indicate that by 1912 Ewing's collecting method also involved ascertaining whether a work of art could represent the chosen artist's oeuvre.

While Ewing's proposal to the Savage Club concerned the creation of a permanent, institution-based art collection, the concept of an Australian art collection is evident in Ewing's collecting activities of the time. With the choice of artist further limited to practising artists and art selections restricted to 'representative', Ewing had begun to define his theme. The emphasis Ewing gave to choosing art that reflected an artist's career presents the possibility that Ewing was seeking to map the present-day arts scene. His collecting theme could therefore be interpreted as chronicling contemporary Australian art.

### **Collecting a Theme**

With limitations on his collecting activities, Ewing's theme began to develop. Having defined a conceptual whole, new additions were thus valued according to the work's ability to extend and develop the collection. In the instance of the Heysen works Ewing purchased in 1912, the additions contributed to the overall collection while extending the range of Heysen's oeuvre already present in the collection. As Ewing's earlier acquisitions by Heysen did not reflect the artist's favoured subject matter or painting style, the three purchases also ensured the representative element was fulfilled. Ewing's purchase of three further works by Heysen can thus be interpreted as an act of necessity, enabling Ewing to fulfil his theme.

Over the following two years, between 1913 and 1915, Ewing continued to extend his theme by adding representative examples of practising Australian artists. In 1913, Ewing acquired

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<sup>66</sup> The 1981 catalogue, *The Ewing Collection*, noted that Ewing purchased *Moonlight* at Heysen's 1908 exhibition. However, Ewing did not record that he acquired the painting in 1908, as he did with other acquisitions from that exhibition. As there was another painting with the same name in the 1912 exhibition, I have instead positioned the purchase of this painting in 1912. See Ewing Papers, 2592/1(j), SLV; and *Exhibition of watercolors by Hans Heysen: Athenaeum Hall, July 9th to 20th, 1912* (Melbourne: E. Whitehead & Co., Printers, 1912).

three works of art by Max Meldrum, *La route de Petit Benefice*, 1910 (fig. 20), *Coucher de Soleil*, c.1910 (fig. 21), and *l'apres midi*. These three paintings were explorations of Meldrum's new tonalist style. Meldrum became a new artist for Ewing's collection, while the tonalist focus stylistically extended the art Ewing had previously acquired.

*Couche de Soleil* (fig. 21) explores the contrasting tonal relationship between light in the landscape and sky, when heightened by dusk. Although colour is a secondary concern in Meldrum's theories, in *Couche* the chromatic contrast between the dark trees of the fore- and middle-grounds frame and lead the eye to the rose-tinged sky of the background. The depiction of the field in the foreground and middle ground is reserved for a more comprehensive exploration of the varieties of darker tones experienced in the twilight landscape.

Meldrum had been developing his theories of tonalism over the preceding ten years while studying in Paris. He outlined these theories in a 1917 lecture titled, "The invariable truths of depictive art", and published the concepts in Colin Colahan's *Max Meldrum, his art and his views*, in 1917.<sup>67</sup> In Melbourne, Meldrum's theories divided an already conflicted arts community, with works in a tonalist style being mostly unpopular with the buying public. The exhibition in 1913 attracted a large audience yet was a financial failure.<sup>68</sup> Ewing's acquisition of *La route de Petit Benefice* for 85 guineas was the highest sale of the show.<sup>69</sup> Within Ewing's broader collection, Meldrum's works contrasted significantly with Hodgkins's two post-impressionist explorations purchased the previous year.<sup>70</sup> Ewing's support of Meldrum indicates that public taste and artistic divisions had little effect on acquisition choices.

However, Ewing did not acquire another work by Meldrum, nor did he purchase any examples from the 'Meldrumite' crowd. Even Ewing's son George later wondered why his father never bought any art by one of Meldrum's followers, Clarice Beckett.<sup>71</sup> After the onset

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<sup>67</sup> Joyce McGrath and Bernard Smith, "Meldrum, Duncan Max (1875–1955)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/meldrum-duncan-max-7553>. Ewing would have been familiar with Meldrum's theories of tonalism, as he owned a copy of Colahan's book. See Appendix 6 for Ewing's book collection.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Perry and John Perry, *Max Meldrum & associates: their art, lives and influences* (Castlemaine: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 1996), 25.

<sup>69</sup> Perry, *Max Meldrum*, 25.

<sup>70</sup> Chris McAuliffe and Juliette Peers, *The full majesty of nature: the collection of Dr. Samuel Arthur Ewing* (Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002), 7.

<sup>71</sup> Ethel Margaret Ewing Cutten, *Papers, 1920-1990*, Box 3.3, MS 12963, SLV.

of WWI, Ewing's acquisitions instead echoed the Heidelberg School focus of his earlier purchases. Again, Ewing sought to extend his collection by acquiring representative examples of practising Australian artists. In May 1914, Ewing acquired two paintings by Jesse Hilder, a landscape watercolourist who had been gaining in popularity in Sydney. Ewing purchased two paintings, *The Bridge*, c.1909–1914 (fig. 22) and *Children Playing*, c.1909–1914 (fig. 23), which featured Hilder's subtle exploration of colour. As the first Sydney-based artist Ewing patronised, the works by Hilder contributed to the broader nationalistic theme of Ewing's collection.

While Ewing continued to add new artists, he also chose art that would complement his previous acquisitions. In June 1914, Ewing added an oil painting by Arthur Streeton to his collection, *The domes of St Mark's*, 1908 (fig. 24). Streeton had recently returned from five years in Europe and painted the scene while in Venice in 1908.<sup>72</sup> Streeton painted a view from the courtyard of the Doge's Palace, positioned on the middle-right of the courtyard facing north towards St Mark's Basilica.<sup>73</sup> Streeton explores the effects of late-afternoon sunlight on the scene, as the shadows welcome the bustling crowds. As a Venetian cityscape, the image complemented the subject matter of Ewing's first acquisition, Heysen's *Venetian wellhead*.

As WWI began, Ewing curtailed his spending and limited his collecting activities. In 1915, he bought only one work of art for five guineas, the lowest purchase of his collecting career. The work was Heysen's pencil and crayon sketch, *Gum tree*, 1912 (fig. 25), acquired from the artist's 1915 Athenaeum exhibition.<sup>74</sup> Ewing had been an enthusiastic buyer at Heysen's previous two exhibitions; however, Ewing's support may have been muted by the war-time economy or anti-German sentiment surrounding Heysen at the time.<sup>75</sup> Ewing himself was actively involved with the patriotic efforts on the home-front and volunteered (with the rank of Major) at the Caulfield Military Hospital between 1916 and 1918.<sup>76</sup> If Ewing did feel uneasy about the artist, such feelings did not stop him from attending Heysen's exhibition opening.<sup>77</sup> The sketch Ewing selected was one of five for sale, which were the cheapest

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<sup>72</sup> See Robyn Sloggett, "Making 'The Domes of St Mark'," AICCM Bulletin, Vol 29, (2005): 47–59.

<sup>73</sup> Ewing would later request Streeton to conserve *The domes of St Mark*. In 1937, Streeton changed the frame, removed the varnish which he described as 'yellow London fog', and repainted several parts of the painting. Letters between Ewing and Arthur Streeton, Ewing Papers, 2591/6(b), SLV.

<sup>74</sup> *Catalogue of pictures by Hans Heysen: Melbourne Athenaeum, March 4th, 1915* (Melbourne: Melbourne Athenaeum, 1915).

<sup>75</sup> "Artist Hans Heysen suspected of treachery during World War I," *ABC*, March 5, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> *The Ewing collection*, 9.

<sup>77</sup> "Mr. Heysen's Pictures," *The Australasian*, March 6, 1915.

works in the exhibition.<sup>78</sup> The sketch provided insight into Heysen's painting process, complementing the gum tree monoliths present in the landscapes Ewing had purchased in 1912. Even with a limited budget, Ewing continued to seek acquisitions that would extend and complement the art he already owned.

### **Past artists in the present**

Mid-way through WWI, Ewing's limitations on the artists he supported began to change. While he had previously only patronised practising artists, during 1916 Ewing began acquiring art by recently deceased artists. In February 1916, Ewing bought *Rocks and Sea*, c.1911 (fig. 26) from E. Phillips Fox's memorial exhibition. Fox had died three months earlier, and his wife, artist Ethel Carrick Fox, organised the exhibition to sell the remainder of Fox's work.<sup>79</sup> Ewing's selection was still almost contemporarily produced, the seascape having been painted in 1911 in Normandy, France, and remained representative, in this instance of Fox's European period. The work demonstrates Fox's impressionistic exploration of the effects of light on the landscape through layering blocks of colour. While Ewing could no longer support Fox directly, by acquiring art from a memorial exhibition Ewing was able to continue supporting the artist's family.

Around January 1917 Ewing acquired another painting by a deceased artist, *Luxor*, 1911 by Alfred Vincent (fig. 27). Ewing had known Vincent through the Savage Club; the artist had been an active member since the 1900s and was responsible for the Club's artist-based membership.<sup>80</sup> Vincent had died in 1915 and his wife had died soon after, leaving their infant child orphaned.<sup>81</sup> In January 1917, Vincent's estate requested the Savage Club hold an exhibition to sell Vincent's remaining works of art to raise funds for the child.<sup>82</sup> Ewing most likely purchased *Luxor* at this exhibition.

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<sup>78</sup> *Catalogue of pictures by Hans Heysen*, 1915, 7.

<sup>79</sup> *Catalogue of pictures by the late E. Phillips Fox* (Melbourne: Upper Athenaeum Hall, 1916).

<sup>80</sup> Joseph Johnson, *Laughter and the love of friends: a centenary history of the Melbourne Savage Club 1894–1994 and a history of the Yorick Club 1868–1966* (Melbourne: Melbourne Savage Club, 1994), 68–69.

<sup>81</sup> Vincent committed suicide and his wife succumbed to illness six months later. "Death of Mr. Alf. Vincent," *The Daily Telegraph*, December 8, 1915, 5; "Death of Mrs. Alf. Vincent," *The Daily Telegraph*, May 15, 1916, 6.

<sup>82</sup> "The late Alf Vincent," January 25, 1917, Minutes of Committee Meeting, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club.

As Vincent was best known as a black and white artist, Ewing's choice of a coloured watercolour painting was evidently not representative of the artist's oeuvre.<sup>83</sup> While the charitable cause may have necessitated a purchase, the subject matter may have also drawn Ewing to the work. Vincent painted *Luxor* during a six-month trip in Egypt and Europe between 1911 and 1912.<sup>84</sup> The artist portrays an Orientalist scene glimpsed through the city-gate in the background with figures in Middle-Eastern attire accompanied by donkeys in the foreground. In the war-time context, Ewing may have been drawn to the Egyptian location because of public interest in the activities of the Australian light-horse brigades.<sup>85</sup> At this stage, Ewing also did not own any works of art depicting either the Middle East or Orientalist subjects. His decision to acquire a work that did not reflect the artist's main career may indicate that, at times, Ewing prioritised art that stylistically extended past acquisitions.

Ewing's decision to acquire art that was not an exemplary example of an artist's oeuvre is also evident in two additional paintings by Hilder, which Ewing purchased in early 1917. Hilder had died suddenly in April 1916, two months after Fox's memorial exhibition. The Sydney and Melbourne arts scenes responded with an outpouring of grief, which was heightened by the war-time atmosphere. Memorial loan exhibitions were organised in Sydney and Melbourne to celebrate Hilder's career. Ewing lent his two works by Hilder purchased in 1914 to the Sydney memorial exhibition, which was held between June and July of 1916.<sup>86</sup> By the time of the Melbourne memorial exhibition in March 1917, Ewing owned two further watercolours by Hilder, *Landscape sketch – top of the hill*, c.1909–1916 (fig. 28) and *The close of day*, c.1909–1916 (fig.29), possibly acquired from Adolf Albers, Hilder's agent in Sydney. While neither painting was an exceptional example of Hilder's art, the subject matter extended the representation of the artist's work within Ewing's collection.

At the Melbourne memorial exhibition in March 1917, Ewing first viewed another painting by Hilder, *The Island Trader*, c.1909–1916 (fig.30), then owned by Albers.<sup>87</sup> In early 1918

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<sup>83</sup> In Vincent's obituary he was described as a black and white artist. "Death of Mr. Alf. Vincent," 1915. See also Vane Lindesay, "Vincent, Alfred James (1874–1915)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/vincent-alfred-james-8923>.

<sup>84</sup> "Personal," *Daily Herald*, March 11, 1912, 4.

<sup>85</sup> See Robyn Van-Dyk, "The charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade at Beersheba," Australian War Memorial, accessed July 1, 2017, <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/the-charge-of-the-4th-light-horse-brigade-at-beersheba>.

<sup>86</sup> *Catalogue of J.J. Hilder memorial exhibition held at the Society of Artists' rooms, Sydney, July 14th, 1916* (Sydney: Arthur McQuitty & Co, 1916).

<sup>87</sup> *The Hilder memorial exhibition catalogue* (Melbourne: Fine Art Society, 1917).

Ewing purchased this work from Albers for the record sum of 262.10 guineas.<sup>88</sup> The sale made headlines in Sydney's *Sun* newspaper as the most expensive watercolour sold by an Australian artist.<sup>89</sup> During Hilder's life such watercolours did not sell for over 50 guineas,<sup>90</sup> so Ewing's price two years after Hilder's death demonstrated an increase of around 500 per cent. In the context of Ewing's modest-war time spending, the Hilder watercolour was a considerable expense. Even pre-war purchases were small in comparison; Ewing's most expensive work had been Meldrum's *La route* for 85 guineas. Ewing however, prized the painting, later describing the work as a 'masterpiece' and echoing Bertram Stevens's description of Hilder as kindred to Keats.<sup>91</sup> Late at night Ewing would even gaze at the painting when he had difficulty sleeping.<sup>92</sup> By 1938 Ewing valued the painting at 500 pounds, at least 200 pounds more than any other work in his collection.<sup>93</sup> The acquisition was undoubtedly a triumph for Ewing and signaled not only his financial commitment to collecting but demonstrated the extension of his collecting activities into the commercial art market.

### Shaping the Past

Following the purchase of Hilder's *The Island Trader*, Ewing expanded his collecting activities into the secondary art market. In May 1919, Ewing acquired John Ford Paterson's *Evening at Croydon*, c.1890–1900 (fig. 31). Paterson's painting was the earliest-produced work of Ewing's collection, and, as an exploration of the effects of the sunset on a bush landscape, the only Heidelberg School work Ewing had purchased thus far. The painting features Paterson's preferred landscape format, with the composition divided into horizontal thirds that contrast with the vertical linearity of the middle ground trees, characteristic sheep and favoured mauve highlights.<sup>94</sup> Stylistically, Paterson's brushwork and subtle palette expressed the aesthetic of an earlier artistic generation compared to works Ewing already

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<sup>88</sup> "Australian art: High Price Obtained: £1000 for Longstaff Picture, Hilder water color £262/10/," *The Sun*, June 2, 1918, 5.

<sup>89</sup> "High Price Obtained," 1918.

<sup>90</sup> Brett Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1966), 14.

<sup>91</sup> Ewing described Hilder as akin to Keats in a dedication to Dr. William Mayo on the title page of Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens, ed. *The Art of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918), now held in Shaw Research Library, NGV; Bertram Stevens, "Jesse Jewhurst Hilder," in *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, ed. by Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918), 5; Ewing wrote 'masterpiece' next to *The Island Trader* in the *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 1938, held in the Ewing Papers, 2591/8(a), SLV.

<sup>92</sup> Ewing Gallery [pamphlet], Cutten, Box 3.5, SLV.

<sup>93</sup> Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>94</sup> See Lyn Johnson, *John Ford Paterson: a family tradition* (Langwarrin: McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, 2010).

owned. The acquisition thus suggests that Ewing was extending his theme beyond contemporary, as he began to collect art from the previous generation.

While Ewing's earlier purchases had directly supported the artist or their families, Ewing's acquisition of Paterson's work instead supported a fellow collector, Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer. Ewing bought the painting from Spencer's famous 1919 auction. Spencer sold over 200 works of art for £4,500 in two sales held in May and December of 1919.<sup>95</sup> Spencer had been prompted to sell his collection after hearing of the successful sale of Leonard Dodds's collection in April 1919.<sup>96</sup> Ewing would have known Spencer, having studied under the Professor during the 1880s.<sup>97</sup> They would have been re-acquainted in more recent years through the Savage Club, where Spencer gave occasional lectures, and through the University, where Ewing also gave periodic lectures.<sup>98</sup> Spencer's unparalleled reputation as a collector may have further connected the two. By acquiring the painting from Spencer, Ewing was no longer collecting as a charitable undertaking as he instead began engaging with the collecting activities of his peers.

All the art Ewing had purchased previously had no prior provenance, with Ewing the first and only owner. Acquiring a painting with a provenance history significantly shifted his collecting boundaries. Baekeland and Belk agree that provenance is significant for collectors.<sup>99</sup> Baekeland explains that objects from famous collections hold unusually high market value because buyers are drawn to the object's association with prominent collectors.<sup>100</sup> Baekeland proposes that value derives from the collector's reputation, as buyers aspire to identify with the prestige.<sup>101</sup> In 1919, Spencer was one of the most famous collectors in Australia.<sup>102</sup> His auctions were remarkably successful, with works by Hilder and Streeton reaching record highs.<sup>103</sup> Beside the market growth of the time, as explored in the previous

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<sup>95</sup> D.J. Mulvaney and J.H. Calaby, *So much that is new: Baldwin Spencer, 1860-1929, a biography* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985), 347.

<sup>96</sup> D.J. Mulvaney, *Baldwin Spencer*, 353. Leonard Dodds sold the furniture and paintings from his house in Darling Point, Sydney, on March 20, 1919. The *Sun* reported that the 'surprise packet of the Leonard Dodds's household goods auctioning was the prices which the pictures brought'. "Great sale of Leonard Dodds," *Daily Telegraph*, March 26, 1918, 3.

<sup>97</sup> "University Science Club," *The Age*, July 6, 1888, 5.

<sup>98</sup> One lecture Spencer gave was on May 24, 1913. See February 27, 1907, Minutes of Committee Meeting, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club. For Ewing's lecture, see "Fred Clutsum," *Punch*, April 6, 1905, 28.

<sup>99</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 210; Belk, "Collectors and Collecting," 321.

<sup>100</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 210.

<sup>101</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 210.

<sup>102</sup> Heather Johnson, *The Sydney art patronage system, 1890-1940* (Grays Point: Bungoona Technologies, 1997), 143.

<sup>103</sup> See Shireen Huda, "Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer: Portrait of a collector," *Art Monthly Australia* 219 (May

chapter, part of the success of Spencer's auction may have also resulted from buyers wishing to be associated with Spencer's fame. Later in life, Ewing continued to highlight the painting's connection with Spencer.<sup>104</sup> Through Paterson's work, Ewing was aligning his own collecting legacy with the most prestigious collector of the era.

### Completing the Collection

Following WWI, Ewing became increasingly concerned with his legacy as a collector. He recounted to a close friend later in life that his collection was created over the course of 'twelve years ... from 1908 to 1920'.<sup>105</sup> Following the end of the war, Ewing's enthusiasm for collecting did not match the quantities nor the stylistic variety of pre-war acquisitions. Instead, Ewing began to lessen his collecting activities, as he prepared for the completion of his collection. The need for completion may have begun earlier, as some collectors become fixated on completing a theme soon after defining it.<sup>106</sup> Belk argues that the desire to complete a collection is one of the defining features distinguishing collecting from other hoarding tendencies.<sup>107</sup> Between 1918 and 1920, Ewing added one new artist, Bernard Hall, and concluded the collection with additional paintings by Norman Lindsay and Arthur Streeton.

In October 1919 Ewing attended Bernard Hall's exhibition in the Athenaeum Hall and acquired two paintings, *Dining room interior*, c.1910–19 (fig. 31) and *Suicide*, c.1916 (fig. 32). As with previous acquisitions, Ewing chose paintings that featured Hall's best-known subjects and painting style; the artist was renowned for nude works and still life interiors painted in the academic style shaped by his Munich training.<sup>108</sup> Hall's characteristic use of highlights is evident in *Dining room interior*. Hall uses silver-white paint on opposing sides of the composition to connect the viewer's eye, thus creating the illusion of space in the centre of the room. The artist's emphasis on colour as a centrepiece of a painting is also evident in *Suicide*, where sumptuous bright yellow fabric surrounds the contorted naked body of a dying woman lying on a daybed. Ewing's chosen acquisitions exemplified Hall's oeuvre,

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2009): 37–40.

<sup>104</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 15.

<sup>105</sup> James MacDonald was Ewing's close friend and wrote the biography on Ewing for the 1938 catalogue. See *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 7–8. See Ewing Papers, 2591/7(e), SLV.

<sup>106</sup> Baekeland, "Psychological aspects," 211; Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 334; Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel, "No two alike: play and aesthetics in collecting," in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 324.

<sup>107</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 324.

<sup>108</sup> See Gwen Rankin, *L. Bernard Hall: the man the art world forgot* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2013).

indicating that even while completing the collection, Ewing remained directed by the concept of ‘representative’ art.

By 1919, Hall had been working on the concept of the nude study in *Suicide* for almost 20 years. He had completed a similar composition and subject in 1898, *The artist’s model* (fig. 33). Hall finally completed *Suicide* in 1916; however, public reception was negative. One viewer wrote that, ‘in spite of its truly brilliant execution ... [*Suicide*] might have well been left unhung, as it is both a ghastly and indelicate composition’.<sup>109</sup> The realistic portrayal of the woman’s figure concerned other viewers, particularly the placement and depiction of the woman’s rib.<sup>110</sup> The work was unsold, and Hall repainted the offending rib.<sup>111</sup> In May 1918, Lionel Lindsay conceded that the subject matter of the painting ‘met with some conventional opposition’, but congratulated Hall’s ‘undulant grace of line, poise and pattern’.<sup>112</sup> Lindsay concluded that the work was ‘founded upon logic and truth and would find easy comprehension in Europe’.<sup>113</sup>

By the time *Suicide* was exhibited in 1919, the public had become more sympathetic to Lindsay’s review of the painting. The press was in awe of Hall’s stylistic execution, echoing Lindsay’s judgement that the painting was ‘worthy of the Paris salon’.<sup>114</sup> Viewers remained at odds with the subject matter, one writer lamenting that ‘it is a gruesome subject magnificently treated’.<sup>115</sup> Ewing was also conflicted by the subject matter. Although he later bought the work, Ewing requested Hall change the name to *Study in Line and Colour*.<sup>116</sup> Removing the word suicide from the title emphasised the formalistic qualities of the work and re-configured the painting as an academic study.<sup>117</sup> Hall, however, was opposed to the change. The two instead agreed upon *Despair*.<sup>118</sup> The new name removed the controversy of

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<sup>109</sup> “A Woman’s Melbourne Letter,” *Western Mail*, June 2, 1916, 38.

<sup>110</sup> The critique reads: ‘There was always an argumentative group in front of Bernard Hall’s “The Suicide”, criticising the anatomy and shuddering at the realism. The chief worry seems to be as to what the lump is which sticks up like a small mountain on the white flesh of the body as it lies flung back on the couch with hands clenched and flung above the head. It is a weird and haunting picture’. “Melbourne Social Notes,” *Bendigonian*, May 25, 1916, 10.

<sup>111</sup> “Melbourne Social Notes,” 1916; “Art exhibition,” *The Age*, June 13, 1919, 8.

<sup>112</sup> Lionel Lindsay, “L. Bernard Hall,” *Art in Australia*, first series, No. 5 (1918), Sydney: Sydney Ure Smith: 22.

<sup>113</sup> Lindsay, “L. Bernard Hall,” 23.

<sup>114</sup> “Melbourne Week by Week,” *The Forbes Advocate*, July 4, 1919, 1.

<sup>115</sup> “Art exhibition,” *The Age*, June 13, 1919, 8.

<sup>116</sup> Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection.”

<sup>117</sup> Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection.”

<sup>118</sup> Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection.”

suicide and instead positioned the woman as depicted in a moment of anguish. The note clasped in her right hand contributes to a newly-emphasised romantic atmosphere.

Ewing's acquisition of *Suicide* despite his distaste for the subject is somewhat unusual. Additionally, the cost of the painting at £300 was the most expensive purchase of Ewing's collecting career.<sup>119</sup> The esteem in which Hall was held by Melbourne art's scene may have swayed Ewing's decision. By 1919, Hall had been director of the NGV and Head of the Art School for almost 30 years.<sup>120</sup> Lindsay proclaimed that Hall was among 'the strongest influences in the art of this generation, and his advent to Australia was a rare piece of good fortune in our art history'.<sup>121</sup> As an educator of most of the local, practising artists of the period, Hall provided Ewing's collection with a thematic link between the artists previously acquired.

However, according to Ewing's children, Ewing acquired Hall's painting out of concern that the work would leave Victoria. At the 1919 exhibition, Ewing heard that the AGNSW intended to purchase *Suicide*.<sup>122</sup> Ewing justified the price and subject matter of the acquisition to his family as an intervention to secure the state's cultural heritage, arguing that the painting was important to the Victorian public.<sup>123</sup> Ewing's reasoning demonstrates that he had no longer conceived of himself solely as a buyer of art, but instead pictured himself as a custodian of art.

The final four works Ewing acquired before completing his collection in 1920 accentuated the representative element of his collection while complementing and expanding the art already owned. One of Ewing's earliest purchases had been a black and white drawing by Norman Lindsay, *Untitled [Dr. Death]*, c.1909 (fig. 8). Lindsay however, had since gained greater acclaim for watercolour explorations of female nudes. Therefore, Ewing's overall collection theme necessitated the purchase of another of Lindsay's paintings, and one which clearly represented the artist's oeuvre. In October 1918 Ewing attended Lindsay's exhibition in the Fine Art Society's Gallery and acquired *Ballet*, 1918 (fig. 35). Lindsay portrays a group of female figures partially clothed, in the act of dancing, with a nude nymph-like

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<sup>119</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 6.

<sup>120</sup> Hall continued as the director until the 1930s. See Rankin, *L. Bernard Hall*. See also *Von Guerard to Wheeler, the first teachers at the National Gallery School, 1870–1939: the Victorian College of the Arts Gallery, 6-21 April 1978* (Melbourne: Victorian College of the Arts, 1978).

<sup>121</sup> Lindsay, "L. Bernard Hall," 23.

<sup>122</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 6.

<sup>123</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 6.

creature positioned at the centre of the work. The pale, subtle palette and delicate brushwork and watercolour washes creates an ethereal atmosphere. The subject matter and manner of depiction enabled *Ballet* to fulfil the representative element lacking in Ewing's first purchase of Lindsay's work.

In 1920, Ewing acquired three additional paintings by Arthur Streeton from the artist's exhibition at the Victorian Art Society's Galleries. Streeton had just returned from England where he had spent the majority of the war years, with this exhibition his first in Australia since the beginning of WWI. Ewing bought three works: an oil landscape scene from WWI, *Amiens Cathedral*, c.1918 and two watercolour paintings on silk fans, *The Tintoretto Fan*, c.1920 (fig. 36) and *Sleeping Beauty*, c.1920 (fig. 37). As with Lindsay's *Ballet*, these selections also extended the representation of Streeton's oeuvre within Ewing's collection.

*Amiens Cathedral* was the first painting Ewing purchased that made reference to an historical event. Streeton painted the work during his time as an official war artist, having been attached to the 2nd Division Australian Imperial Force in the Somme region of France between May and August 1918.<sup>124</sup> The landscape scene portrayed the Roman Catholic cathedral in Amiens near the River Somme. Ewing would have been familiar with the battle of Somme, a series of significant conflicts during 1916 on the Western Front.<sup>125</sup> One year after buying the painting, Ewing would even visit the ruins in the Somme region.<sup>126</sup> While the painting extended the representation of Streeton's oeuvre, Ewing's later trip indicates that he was also personally engaged by the war-time subject.

The two silk fans Ewing also purchased provided a new medium while extending both the number of Streeton's works and the Venetian subject matter already present in Ewing's collection. The central scene in *The Tintoretto Fan* references the three figures from Jacopo Tintoretto's oil painting, *The Discovery of Arianna*, 1576, oil on canvas (fig. 38), from the Sala dell'Anticollégio. The lower half of *Sleeping Beauty* provides an outline of the Venetian skyline, including the Santa Maria Della Salute in the bottom left of the fan. The medium and

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<sup>124</sup> "Lieutenant Arthur Ernst Streeton," Australian War Memorial, accessed June 2, 2017, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10676828>.

<sup>125</sup> See "Somme Offensive," Australian War Memorial, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E158/>.

<sup>126</sup> Ewing visited the battlefields from Calais to Somme, before travelling down to Paris. See Margaret Ethel Ewing Cutten, *Collection relating to the Ewing and Cutten families*, accession no: H2013.130/1-382; H2013.137/1-287; H2013.138/1-16; H2014.1096, SLV, 1878 and 1990.

decorative patterning pays homage to Charles Conder's aesthetic silk fans from the 1890s.<sup>127</sup> With the acquisition of Streeton's three works, Ewing completed his Australian painting collection.

### **The Collecting Addiction**

In 1921 Ewing travelled overseas for the first time since 1902. His first stop was Canada, where he visited family, and then to America, where he toured medical facilities around the country.<sup>128</sup> Ewing was particularly enamoured with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and the Mayo brothers, Drs Charles and William Mayo, whom Ewing later described as the 'best doctors in the world'.<sup>129</sup> Ewing remained in contact with the Mayo brothers, who, like Ewing, had a passion for art.<sup>130</sup> After America, Ewing continued to London, re-joining his family.<sup>131</sup> From London, Ewing took a trip to France, to visit the ruins of the Somme battlefields on the Western Front.<sup>132</sup> He continued to Paris and Spain before returning to Australia in 1922.<sup>133</sup>

While in London Ewing started a new collection in decorative arts. By this stage, Ewing had been an active collector for almost 14 years. Belk postulates that the importance of the self when collecting results in collections becoming an extension of the collector.<sup>134</sup> The conclusion of a collection can therefore precipitate a diminished sense of self. Belk posits that some collectors overcome this loss by beginning a new collection.<sup>135</sup> As Ewing had recently completed his Australian painting collection, the start of a new collection enabled Ewing to maintain and develop his collecting identity.

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<sup>127</sup> See Ann Galbally, *Charles Conder: the last bohemian* (Carlton South: Miegunyah Press, 2002).

<sup>128</sup> Touring American medical facilities was a common practice for Australian doctors of the time. While Scottish institutions had led medical education during the nineteenth century, by the 1920s, western practitioners looked towards America. See Helen Clapesattle, *The Doctors Mayo* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1941), 639–640.

<sup>129</sup> Ewing Papers, 2591/8(a), SLV.

<sup>130</sup> Ewing sent the Mayo brothers a copy of Streeton's, *The Arthur Streeton Catalogue* (Melbourne: A. Streeton, 1935), and a copy of the *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery* in 1938. Dr. William J. Mayo to Dr. S.A. Ewing, Ewing Papers, 2591/7 (c), SLV.

<sup>131</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 9; Cutten, *Collection relating to the Ewing and Cutten families*, SLV.

<sup>132</sup> Ewing visited the battlefields between Calais and Paris in 1921. See photos in Cutten, *Collection relating to the Ewing and Cutten families*, Accession no: H2013.130/130, box 7, SLV, 1921.

<sup>133</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>134</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 319, 324.

<sup>135</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 319, 324.

Ewing already owned several decorative works back in Australia. Like his painting collection, Ewing acquired his first decorative work by chance, with the gift of a claret jug, c.1870 (fig. 39) from a grateful patient.<sup>136</sup> In 1913 he extended the range of objects by adding a marble sculpture by Charles Web Gilbert, *Nautilus*, c.1906 (fig. 40), which depicted a nude Venus rising from a nautilus shell.<sup>137</sup> As a close friend of the artist, Ewing would regularly drop by Gilbert's studio for a chat.<sup>138</sup> Ewing's choice of decorative arts and objects as his new collection focus enabled him to naturally extend a minor part of his broader collection.

As with the early stages of his collecting career, Ewing's first acquisitions in the decorative arts lacked a thematic link beyond the general corresponding medium. Using a London dealer, Ewing acquired an assortment of seventeenth and eighteenth-century English works, including a patch box (fig. 41) and porcelain sculptures (figs. 42–43).<sup>139</sup> From the same dealer, he then acquired two jugs (fig. 44–45) and a bowl (fig. 46), produced during the thirteenth-century in Iran, and a Tibetan book cover from the eighteenth century (fig. 47).<sup>140</sup> While in Paris, Ewing continued collecting decorative arts, focusing on porcelain plates and bowls from the town of Sèvres (fig. 48–49).<sup>141</sup> Ewing's new collection was geographically, chronologically and artistically diverse. As with the beginnings of his painting collection, the purchases resulted from chance encounters rather than directed hunting. Indeed, Ewing never developed the desire to hunt for specific works to add to this collection. Without the searching process Ewing may have found this collection less fulfilling. Upon his return to Australia in 1922, Ewing did not add any further items to this decorative arts collection.

### Collecting to Give

Although Ewing had acknowledged the completion of his painting collection in 1920,<sup>142</sup> on return to Australia in 1922, Ewing added one more painting to the collection, a portrait of himself by John Longstaff (fig. 50). Ewing had previously commissioned portraits of his

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<sup>136</sup> *Ewing gift*, 10.

<sup>137</sup> The receipt from *Nautilus* indicates that Ewing also purchased a bronze head by Gilbert, and an etching by Brangwyn. Ewing Papers, 2592/3(a), SLV.

<sup>138</sup> *Ewing gift*, 8.

<sup>139</sup> Ewing's daughter Margaret donated Ewing's 29 decorative artworks to the NGV in 1982. See *Ewing gift*, 8–13 and Appendix 4.

<sup>140</sup> Ewing believed the book cover was from Mongolia. The NGV has since established that the work is Tibetan Buddhist, as evident from the Tibetan Sanskrit. See *Ewing gift*, 5 and *Cover for a Buddhist manuscript*, NGV Collection, accessed October 15, 2014, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/53231/>.

<sup>141</sup> See receipts in the *Ewing gift file*, NGV and *Ewing gift*, 12–13.

<sup>142</sup> Ewing noted to close friend, James MacDonald, in 1938 that the collection was created over twelve years, from 1908 to 1920. See *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 7–8. See Ewing Papers, 2591/7(e), SLV.

children,<sup>143</sup> however, he did not consider these paintings as part of his own collection and instead perceived these works as belonging to his children.<sup>144</sup> Longstaff's painting was therefore the first and only portrait in Ewing's collection.

Longstaff had recently returned from London where he had spent the last decade as a popular portrait painter for the British aristocracy.<sup>145</sup> Ewing had long been an admirer of Longstaff, having held the artist's figurative works in high regard during the 1880s.<sup>146</sup> Longstaff's studio was nearby Ewing's Collins Street practice, and both would have been familiar with one another as members of the Savage Club.<sup>147</sup> Following the commission, Longstaff became a close friend of the Ewing family.<sup>148</sup>

Longstaff depicts Ewing in a half-length portrait with the artist's characteristic dark palette. Ewing is dressed in evening attire with a dark, full-length coat. Longstaff uses the white highlights of a scarf draped around Ewing's neck to draw the viewer's gaze from the face downwards to rest on the left hand, accentuating the slender hands of a surgeon. Through the portrait, Ewing physically inserted himself amongst the art and artists of his collection.

After the portrait commission, Ewing did not return to collecting but instead began giving selections of his collection to the public. In 1922, Ewing gave Streepton's *Amiens Cathedral* to Melbourne Grammar School, where his two sons attended. The gift commemorated his eldest son Geoffrey's graduation.<sup>149</sup> In 1925, Ewing commissioned Charles Web Gilbert to create a portrait bust in bronze of a recently deceased young poet, John Hugh Sutton (fig. 51).<sup>150</sup> Sutton had been a friend of Ewing's youngest son George, with both attending Melbourne

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<sup>143</sup> These portraits were *Margaret Ewing*, c.1917 by Marion Jones and *George Ewing*, c.1917 by Florence Rodway.

<sup>144</sup> Although the 1938 catalogue indicates that Ewing lent a later portrait of his daughter Margaret by William McInnes, c.1926, and the Rodway portrait to the University, Margaret instead later advised that she and her brother George had loaned the portraits. Margaret then transferred both portraits and the Jones portrait still in her possession, to the SLV. See *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 15, 32; See also Margaret Cutten to Mrs. Frances Lindsay, August 23, 1990, Ewing and Cutten Files, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

<sup>145</sup> Leigh Astbury, "Longstaff, Sir John Campbell (1861–1941)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/longstaff-sir-john-campbell-7230>.

<sup>146</sup> In 1886, Ewing admired Longstaff's recently completed painting, *Motherless*. The painting depicts three women, presumably daughters, mourning the death of their mother. Ewing's mother had recently died, perhaps drawing Ewing to the painting. Ewing's diary, Saturday March 20, 1886, Ewing Papers, 2591/1(c), SLV.

<sup>147</sup> Johnson, *Melbourne Savage Club*, 272; *Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Longstaff attended Ewing's daughter Margaret's wedding in 1930. "Weddings: Cutten–Ewing," *The Australasian*, September 13, 1930, 10.

<sup>149</sup> A. Evans to Dr. S.A. Ewing, February 22, 1923, Ewing Paper, 2501/7(c), SLV.

<sup>150</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 32.

Grammar School. Ewing gifted the bronze to the School and George kept the cast (fig. 52).<sup>151</sup> Gilbert had been producing commemorative work since WWI, with the bust one of his final works before his death in 1925.<sup>152</sup> Art philanthropy was the catalyst of Ewing's return to collecting; within a year of the Gilbert commission, Ewing returned to collecting in earnest.

### The Fear of Completion

In 1926, Ewing helped organise a scheme involving art collecting at the Savage Club, similar to the one he had previously suggested to the Club in 1912. This time Ewing coordinated a committee known as the Art Union, which was made up of fellow members and artists Harold Herbert and Charles Wheeler.<sup>153</sup> The Union worked on the basis of subscription, with funds donated by Savage Club members for the purpose of acquiring art for the Club. The success of the scheme may have resulted from the favourable economic climate of the 1920s. Furthermore, the Club had recently moved to larger premises in Bank Place, with the additional wall space perhaps assisting the Club's positive reception of the scheme.<sup>154</sup>

In May 1926, Ewing attended A.H. Fullwood's exhibition in the New Gallery as the Union buying representative. Here, he purchased a watercolour painting for the Club, *Chinese Gardens*.<sup>155</sup> While at the exhibition, Ewing acquired another painting for his own collection, an oil on panel work titled, *An English garden, Crowhurst*, c.1901–18 (fig. 53). Fullwood had returned to Australia following WWI, after having spent the previous 20 years in England.<sup>156</sup> The artist had been exploring impressionism while in England, particularly through loose brushwork.<sup>157</sup> Fullwood's treatment of the scene in *An English Garden* reflects this impressionist influence. The middle-ground flowers on the fence and house suggest an exploration of pointillism, while the layered blocks of colour provide spatial depth in the work. As with the beginnings of Ewing's collections, chance again directed this acquisition. Through his opportune attendance at Fullwood's exhibition, Ewing returned to collecting Australian paintings.

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<sup>151</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 32.

<sup>152</sup> G. Sturgeon, "Gilbert, Charles Marsh Web (Nash) (1867–1925)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gilbert-charles-marsh-web-nash-6377>.

<sup>153</sup> Minutes of Committee Meeting, September 25, 1907, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900–1941. See Appendix 12 for further details.

<sup>154</sup> Bank Place is the Savage Club's current location. See Williams, "Melbourne Savage Club," 82–87.

<sup>155</sup> Ewing Papers, 2592/3(a), SLV. The location of the *Chinese Gardens* is currently unknown. Author in conversation with Gavin Fry, curator of the Melbourne Savage Club art collection, 2016.

<sup>156</sup> Martin Terry, "Fullwood, Albert Henry (1863–1930)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fullwood-albert-henry-6259>.

<sup>157</sup> Terry, "Fullwood."

Fullwood's landscape was the first work Ewing had added to his collection since Longstaff's portrait in 1922, and the first extension since purchasing Streeton's three paintings in 1920. The new additions indicate that Ewing no longer conceived his painting collection as closed. Russell Belk argues that the desire for completion is simultaneously accompanied by a fear of that completion.<sup>158</sup> Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel propose, in their article "No two alike: play and aesthetics in collecting", that collectors find methods to fulfil their desire to complete a collection while avoiding this resolution altogether.<sup>159</sup> Danet and Katriel posit that some collectors overcome the dichotomy of the situation by acquiring art solely to improve their current collection. Collecting to improve ensures that collectors can never complete their collection.

Ewing's acquisition of Fullwood's landscape can be understood through the notion of improvement, as the refinement of the art and artists present in the collection. The painting added a new artist while extending the range of landscapes already present through the addition of a British subject. Fullwood's work both expanded and complemented the art Ewing already owned. As thematic improvement was a collecting method Ewing had previously utilised, the idea of improving the selection of Australian artists and their art in his collection became a natural extension of Ewing's past collecting habits.

### **Refining Representative History**

Over the remaining 20 years of his collecting career, Ewing negotiated the desire for and fear of the completion of his painting collection. As with past practices, Ewing continued to collect according to the notion of improvement, but this time, he was conceptually focused on refining his theme. Before WWI, Ewing's theme had focused on mapping diversity in the Australian art scene. Mid-way through the war years, Ewing had broadened his contemporary focus to include artworks from the previous generation, such as Paterson's *Evening at Croydon* (fig.31). During the 1920s and 1930s, Ewing continued to develop this element, as he acquired a selection of artists to chronologically build the historical narrative of his collection.

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<sup>158</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 324.

<sup>159</sup> Danet and Katriel, "No two alike," 229–231.

In 1926, shortly after purchasing Fullwood's work, Ewing visited an exhibition by David Davies in the Fine Art Society's Gallery. Ewing purchased two new paintings, *Evening, Templestowe*, c.1893–99 (fig. 54) and *Market at Dieppe*, c.1920 (fig. 55). Ewing chose two works which spanned the artist's oeuvre, as he had done with Bernard Hall. *Evening, Templestowe* illustrated Davies's early Heidelberg School period, which explored the subtleties of changing light in the landscape. The quick, loose and obvious brushwork of *Market at Dieppe* demonstrated Davies's most recent style.<sup>160</sup> Through these two additions, Ewing explored the development of an artist's career. Within Ewing's collection, Davies's works intensified the presence of the previous artistic generation.

When Ewing shifted his theme to include the past during WWI, Australian artists were also grappling with their past. In 1916, Frederick McCubbin published the first exploration of Australian art history as part of his biography, *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*.<sup>161</sup> McCubbin had been working on the book since 1914, and edited the final chapter, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art", from a lecture given at the NGV in August 1915 titled, "A plea for Australian art".<sup>162</sup> In this chapter, McCubbin delineates Australian art history as a linear progression consisting of four artists, Louis Buvelot, Walter Withers, David Davies and Arthur Streeton.<sup>163</sup> Ewing had been a subscriber to the book and had one of his landscapes by McCubbin, *A Frosty Morning* (fig. 12), reproduced in the book.<sup>164</sup> Ewing would have thus been familiar with McCubbin's version of Australian art history.

Since Ewing already owned works of art by Withers (fig. 10) and Streeton (figs. 24, 36–37), the addition of an early work by Davies suggests the influence of McCubbin's chronological framework upon Ewing's collection theme. Furthermore, by 1930, Ewing owned a pencil drawing by Buvelot, *Tree study, Coleraine*, c.1860s (fig. 56). Buvelot provided the final link to visually replicate McCubbin's 'complete history'.<sup>165</sup> Ewing's reflection of McCubbin's

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<sup>160</sup> See Cameron Sparks, *David Davies 1864–1939* (Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, 1984), 14–15.

<sup>161</sup> Frederick McCubbin, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art," in *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*, ed. James S MacDonald (Melbourne: Lothian Book Publishing Co., 1916), 82–95.

<sup>162</sup> Leigh Astbury, "The Art of Frederick McCubbin and the Impact of the First War," *La Trobe Journal*, No. 24, (October 1979): 81.

<sup>163</sup> McCubbin, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art," 89–90.

<sup>164</sup> Ewing is listed among approximately 100 subscribers. See James S MacDonald ed., *The Art of Frederick McCubbin* (Melbourne: Lothian Book Publishing Co., 1916), 99. *A Frosty Morning* is plate xxvi in McCubbin's book. See MacDonald, *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*, 67. Ewing's copy of the book was donated to the NGV's Shaw Research Library in 1980 by his daughter Margaret. See Appendix 6 for Ewing's known book collection. See also *Ewing gift*, 14–15.

<sup>165</sup> McCubbin, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art," 90.

chronology reveals the development of Ewing's own art historical education, while confirming that he remained focused thematically on the past.

Following the Davies purchases, Ewing continued to expand the historical element of his theme through two additional artists, Nicholas Chevalier and Edward Officer. By 1930 Ewing owned Nicholas Chevalier's oil sketch, *Buffalo Range from the west*, 1862 (fig. 57) and Edward Officer's oil on canvas landscape, *Autumn in Normandy*, c.1896–99 (fig. 58).<sup>166</sup> Officer's landscape was an example of the artist's early career and reflected a period spent practicing in Europe between 1895 and 1900.<sup>167</sup> Ewing would have known Officer from the Savage Club and most likely purchased the painting through the secondary art market after the artist's death in 1921.<sup>168</sup> Chevalier's painting arguably illustrates Mt Zero in the Grampians, where Chevalier painted during 1862.<sup>169</sup> Ewing, however, believed the painting illustrated the Buffalo Ranges, aligning the work with Chevalier's popular painting in the NGV, *The Buffalo Ranges*, 1864 (fig. 59). The reference may suggest that the NGV's collection assisted Ewing's exploration of past artists and their art.

The historical focus of Ewing's acquisitions during the 1920s indicates that he was also avoiding the contemporary art of the day. The few contemporarily-produced works Ewing purchased did not reflect modern art and instead referenced pre-war styles. In 1926 Ewing acquired Streeton's *Sydney Harbour at Cremorne*, 1926 (fig. 60).<sup>170</sup> The painting was a return to Streeton's popular panoramic scenes produced during the 1890s and 1900s. Early in 1926, Streeton had been painting in Sydney and held the exhibition in July later that year at the Fine Art Society's Gallery in Melbourne.<sup>171</sup> Streeton's early impressionist brushwork, with thick visible strokes, are noticeably lacking in *Cremorne*. Instead, Streeton's brushwork

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<sup>166</sup> Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

<sup>167</sup> Juliet Peers, "Officer, Edward Cairns (1871 – 1921)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/officer-edward-cairns-7884>.

<sup>168</sup> Officer was a member of the Club between 1911 and his death in 1921. See Johnson, *Melbourne Savage Club*, 278.

<sup>169</sup> Tim Bonyhady and Simon Gregg suggest that this painting depicts Mt Zero in the Grampians, Victoria. Chevalier did not paint in the Buffalo region during 1862 and the mountain scene is similar to another of Chevalier's Grampian landscapes from 1862. However, Mary Laurenson conversely agrees with Ewing's title and location of the painting in the Buffalo region. Simon Gregg, *Nicholas Chevalier: Australian Odyssey* (Sale: Gippsland Art Gallery, 2011), 176.

<sup>170</sup> Streeton stated that this painting was produced in 1906 in his 1935 *Catalogue of Arthur Streeton*. However, the style of painting and the buildings instead indicate that the work was painted in 1926. The brushwork is fine and the palette more constrained than Streeton's works from the 1900s. Juliette Peers also questions Streeton's attribution of this painting to 1906, noting that Streeton made several errors in the *Catalogue*. McAuliffe and Peers, *The full majesty of nature*, 36.

<sup>171</sup> See *An exhibition of paintings and drawings by Arthur Streeton at the Fine Arts Gallery, 100 Exhibition St., Melbourne, 14 July 1926* (Melbourne: Fine Art Society, 1926).

is more refined, as he portrays Sydney's interwar building boom, with the skyscrapers in the city evident in the skyline and new houses extending along the Cremorne ridge on the right of the painting. For Ewing's collection, the subject matter of *Cremorne* continued to extend and reflect upon Streeton's developing oeuvre. As one of Streeton's recent works, the painting provided an additional chronological reference to McCubbin's view of Australian art history.

Ewing's avoidance of modern art during the interwar period may have resulted from cultural nostalgia. Danet and Katriel propose that preferences for the past flourish amongst collectors during times of discontent, particularly when society is 'bleak, unsatisfying or even frightening'.<sup>172</sup> Ewing's preference for pre-war styles may have been a response to the cultural trauma of WWI. This interpretation also recasts Ewing's trip to the Western Front in 1922 as an act of reflection akin to a cultural pilgrimage.

Cultural introspection in the Melbourne arts world is also evident in the publication of history books mid-way through the war. McCubbin positioned his publication as a response to the war. He wrote about the new book to Tom Roberts in 1914, stating that the publication was 'a brave attempt and I hope there is enough patriosum [sic] to find necessary subscribers ... if it succeeds it will be I think a good [thing] for Australian [war] efforts'.<sup>173</sup> Similarly, as previously mentioned, the first history of European colonisation in Australia was also published mid-war, Ernest Scott's *A Short History of Australia*.<sup>174</sup> Through Danet and Katriel's notion, the formation of such histories within the WWI climate may have been influenced by cultural nostalgia for pre-war times.

When Ewing acquired a variety of works in different artistic styles before WWI, he had remained separate from public tastes and artistic divisions in the Melbourne scene. By the 1920s, Ewing had distanced himself from the Meldrum crowd, the post-impressionists and other modern artists, as his stylistic exploration stagnated. Instead, Ewing explored the nineteenth-century and consolidated the Edwardian focus of the remainder of the collection. By the 1920s, Ewing was mapping the past of Australian art.

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<sup>172</sup> Danet and Katriel, "No two alike," 235.

<sup>173</sup> Frederick McCubbin to Tom Roberts, January 9, 1914, in *Letters to Tom Roberts ms.* Mitchell Library, SLNSW, from Astbury, "The Art of Frederick McCubbin," 83.

<sup>174</sup> In 1912, the University of Melbourne sought a Professor of History to write such a history. Ernst Scott was hired for his primary research and publications on Australian history. In 1915, Scott published the first history of Australia, *A Short History of Australia*. Stuart MacIntyre, *A history for a nation: Ernest Scott and the making of Australian history* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 55.

## The Custodian Collector

In 1928 Ewing stopped collecting and completed his collection for the second time. Unlike the earlier completion, this conclusion resulted from Ewing's decision to donate his collection to the public. Belk proposes that collectors ruminating about philanthropy results from end of life concerns about the fate of their collections.<sup>175</sup> As collections are often an extension of the collector, the dispersal of their collection becomes an additional form of mortality and creates the possibilities of two deaths. Belk explains that an intact collection conversely results in the immortality of both, as the collector lives on through their collection.<sup>176</sup> Belk concludes that the fear of dispersal and the quest for immortality characterises the conclusion of most collecting careers.

Ewing's desire for longevity is discernible from the time of his portrait commission in 1922, with Longstaff's portrait physically inserting a visual replica of Ewing within his collection. Given that Ewing's theme examined the past and present of Australian art, the portrait also positioned Ewing within this history. As with Ewing's purchasing of Paterson's work as an alignment with Spencer's legacy, the portrait allowed Ewing to also link his legacy to the collection and the theme contained within. By 1930, Ewing openly expressed his desire that his collection would 'endure'.<sup>177</sup> Gifting the collection to the public would ensure Ewing's creation remained intact, effectively immortalising both Ewing and his collection.

Ewing's daughter Margaret also identified her father's philanthropic resolution as developing around 1922. Margaret believed that Ewing's benevolence was inspired by observing American art philanthropy while touring the country in 1921.<sup>178</sup> Margaret particularly emphasised the influence of the Mayo brothers, of the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.<sup>179</sup> The brothers were active art philanthropists in their local community, having funded an art gallery and created an art collection for their hospital.<sup>180</sup> As discussed earlier, Ewing grew close to the brothers through their mutual appreciation of art, and the doctors continued to exchange publications on art for the following 20 years.<sup>181</sup> Ewing's decision to commission a portrait of

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<sup>175</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 323.

<sup>176</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 323.

<sup>177</sup> Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

<sup>178</sup> Margaret Cutten in conversation with Betty Clarke and Joan Lawrence, May 31, 1977, Ewing and Cutten Gift file, Ian Potter Museum, University of Melbourne.

<sup>179</sup> Margaret Cutten in conversation, Ian Potter Museum, University of Melbourne.

<sup>180</sup> Clapesattle, *The Doctors Mayo*, 696; See Second Hand Roses, "The Art of The Mayo Clinic," accessed February 5, 2016, <https://secondhandroses.wordpress.com/2012/09/11/the-art-of-the-mayo-clinic/>.

<sup>181</sup> Ewing Papers, 2591/7(c), SLV.

himself when returning to Australia can be interpreted as anticipating the later gifting of his collection in 1928.

Ewing's chosen recipient was his sons' secondary school, Melbourne Grammar School. Ewing had already fostered a philanthropic relationship with the School, having previously gifted two commemorative works of art.<sup>182</sup> Ewing's offer in 1928 coincided with the graduation of his youngest son, celebrating and symbolically concluding the family's relationship with the School. Ewing's sole condition for his gift was that suitable facilities were to be built to house and display the collection.<sup>183</sup> The School accepted and began plans to create a gallery space. With a location secured for his legacy, Ewing stopped collecting art.

The onset of the Great Depression, however, caused the School to postpone all new building projects.<sup>184</sup> Despite this setback, Ewing still intended to gift his collection to the School. In 1930, he stated that:

... a knowledge of the meaning of art, and more particularly the art of one's own country, should be regarded as a serious factor in the early training of both boys and girls.<sup>185</sup>

It is interesting that Ewing's chosen recipient could not fulfil his stated objectives; the School excluded children based on gender, religion and socio-economic standing. Nevertheless, Ewing's declaration reveals that he perceived his collection served a pedagogical purpose which was specifically suited to a youthful audience.

By 1934 the School was yet to build the gallery and Ewing began to fear that his collection would be undervalued. In 1934 Ewing rescinded his gift, and stated in a letter to the then Headmaster, Richard Franklin, that:

The long delay in the provision of [the collection's] reception warrants the conclusion that the value of the collection in the school has not been recognised.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Ewing gifted Streeton's painting, *Amiens Cathedral*, to the School to commemorate the graduation of Ewing's eldest son, Geoffrey. Ewing gifted a bust by Charles Web Gilbert to commemorate the death of a promising poet and alumnus, John Hugh Sutton. A. Evans to Dr. S.A. Ewing, February 22, 1923, Ewing Paper, 2501/7(c), SLV. *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 32.

<sup>183</sup> Council Minutes, August 20, 1929, Melbourne Grammar School.

<sup>184</sup> See Weston Bate and Helen Penrose, *Challenging traditions: a history of Melbourne Grammar* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2002), 167.

<sup>185</sup> Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

<sup>186</sup> Dr. S.A. Ewing to Richard Franklin, May 15, 1934, Headmaster Collection, Melbourne Grammar School.

Franklin attempted to re-organise the gallery and worked with Ewing to choose an architect and scheduled the build for 1935.<sup>187</sup> Building works, however, never began, and Ewing's fears were confirmed. By 1936 Ewing had formally withdrawn his gift.

Ewing's attempted donation demonstrates that as a collector, Ewing now identified as a temporary owner of his own collection. His decision to donate and select a recipient organisation allowed Ewing to take agency of the temporality of his ownership. While philanthropy guaranteed the permanency of the collection in the public domain, now as a philanthropist, Ewing's acquisitions were elevated to acts of cultural and historic preservation. Ewing had already exhibited such concepts in his acquisition of Hall's *Suicide*, which he rationalised purchasing out of concern for Victoria's heritage. Instead of collecting for personal pleasure, the planned act of philanthropy meant that collecting had become an altruistic endeavour for Ewing. From the moment Ewing organised the donation of his collection in 1928, he no longer viewed himself as a collector but instead identified as a temporary custodian of public heritage.

### **Refining the Gift**

Without a permanent location for his collection, Ewing returned to collecting. His collecting activities were again directed by a fear of completion as he set about refining his collection. However, this time, Ewing did not modify his theme further. In 1930, he expressed the hope that his collection 'demonstrat[ed] ... the varying phases and individualities of a period in the art of the country [that I] hold dear'.<sup>188</sup> As this statement makes clear, Ewing remained focused on his version of Australian art history.

Ewing continued to refine the artists and art present in his collection. His decision to acquire exemplary examples of the respective artists was particularly suited to the idea of improvement. In 1930, Ewing owned one pencil work by Buvelot, *Tree study, Coleraine* (fig.56). By 1938, Ewing had improved this purchase with two further works by Buvelot, a watercolour, *The Creek, 1877* (fig. 61) and another pencil work, *(Waterpool) at Coleraine, 1867* (fig. 62). As with the painting by Chevalier, Ewing strengthened the early works in his collection by referencing the NGV; Buvelot's *(Waterpool) at Coleraine* was a study for the Gallery's painting, *Waterpool at Coleraine, 1871* (fig. 63). Although Ewing considered

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<sup>187</sup> "A School Picture Gallery," *The Australasian*, February 23, 1935, 6.

<sup>188</sup> Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

himself a temporary custodian, he notably did not dispose of the earlier Buvelot once a more representative example of the artist had been purchased. Instead, once acquired, works of art became a permanent part of Ewing's collection.

As he had done in the 1920s, Ewing again extended the historical section of his theme. This time he added two additional artists, Arthur Loureiro and Charles Conder. Through the secondary art market, Ewing purchased Loureiro's *Brolles*, 1882 (fig. 65) and a landscape oil sketch by Conder, *Untitled [A Christmas Card]*, c.1886 (fig. 66). Ewing believed *Brolles* portrayed Bruges in Belgium; however, Loureiro in fact had painted the landscape in the forest of Fontainbleu in Brolles, France, where the plein air movement began.<sup>189</sup> Loureiro had painted the scene before immigrating to Melbourne in 1884, although the artist returned permanently to Portugal in 1905.<sup>190</sup> As Loureiro did not appear in McCubbin's history, which Ewing had previously relied upon, Ewing may have instead acquired the work through a suggestion from his wife, Ethel. Ethel had been taught art by Loureiro during the 1880s and 1890s, while attending the Presbyterian Ladies College.<sup>191</sup> Ethel's influence suggests that, at times, Ewing may have relied on advice from family when choosing art and artists to encompass his theme.

Conder's landscape sketch illustrated the front of a Christmas card sent to the artist's uncle in 1886.<sup>192</sup> The work had been on the art market since Conder's death in 1914.<sup>193</sup> As there are no references to the presence of this work in Ewing's collection before 1938, Ewing most likely acquired the sketch towards the end of his collecting career.<sup>194</sup> The presence of Conder's landscape in Ewing's collection finalised a thematic link initiated by Streeton's silk fans. The letter portion converted the landscape sketch into an icon of the artist, inserting Conder's physical presence within the collection.

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<sup>189</sup> *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery*, 23. Conservation examinations have since confirmed that Loureiro wrote the title, *Brolles*, in the bottom right of the painting. Arthur Loureiro, *Brolles*, 1938.0013, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

<sup>190</sup> Suzanne G. Mellor, "Loureiro, Artur Jose (1853–1932)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/loureiro-artur-jose-4041>.

<sup>191</sup> See Cutten, Box 1.1, SLV; Mellor, "Loureiro, Artur Jose (1853–1932)."

<sup>192</sup> See Appendix 13 for letter.

<sup>193</sup> On the back of the card, Conder's nephew wrote: 'I hereby certify that this is the work of my cousin Charles E Condor, done in Australia to which the enclosed letter to his uncle repers[sic] dated this 13th day of April 1915 in E Condor. Witness J. R. Price'. Charles Conder, *Untitled (A Christmas card)*, 1938.0028, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

<sup>194</sup> The work was not included in Colquhoun's 1930 profile of Ewing's collection. See Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

As with previous refinements, Ewing also extended the contemporary representation of his theme. He added a new artist, Henri van Raalte, to the collection, acquiring an aquatint (fig. 66) and an etching (fig. 67). Since van Raalte was based in Perth, Ewing most likely acquired the works through art dealer William Sedon of Sedon Galleries.<sup>195</sup> Ewing was acquainted with Sedon through the Savage Club and later bought work by another artist-member from Sedon.<sup>196</sup> These landscapes were Ewing's first Western-Australian scene and reflected a more inclusive interpretation of the national theme. Ewing would have also been reminded of his years spent on the Western Australian goldfields during the 1890s.<sup>197</sup> At this stage, Ewing still owned land near Kalgoorlie, which further confirms that Western Australia remained important to the collector.<sup>198</sup>

The friendships that Ewing cultivated through the Savage Club also enabled him to expand the range of artists present in his collection. Several artists even gifted their art to Ewing. Lionel Lindsay gave Ewing an etching, *The tinsmith's shop*, c.1921 (fig. 68), illustrating King Street, Sydney. Lindsay's illustration was one of 137 he produced between 1908 and 1940 of Old Sydney.<sup>199</sup> Likewise, Charles Wheeler gave Ewing a small oil landscape, *Winter morning, Trawool*, c.1905–1930 (fig.69). Ewing already owned several small landscapes by Wheeler,<sup>200</sup> with the gift perhaps a response to their collaboration as part of the Club's Art Union committee during the 1920s.<sup>201</sup> Ewing also became close to a third artist, Harold Herbert, who, like John Longstaff, became a family friend.<sup>202</sup> When Herbert fell into a depression during 1937, Ewing even financially supported the artist to take a painting trip with Arthur Streeton in Tasmania.<sup>203</sup> During the 1930s, Ewing purchased three watercolours by Herbert, illustrating Victorian scenes from Lorne, Phillip Island and Bacchus Marsh (fig. 70–72), with the selections spanning fifteen years of the artist's career. As with Hilder and Streeton, Ewing now owned a visual exploration of Herbert's artistic development.

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<sup>195</sup> Van Raalte sold works in Melbourne through Sedon. See *Exhibition of etchings, woodcuts, &c. by famous artists: opened by Hon Theodore Fink on Tuesday, December 7th, at 3 p.m* (Melbourne: Sedon Galleries, 1926), 4–5.

<sup>196</sup> Johnson, *Melbourne Savage Club*, 155–156, 283; Ewing's 1940 diary, November 7, 1940, Cutten Papers, Box 4.2, SLV.

<sup>197</sup> *The Ewing Collection*, 9.

<sup>198</sup> Samuel Arthur Ewing, 326/241, Wills, VPRS 7591/P0002/1150, Public Records Office of Victoria.

<sup>199</sup> "Old Sydney Etchings, 1908–1940," Trove, accessed October 30, 2015, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-152588650>.

<sup>200</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>201</sup> See Appendix 12 for outline of the Art Union Club.

<sup>202</sup> Both Longstaff and Herbert attended Ewing's daughter Margaret's wedding in 1930. "Weddings: Cutten–Ewing," *The Australasian*, September 13, 1930, 10.

<sup>203</sup> Ewing Gallery [pamphlet], Cutten Papers, Box 3.5, SLV.

Following 1930, Ewing continued to extend the visual exploration of Heysen's career, and purchased three recent paintings by the artist, *The river bend*, 1922 (fig. 73), *Untitled [Landscape]*, c.1920s (fig. 74), and *Red Hills of Aroona, Flinders Rangers*, 1933 (fig. 75). Ewing now also owned a comprehensive exploration of Heysen's oeuvre. As with previous additions, the new works did not stylistically conflict with the overall collection and instead sought to complement the landscape focus and late nineteenth and early twentieth century examples Ewing already favoured.

### **Ewing's Beneficiary**

While chance had drawn Ewing to collecting, chance also determined the final resting place of his art collection. Around 1936, the University of Melbourne announced plans to establish a student union organisation.<sup>204</sup> Ewing offered to financially assist the development through a friend and colleague, and the University's then Head of Anatomy, Frederick Wood Jones.<sup>205</sup> In January 1937, Wood Jones brought up Ewing's offer to Vice Chancellor Raymond Priestly at a University dinner.<sup>206</sup> The following day, Priestly wrote to Wood Jones, suggesting that art be donated to the new student union instead of money, and coincidentally, requested that the art be representative of Australian art.<sup>207</sup> Priestly's desire was partly motivated by university rivalries; he had noted that 'Sydney [has] on loan a very representative set of Australian pictures'.<sup>208</sup> However, Priestly was also spurred by overseas examples, particularly noting a Canadian art collection owned by the student union at the University of Toronto.<sup>209</sup> Within three months of Priestly's letter, Ewing offered his collection to the

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<sup>204</sup> See Melbourne University Union Student Minutes 1923–1944, accession 1982.0033, University of Melbourne Archives.

<sup>205</sup> Ewing had given Wood Jones a print of Rembrandt's *Lesson of Anatomy* for his office in 1934. Wood Jones wrote a note to Ewing to thank him for the gift. Wood Jones then suggested that Ewing donate art to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, writing to Ewing that: 'It has been suggested to me that if you have medical portraits, with which you are generous minded enough to part, the bare walls of the new home of the Royal College of Surgeons are crying out for some beautiful things. There your gift would secure immediately'. Ewing later donated two photoportraits to the Royal College, one of American doctor, Dr. William Mayo, and the other of British surgeon, Dr. Charles Ballance. See Archives of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons; Professor of Anatomy Frederick Wood-Jones to Ewing, November 5, 1934. Ewing Papers, 2591/7(d), SLV.

<sup>206</sup> Vice-Chancellor Raymond Priestly to Head of Anatomy Frederick Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1938, 558 – Union House, various, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>207</sup> Priestly writes: 'I suggested to Rowden White...[for] the endowment of a fund for the purchase of pictures...preferably pictures by Australian artists'. Priestly to Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>208</sup> Priestly to Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>209</sup> Priestly to Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Archives of the University of Melbourne. Several months earlier Priestly had organised students and the new union warden to survey student unions in Asian and North American universities, with instructions to note the place of art in the respective organisations. See Registrar's

University for use in the new Union.<sup>210</sup> The donation was secured in June 1937, and in September the Union announced the gift to the University Board.<sup>211</sup>

Again, friendships and family connections directed Ewing's philanthropic undertakings. Besides connections to Wood Jones, the majority of Ewing's immediate family, including himself, his wife and two sons, were alumni of the University. Interestingly, Ewing had been somewhat hesitant about the donation, having encountered difficulties with the University in the past.<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, the choice of another educational institution closely associated with his family reiterated Ewing's belief in the pedagogical value of an art historically-themed collection.

As with Melbourne Grammar, Ewing required that the University build a gallery to house the collection. Work had already begun on the new Union building, so a room was modified by the architects to become a new gallery space.<sup>213</sup> The Union board was less enthusiastic about the additional costs of the alteration. Priestly, however, was determined. He had for some time desired the opportunity to develop the 'aesthetic side of student life' beyond anything 'previously approached in any Australian University'.<sup>214</sup> He 'press[ed] the Union to take their faith in their hands and build the gallery and look for the money afterwards'.<sup>215</sup> Priestly was successful, and the plans for the gallery went ahead.

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corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1938, 558 – Union House; 1938, 175, Debating Team – Visit to America, Japan; 1938, 592, Warden of Union House – Correspondence, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>210</sup> Union warden William Bryden, to Ewing, July 6, 1937.

<sup>211</sup> Union warden William Bryden, to Ewing, July 6, 1937; Chancellor James Barrett to Dr. S.A. Ewing, September 7, 1939, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>212</sup> Raymond Priestly's letter noted that Ewing had mentioned past troubles with the University to Wood Jones. Priestly writes that: 'If your friend who has reason for dissatisfaction with the University as it has been cares to help us in our attempt to make it a real force in the community in the future, he would be returning good for indifferent – or bad – treatment'. Priestly to Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Archives of the University of Melbourne. Wood Jones later referenced Ewing's difficulties with the University in 1939. Wood Jones wrote: 'I know that you had to forget some things in order to be so generous to some of the institutions in Melbourne and I think this makes the sentiment all the finer'. Professor of Anatomy at the University of Manchester Frederick Wood Jones to Dr. S.A. Ewing, January 2, 1939, Ewing Papers, 2591/7(d), SLV.

<sup>213</sup> Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>214</sup> Chancellor James Barrett wrote to Dr. S.A. Ewing on September 7, 1937: 'Your generous offer which will be of considerable assistance in fulfilling the Vice Chancellor's ambition to develop the aesthetic side of student life to a degree not previously approached in any Australian University'. Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>215</sup> Vice Chancellor Raymond Priestly to John Russell, Carnegie Corporation July 19, 1939, 112, Carnegie Corporation – Arts Teaching Set Equipment, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

The new Union building opened with much fanfare in April 1938.<sup>216</sup> As part of the day's festivities, Ewing opened the new Ewing Gallery, which had been named in his honour (fig.76). Arthur Streeton unveiled John Longstaff's portrait of Ewing, while Longstaff and Max Meldrum looked on.<sup>217</sup> Next to the entrance of the Gallery, Ewing affixed a commemorative plaque with the statement:

That our youth may be inspired with the beauty as well as a deeper love of their country by the works of our artists, this collection of Australian art was given by Samuel Arthur Ewing, M.R.C.S. (ENG.), D.P.H. (CANTAB), F.R.C.S., Surgeon of this City, to the Melbourne University Union in 1938.<sup>218</sup>

This dedication outlined Ewing's pedagogical purpose as well as emphasising the nationalistic theme of the collection.

Ewing's gift did not include a formal agreement with the University. However, a verbal understanding did exist between the parties. Raymond Priestly was aware of Ewing's collection theme and stated that the selections represented the 'many different phases of Australian art'.<sup>219</sup> Several years later, then Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor George Paton reiterated Ewing's theme, stating that the collection was intended to show 'the historical development of Australian art'.<sup>220</sup> Furthermore, Paton disclosed that Ewing had required that his gift remain a closed collection which was 'not to be added to nor subtracted from' because it was a 'single artistic unit'.<sup>221</sup> While the examination of the chronology of Ewing's acquisitions indicated a thematic overlay, by 1938 Ewing had defined his collection thematically as visual art history.

The catalogue Ewing created for the donation further explored the historical narrative of his collection. After the University accepted the gift in 1937, Ewing was requested by the then

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<sup>216</sup> A publication commemorated the opening, with music composed and a day's activities organised. See *Office Opening of Union House*, Ewing Papers, 2591/6(c), SLV.

<sup>217</sup> Ewing had requested Streeton undertake conservation on *Domes of St Mark's* before the donation. Streeton was 'thankful' for Ewing's request, remarking that it was 'perfectly wicked that an artist's work should be touched by *anyone* but the Artist – if he is alive'. Arthur Streeton to Dr. S.A. Ewing, October 9, 1937, Ewing Papers, 2591/6(b), SLV.

<sup>218</sup> Ewing drafted the text in his 1938 diary, see Cutten Papers, Box 4.2, SLV. After the renovation of the Ewing Gallery in the 1980s and the removal of the Collection to the University Art Collection, the plaque remains part of the Ian Potter Collection. See Ewing and Cutten Files, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

<sup>219</sup> Raymond Priestly to James Barrett, September 4, 1937. Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>220</sup> Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>221</sup> Registrar's corresponded, Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

warden of the University's Union House, Dr. William Bryden, to produce an informal text covering provenance details of the art and anecdotal information on the artists.<sup>222</sup> In a note to Ewing, Bryden wrote that he was:

very impressed ... with the way you explained practically every picture and had a little story to tell about it ... if you would be good enough to write the details of the pictures down (details such as the origin, the reason for the artist's conception of the pictures, the way you acquired it, etc) ... then we will publish a little catalogue of the collection.<sup>223</sup>

Instead, Ewing organised a scholarly publication featuring two prominent members of Melbourne's art world; James MacDonald, then director of the NGV, wrote the introductory biography on Ewing, and Robert Henderson Croll, who had recently published *Tom Roberts: Father of Australian landscape painting*, provided the catalogue essay.<sup>224</sup> Croll confessed that his essay 'does not profess to be a history of art',<sup>225</sup> yet utilised the art and artists of the collection to delineate a chronological and stylistically progressing narrative from the 1860s to the present time. Ewing's donation to the University reveals that by 1938 he had conceptualised his collection as a visual history of Australian art, and that he wished others, and particularly students, to view and critically engage with this history via his catalogue.

The Union's organisation of the Ewing Gallery accentuated the art historical theme of Ewing's Collection. Couches were included, and a set of books and prints from the Carnegie Institute enabled students to also engage with international versions of art history.<sup>226</sup> The Union Report from 1938 proclaimed that the space was 'invaluable in the general study of the history of art'.<sup>227</sup> Bryden also reported that lectures on art and the appreciation of art were

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<sup>222</sup> Dr. William Bryden to Dr. S.A. Ewing, July 28, 1937, Ewing Papers, 2591/6(c), SLV.

<sup>223</sup> Bryden to Ewing, Ewing Papers, 2591/6(c), SLV.

<sup>224</sup> Robert Henderson Croll, "Some notes on pictorial art in Australia," *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938), 9–14. Croll based this essay on the introduction he previously wrote for the Centenary Art Exhibition Catalogue in 1934. See *The centenary art exhibition, 1934, Commonwealth Bank Chambers, 367 Collins Street, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Speciality Press, 1934).

<sup>225</sup> Croll, "Some notes on pictorial art in Australia," 14.

<sup>226</sup> Priestly advised Barrett that the gallery space was to be furnished to allow for students to read 'a selection of books dealing with various phases and branches of art' while viewing Ewing's Collection. Raymond Priestly to James Barrett, September 4, 1937. Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne. Priestly had heard that the University of Western Australia had received a set of books on art history from the Carnegie Corporation and requested a similar donation for the University of Melbourne. Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1938. 113, Carnegie Corporation – General Matters, Archives of the University of Melbourne. For list of books and prints included in the Carnegie Art Set, see Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1938. 112 – Carnegie Corporation: Arts Teaching Set Equipment.

<sup>227</sup> Bryden did not note who gave the lectures nor the content. See William Bryden, 1938 Report, Union House, 4, Melbourne University Union Student Minutes 1923–1944, Accession 1982.0033.

held in the space.<sup>228</sup> The pedagogical focus completed Ewing's visual and written narrative of Australian art history, and possibly placed the discipline of 'art history' on the University's agenda for the first time.<sup>229</sup>

### **The (almost) End**

By gifting his collection to the University, Ewing had finally fulfilled his desire, dating from 1912, to establish a permanent, institution-based Australian art collection in Melbourne. The gift consisted of 60 works of art from his broader private collection of approximately 100 paintings, drawings and etchings and around 30 decorative art works and objects.<sup>230</sup> The selection featured his Australian painting collection, with the remaining art residing with the family. The removal of the collection most likely caused Ewing to experience a diminished sense of self, just as he had in past attempted completions.<sup>231</sup> And likewise, Ewing returned to collecting. This time however, he did not seek a new collection, and neither did he add to the remainder of his private collection. Instead, Ewing remained focused on his Australian painting collection, now located at the University.

As with previous years, Ewing's fear of completion continued to direct his acquisitions through the idea of refinement. In 1938, Ewing added another painting to the University's Collection, Streeton's *White Lilac*, c.1938 (fig. 77). The still life was one of Streeton's last works. The artist had painted this and two other works over three days in early 1938.<sup>232</sup> In 1940, Ewing added the final work to the Collection, a recent watercolour by Harold Herbert, *Eildon*, 1940 (fig. 78). Herbert remained opposed to modernism, with *Eildon* stylistically reflecting the three watercolour landscapes of Victoria that Ewing had purchased over the preceding decade.

While the two acquisitions were the artists' most recent works, stylistically, Ewing's choices were conventional. The paintings reflected the conservative nature of Streeton and Herbert's end of career styles, with Herbert dying soon after Streeton in 1945. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>228</sup> William Bryden, 1938 Report.

<sup>229</sup> Around this time, the National Women's Association had also sought to establish a lectureship in art history. Whether this attempt was influenced by the Ewing Collection is unknown. See Juliette Peers, "The canon and its discontents: women artists as drivers of early art historical activities and alternative art historical narratives in Australia," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 4 (June 2011): 1–18.

<sup>230</sup> See Appendices 1–5.

<sup>231</sup> Belk, "Collectors and collecting," 321.

<sup>232</sup> Arthur Streeton to Walter Pring, February 12, 1938. Ann Galbally and Anne Gray, *Letters from Smike: the letters of Arthur Streeton, 1890-1943* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1989), 211.

additions enabled Ewing to expand and conclude the representation of the two artists' oeuvres within his collection. Furthermore, these acquisitions confirm the conflict Ewing continued to experience between his desire to complete his collection, his fear of such completion, and his yearning for new acquisitions. In 1941, Ewing's death finally ensured the ultimate conclusion of his collection.<sup>233</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Over the course of this chapter, I have demonstrated that Ewing conceived the theme of his collection as representing Australian artists active from the latter half of the nineteenth century through to the first half of the twentieth century. I analysed the construction of Ewing's theme by interpreting his acquisitions as a narrated sequence of events. The sequence became a chronological timeline that developed thematically with each addition. Ewing's gift to the University in 1938 was thus the zenith of the chronological crescendo, with the completion concurrently providing clarity for Ewing, the narrative agent. By the conclusion of Ewing's collecting career, he had clearly defined the theme of his collection as the history of Australian art.

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<sup>233</sup> Ewing died on July 23, 1941, aged 77, at Mercy Private Hospital, East Melbourne. He was cremated at the Springvale Crematorium. Ewing was survived by his wife Ethel, his son George and daughter Margaret. Ewing Papers, 2592/3 (b), SLV.

## Chapter Three: Framing Art History

In the previous chapter, I posited that Ewing conceived his collection thematically as a visual exploration of Australian art history. However, as a private collector engaged in art history through the art market, Ewing's collecting activities do not align with conventional notions of art history. Therefore, this chapter will apply a broader concept of art history in order to critically examine Ewing's conception and approach to the history of Australian art. Given that limited material has survived to illuminate a structural framework within Ewing's theme, I will evoke the concept of 'partial expressions' from the hermeneutic circle in order to interpret and analyse Ewing's visual exploration of Australian art history.

### Early Australian Art History as Historical Reflections

Conventionally, the foundations of Australian art history are understood through the development of the discipline alongside professional curatorial practices during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline Strecker questions the accepted institutional origins in her article "Colonizing Culture: The Origins of Art History".<sup>2</sup> Strecker locates the foundations of the discipline prior to the establishment of an independent university-based discipline. She argues that a Eurocentric view of art history was laid during the nineteenth century, within colonial educational institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Juliette Peers extends Strecker's institutional examination of the foundations of Australian art history in her article "Art and its discontents".<sup>4</sup> Peers expands the concept of art history to include broader cultural engagements being undertaken during the early decades of the twentieth century. She defines art history as historical reflections that contain 'various forms of "sense making" around culture' in a narrative format.<sup>5</sup> Peers utilised the extended definition to examine feminist art histories, and thus highlights the contribution of women to early art histories in Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Juliette Peers, "The canon and its discontents: women artists as drivers of early art historical activities and alternative art historical narratives in Australia," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 4 (June 2011): 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Strecker, "Colonizing Culture: The Origins of Art History in Australia," In *Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London: Routledge, 2002), 100–112.

<sup>3</sup> Strecker, "Colonizing Culture," 100–112.

<sup>4</sup> Peers, "The canon and its discontents," 1–18.

<sup>5</sup> Peers, "The canon and its discontents," 3.

While Peers does not include private collecting within her extended definition, she does emphasise the presence of a narrative when identifying ‘art historically inflected activities’.<sup>6</sup> The altered definition presents the possibility that there have been further narrative-based explorations, such as Ewing’s collection, which consider art within its historical and theoretical context amongst broader cultural practices.

### **Ewing’s Visual Art History**

The first written narrative of Ewing’s visual exploration of Australian art history was notably not produced by the collector. Instead, Ewing relied upon Robert Henderson Croll, a known figure of the local arts publishing scene.<sup>7</sup> Croll’s narrative in the 1938 catalogue outlined a chronological delineation of Australian artists, who were grouped according to state boundaries.<sup>8</sup> The history begins with Louis Buvelot in the 1860s, who is used to herald the overview of Victorian artists, and concludes with those whom Croll proposes ‘advanced’ Australian art, including the impact of Alfred Felton and his bequest.<sup>9</sup> Croll’s essay was based on a brief introduction written several years earlier for the Melbourne Centenary Art Exhibition catalogue.<sup>10</sup> Croll extends this written text for Ewing’s Collection through the art and artists Ewing selected. Croll engages with William Moore’s then recently published *Story of Australian Art*, by quoting several excerpts from Moore’s history. Although Croll was careful to note that his essay does ‘no more than to suggest the material for [another history of Australian art]’,<sup>11</sup> he constructs art history as the stylistic progression of Australian artists.

Ewing’s reliance on Croll to provide a professional overview of the Collection presents the possibility that the narrative contained may have derived from either Croll or the collector himself. Certainly, Ewing was responsible for organising the remaining portion of the catalogue. However, the works of art and corresponding biographies are arbitrarily arranged and do not reflect Croll’s geographical distinctions or chronological progression. With an absence of visual documentation of the original display in Union House, further details

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<sup>6</sup> Peers, “The canon and its discontents,” 1.

<sup>7</sup> Croll’s experience was noted in the catalogue, with a footnote listing his recent publications, including ‘The Etched Work of John Shirlozv; Tom Roberts: Father of Australian Landscape Painting; [and] The Life of R. IV. Sturgess’. Robert Henderson Croll, “Some notes on pictorial art in Australia,” in *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Croll, “Some notes on pictorial art in Australia,” 9–14.

<sup>9</sup> Croll, “Some notes on pictorial art in Australia,” 14.

<sup>10</sup> See *The centenary art exhibition, 1934, Commonwealth Bank Chambers, 367 Collins Street, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Speciality Press, 1934).

<sup>11</sup> Croll, “Some notes on pictorial art in Australia,” 10, 14.

regarding Ewing's own conception of Australian art history cannot be drawn from the catalogue.

Secondary accounts of Ewing's descriptions of his theme, as previously mentioned, do provide some insight into his visual concept of art history. In 1930, Alexander Colquhoun paraphrased Ewing's description of his collection as outlining 'varying phases and individualities' of Australian art.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in 1937, then Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Raymond Priestly, recounted that Ewing desired his collection to illustrate the 'many different phases of Australian art'.<sup>13</sup> Several years after Ewing's donation to the University, then Dean of the Law Faculty, George Paton, recollected that Ewing believed his collection demonstrated 'the historical development of Australian art'.<sup>14</sup> While these secondary accounts further confirm that Ewing conceived his collection as the history of Australia art, the choice of words to describe such a history has the potential to provide insight into Ewing's conception of art history.

The emphasis that Ewing placed on 'phases' could suggest the concept of periodisation. Combined with the notion of 'development', Ewing may be suggesting a narrative based on a trajectory of stylistic development. His use of 'individualities' may be emphasising artists over the works of art. Through these brief references, Ewing's conception of Australian art history could be interpreted as the stylistic development of Australian artists. However, is this narrative evident in Ewing's selection of art and artists?

While aspects of a stylistically developing narrative are evident in the selections Ewing gifted to the University, so too are elements of Croll's approach. Croll's emphasis on colonial boundaries is apparent in Ewing's selections. Considering that almost a quarter of the art was produced overseas, Ewing appears to define Australian artists as those who were born, trained or located in Australia at some point in their career. Within this definition, however, most of the artists Ewing chose were predominately active in Victoria. Combined with the

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Dr. Ewing's Collection," *The Age*, March 1, 1930, 7.

<sup>13</sup> In 1937, Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Raymond Priestly wrote that Ewing's Collection illustrated the 'many different phases of Australian art'. Raymond Priestly to James Barrett, September 4, 1937. Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>14</sup> In 1945, then Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor George Paton, stated that Ewing intended the Collection to show 'the historical development of Australian art'. Registrar's corresponded (UM312), Accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

inclusion of New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins as previously mentioned, Ewing, like Croll, appeared to perceive nationalism through a colonial mindset.

Besides these colonial distinctions, Ewing's choice of artist was also weighted by gender. Only two of the 30 artists were women, Constance Jenkins and Frances Hodgkins. Similarly, Croll's essay also highlights a male art history. Croll referenced approximately 70 artists in total but discussed the art of only five women artists. Ewing avoids an Indigenous presence in both the art and artists chosen, and similarly, Croll recommends to 'ignore those primitives, our aborigines'.<sup>15</sup> Ewing, in common with Croll, therefore conceives an Australian art history that is a white, male endeavour and a history of artists which is contained by European colonisation and the colonial state of Victoria.<sup>16</sup>

Although neither Ewing nor Croll distinguish Australian art history according to a subject matter, Ewing's selections are predominately landscapes. Of the 60 works of art, 38 depict landscapes. Most feature Australian scenes, however, 13 were also painted overseas and illustrate English, Scottish, French, Italian and Egyptian locations. The favoured mediums were oil and watercolour paintings, and constitute 51 of the 60 works of art. The subject and medium emphasis could imply that Ewing, like art historians after him,<sup>17</sup> considered Australian art history as the development of landscape painting.<sup>18</sup>

In the selection gifted to the University, Ewing's choice of art and artists can be interpreted in two distinct narratives: firstly, through a linear progression organised by the date of the works of art, and secondly, as the stylistic development of the individual works of art. The production dates of the art of the Collection suggests a linear 80-year period, which begins chronologically with Nicholas Chevalier's 1862 painting, *Buffalo Ranges from the West* (fig. 59) and progresses to a conclusion with Harold Herbert's 1940 watercolour, *Eildon* (fig. 57).

The stylistic development of the artists presents an alternative narrative. Here, the history begins with colonial styles, as epitomised by Chevalier's painting (fig. 59) and Louis Buvelot's two works, the pencil work, *(Waterpool) at Coleraine*, 1867 (fig. 62) and a

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<sup>15</sup> Croll, "Some notes on pictorial art in Australia," 9.

<sup>16</sup> Ewing's views on race reflected the norms of the day. In 1899 Ewing gave an interview in favour of the White Australia policy and collected several anti-Semitic articles. Ewing Papers, 2592/9, SLV.

<sup>17</sup> See Robert Hughes, *The art of Australia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).

<sup>18</sup> By 1940, the Collection consisted of 60 works of art: 38 landscapes, 11 figural works, five cityscapes, two still-life works, and four portraits. See Appendix 1.

watercolour, *The Creek*, 1877 (fig. 61). The stylistic progression to the plein air movement of the Heidelberg School is represented by Arthur Loureiro's early example of plein air in *Brolles*, 1882 (fig. 64) and John Ford Paterson's Heidelberg-style landscape exploring light and colour in *Evening at Croydon*, 1890–1900 (fig. 31). The final stages of the School are evident in Streeton's *The domes of St Mark's*, 1908 (fig. 24), Fox's *Rocks and Sea*, c.1911 (fig. 26), and McCubbin's *A Frosty Morning*, c.1910 (fig. 12). The development of new styles building on the Heidelberg School are evident in the watercolour landscapes of Hans Heysen (figs. 17–19, 73–75), Jesse Hilder (figs. 22–23, 29–30) and Harold Herbert (figs. 70–72, 77). The beginnings of post-impressionism are present in Rupert Bunny's Whistler-inspired *The New Step*, c.1908 (fig. 13) and Constance Jenkins, *My lady pincushion (daylight)*, c.1909–11 (fig. 79), followed by the decorative aestheticism of Blamire Young's *The Pasture Stance*, c.1911–12 (fig. 80). The stylistic progression concludes with early modernist explorations by Frances Hodgkins, in *Rosamund*, c.1909–1912 (fig. 15) and Max Meldrum's tonalism, in *Coucher de Soleil*, 1910 (fig. 21). Instead of an 80-year chronological development, through a stylistic narrative, Ewing's history is a 60-year period that begins in the 1860s and concludes pre-WWI.

Despite the fact that the chronological production of the works of art and the stylistic groupings create two differing linear narratives, Ewing's later emphasis on 'developing' 'phases' suggests that he sought the latter approach – stylistic groupings. Yet, the timeline of his acquisitions does not reflect a stylistic narrative. Ewing's purchases towards the end of his collecting career reflected early twentieth-century styles, such as Streeton's *White Lilac*, 1938 (fig. 77). Ewing instead acquired the most stylistically advanced selections prior to WWI, including Meldrum's *Coucher de Soleil*, c.1910 (fig. 21). Notably, as discussed in the previous chapter, Ewing's early collecting activities sought to map the contemporary arts scene, and it was not until mid-way through WWI that he began to acquire art from the previous generations of Australian artists. The differing stylistic and chronological narratives creates two converging concepts of art history that are intertwined in the final selections Ewing donated to the University.

### **Structuring a Narrative of Art History**

Although two narratives coexist in the final donation, the identifiable presence of a narrative positions Ewing's collecting activities through Peers's definition of art history, as historical

reflections which seek meaning through a narrative format.<sup>19</sup> The ability of the two concepts to coexist in the Ewing Collection presents the possibility that an overarching structure effectively links the converging ideas. However, similarly to limitations on primary material regarding Ewing's theme, almost no references have survived to illuminate the structure of his collection.

Consequently, I will return to Mieke Bal's interpretation of collections through narratology. Bal interprets collections as individual parts that, when grouped, constitute a thematic whole; as utilised in the previous chapter to reassess Ewing's collection as art history.<sup>20</sup> Importantly, Bal's identification of part-whole relations also recalls concepts from hermeneutics discourse. In relation to the hermeneutic circle, Charles Taylor argues that an interpretation of the whole relies on readings of its partial expression.<sup>21</sup> Taylor explains that such meaning is only gained in relation to others, with partial expressions also dependant on those of others, and ultimately on the whole.<sup>22</sup> This idea is extended by Ilse Bulhof, who deduces through Wilhelm Dilthey's work that the identification of a conceptual whole also facilitates an interpretation of the structural whole.<sup>23</sup> Bulhof's intertwining of the conceptual and structural whole intimates that the existence of one confirms the presence of the other. In relation to Ewing's collection, as I have previously identified the conceptual whole as Australian art history, through Bulhof, the corresponding narrative must therefore be based on a structural whole.

Even though limited material has survived regarding Ewing's collecting methods, throughout his collecting career, Ewing's selections of art appear to adhere to the notion of 'representative'.<sup>24</sup> As demonstrated in the previous chapter, through the notion of 'representative' Ewing classified potential acquisitions according to whether the selection was an exemplary example of an artist's oeuvre. Ewing's use of the term as a collecting method presents the possibility that 'representative' can be interpreted as a partial expression of an overarching structure, outside of the stylistic and chronological narratives evident in his Collection.

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<sup>19</sup> Peers, "The canon and its discontents," 3.

<sup>20</sup> Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. By John Elsner (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 100.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2: *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 18.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," 18.

<sup>23</sup> Ilse N. Bulhof, *Wilhelm Dilthey A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture* (The Hague; Boston: M. Nijhoff Publishers; Hingham: Kluwer Boston, 1980), 72.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Dr S.A. Ewing, September 25, 1912, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1912.

In the remainder of this chapter I evoke Bulhof's concept to postulate that Ewing's concept of history contains a structure. By echoing the interplay of Taylor's part-whole relationship, I posit that the term 'representative' is a partial expression of the structural framework of Ewing's theme. By examining Ewing's application of 'representative', I return to the chronological delineation of his acquisitions to correlate the maturation of his conceptual theme with the development of its structure. Throughout, I continue to apply Baudrillard's notion from the previous chapter that collectors collect themselves and interpret the structural framework through Ewing's educational background.<sup>25</sup> Through this exploration, I demonstrate that Ewing created a narrative that is based on theoretical and historical contexts within Australian art history.

### **Representative Art History**

While Ewing's use of 'representative' as a collecting method may have initially been idiosyncratic, by the 1930s, 'representative' was used in the arts scene to describe both the Ewing Collection and comparative Australian-based art collections. The Ewing Collection was described in Sydney Ure Smith's *National Journal* in 1939 as 'representative ... of Australian art'.<sup>26</sup> William Moore, in *Story of Australian Art*, distinguished an Australian landscape collection in the Melbourne branch of the Commercial Traveller's Association also as 'representative' of Australian art.<sup>27</sup> At the Melbourne Teachers College, a collection of Australian art formed during the mid-1930s was similarly described as 'representative'.<sup>28</sup> In 1937, the Australian painting collection of Dr. Oscar Paul, a Sydney-based collector, was also deemed 'representative' of Australian art.<sup>29</sup> While the application of 'representative' to Australian art collections may reflect pre-WWII nationalism,<sup>30</sup> the comparable application may also suggest a broader cultural understanding of the term in relation to nation-based collections.

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<sup>25</sup> Jean Baudrillard, translated by James Benedict, *The System of Objects* (London; New York: Verso, 1996), 91.

<sup>26</sup> The biography was written by Athol Shmith, a pseudonym possibly for Sydney's second wife, Ethel. Athol Shmith, "Dr. S.A. Ewing," *Australia: National Journal*, no. 2 (Spring, September–November, 1939): 2.

<sup>27</sup> William Moore, *The story of Australian art: from the earliest known art of the continent to the art of to-day* (Vol. 2, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 38.

<sup>28</sup> The Melbourne Teachers College collection became part of the University of Melbourne when the College amalgamated with the organisation in 1990. See Belinda Nemeč, and Lisa Sullivan, *Curiosity: 150 years of collecting at the University of Melbourne* (Parkville: Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2003), 2–3.

<sup>29</sup> For further information on Dr. Oscar Paul's Collection, see *Catalogue of the loan collections and other works of art at Sydney University Union* (Sydney: Sydney University Union, 1937).

<sup>30</sup> See Noel McLachlan, "In between: Snugglepot & Statis – are we Australian or English?," *Waiting for the Revolution: A history of Australian Nationalism* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1989): 209–238.

Outside of the Western arts scene of the time, Australian collectors in the fields of natural science were also acquiring ‘representative’ collections. During the late 1930s, anthropologist Dr. Lindsay Page Winterbotham collected a self-described ‘representative collection’ that outlined Aboriginal culture from the Queensland region.<sup>31</sup> Daniel Leo, in his article “An Ark of Aboriginal Relics” concluded that Winterbotham created the collection as an act of preservation resulting from the anthropologist’s belief in evolutionism.<sup>32</sup> As a collecting method, Winterbotham utilised ‘representative’ to scientifically detail objects that typified the chosen culture. Winterbotham’s use of ‘representative’ similarly reflects Ewing’s desire for exemplary objects. In the arts scene, ‘representative’ could have possibly held a similar classificatory function, with the chosen art defining and outlining a cultural conception of white Australian culture. The classifying element of ‘representative’ presents the possibility that the term, and Ewing’s use, can be understood through Western science.

In addition to the presence of ‘representative’ in collecting activities of varying disciplines, the scholarly field of collecting at the time also emphasised the importance of ‘representative’. In 1932, Walter Durost first defined a collection as a series of items where the ‘predominant value is representative’.<sup>33</sup> For Durost, the presence of ‘representative’ relied on an item being ‘one of a series, part of a whole [or] a specimen of a class’.<sup>34</sup> Durost’s belief that ‘representative’ signified a ‘specimen of a class’ further links the term to the sciences, while reiterating that ‘representative’ held a classificatory function within a collection.

The origins of ‘representative’ as a classifying system developed several hundred years before Ewing’s own application to his collecting activities. Michel Foucault positions the foundation of the term during the seventeenth century, when an episteme centred on interpretation shifted towards representation.<sup>35</sup> Sean Hides demonstrates the development of the term during the eighteenth century through the formation of a taxonomic system that was based on ‘observing differential morphology’.<sup>36</sup> Known as the Linnaean Method, the rank-

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<sup>31</sup> The collection consisted of 1000 objects, which Winterbotham gifted to the University of Queensland in 1948. Daniel Leo, “An Ark of Aboriginal Relics,” in *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, ed. by Nicolas Peterson et al. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008): 77.

<sup>32</sup> Leo, “An Ark of Aboriginal Relics,” 105.

<sup>33</sup> Durost was researching children’s collecting habits in America. Walter Durost, *Children’s Collecting Activity related to social factors* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932), 10.

<sup>34</sup> Durost, *Children’s Collecting*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 206–210.

<sup>36</sup> Sean Hides, “The genealogy of material culture and cultural identity,” in *Experiencing material culture in the Western world*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; Washington: Leicester University Press, 1997), 19.

based classification system was popularised by Carl Linnaeus in 1735 and is still in use today.<sup>37</sup> Linnaean taxonomy is the scientific practice of classification and applies the concept of ‘representative’ as part of classifying the natural world according to seven hierarchal rankings.<sup>38</sup> Susan Pearce concludes that the establishment of a taxonomic system based on ‘representative’ reflected deist theories of the Enlightenment and complemented modernist beliefs of the time that the ‘physical process of material observation and measurement by a rational man could result in objective knowledge and truth’.<sup>39</sup> The term ‘representative’ therefore originated in the natural sciences and was used through taxonomy as a method to observe and define the natural world.

Ewing and others, however, were utilising the concept of ‘representative’ when collecting Australian art. Pearce positions the transferral of ‘representative’ to collections during the eighteenth century through taxonomic collections known as the Wunderkammer or cabinet of curiosities.<sup>40</sup> James Clifford’s definition of the Wunderkammer reiterates the importance of ‘representative’, positioning such collections as consisting of objects ‘valued because they exemplified an array of systematic categories’.<sup>41</sup> Through collecting, the Wunderkammer became the physical manifestation of Linnaean taxonomy, as collectors sought to identify and define the known world through tangible objects. Taxonomy thus became the explanatory paradigm of the Wunderkammer microcosm.<sup>42</sup>

By the late eighteenth-century, taxonomic practices underlying the Wunderkammer had transferred to other collecting practices of the time. In the art world, Pearce posits that taxonomy was utilised within developing nation-based art collections of the newly established public art institutions.<sup>43</sup> Parallel to the establishment of taxonomy was the development of the modern nation-state, which expedited the growth of national-based art collections. Pearce argues that taxonomy was the methodological approach used to demarcate an art history of a nation, thus also concurrently creating a national cultural identity.<sup>44</sup> She demonstrates the influence of taxonomy in the visual arrangements of art history, using the

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<sup>37</sup> Linnaeus published the outline of his method in *Systema Natura* in 1735. See Donald R. Prothero, *Bringing fossils to life: an introduction to paleobiology* (Boston: WCB/McGraw-Hill, 1998), 43–62.

<sup>38</sup> See Prothero, *Bringing fossils to life*, 45.

<sup>39</sup> Susan M. Pearce, “Classic Modernist Collecting,” in *On Collecting: an investigation into collecting in the European tradition* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 124.

<sup>40</sup> Pearce, “Classic Modernist Collecting,” 126–7.

<sup>41</sup> J. Clifford, “Collecting ourselves,” in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 265.

<sup>42</sup> Clifford, “Collecting ourselves,” 265.

<sup>43</sup> Pearce, “Classic Modernist Collecting,” 126–7.

<sup>44</sup> Pearce, “Classic Modernist Collecting,” 126–7.

example of the rehang of the Royal Viennese Collection in 1776, where art was grouped according to national schools and stylistic periodisation.<sup>45</sup> An accompany *Guide* was published ensuring that visitors to the institution were aware that a ‘walk through the gallery was a walk through art history’.<sup>46</sup> Pearce’s identification of the transferral of taxonomy to alternative collecting practices also positions the use of taxonomy as a tool of the modern nation-state.

The continued presence of ‘representative’ within the scholarly field of collecting during the 1930s demonstrates that taxonomy remained relevant to early twentieth-century collecting practices. In Australia, the continued presence and similar application of ‘representative’ to national art collections reflects the past use of taxonomy to define cultural identity within the modern-nation state. The taxonomic origins indicate that such collections consisted of art, which, through observation, delineated Australian art. Ewing’s ‘representative’ collecting practice further reflects the classificatory origins, and in the context of his theme, suggests that he too sought to define Australian art. The examination of an emerging national culture through the use of taxonomy could then be interpreted as a twentieth-century reconfiguration of the Wunderkammer, now confined to the microcosm of the modern nation-state.

### **The Classifying Collector**

As a collecting method however, Ewing’s use of ‘representative’ predates comparative 1930s applications in Australia. Ewing originally utilised the term to distinguish a nation-based art collection almost two decades earlier, in 1912.<sup>47</sup> His early use presents the possibility that he was not reflecting cultural trends but was instead applying taxonomic concepts from his own past experiences. Indeed, Frederick Baekeland argues that a collector’s educational background determines the extent to which classification practices are undertaken while collecting.<sup>48</sup> While Baekeland’s discussion of classification reiterates the continued presence of taxonomy within collecting practices of the twentieth century, he is also proposing that formal training in taxonomy transposes to art collecting practices.

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<sup>45</sup> Pearce notes similar applications of the Linnaean Method in displays in the British Museum, the Dusseldorf collection, the Uffizi and the Louvre during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Pearce, “Classic Modernist Collecting,” 126–7.

<sup>46</sup> Pearce, “Classic Modernist Collecting,” 126–7.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Dr S.A. Ewing, September 25, 1912, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1912.

<sup>48</sup> Frederick Baekeland, “Psychological aspects of art collecting,” in *Interpreting objects and collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 209.

This transferral is especially likely for Ewing. Ewing's educational background was in science, having undertaken over fifteen years of study at university level in the fields of medicine and natural sciences. While at the University of Melbourne during the 1880s, Ewing's medical studies also included subjects in botany, zoology, comparative anatomy, geology and mineralogy.<sup>49</sup> Significantly, all these fields required a theoretical understanding of taxonomy.<sup>50</sup>

Ewing's extra-curricular activities as a student provide further evidence of his comprehension of taxonomy. In 1886 Ewing helped found the University's Science Club, becoming secretary of the organisation.<sup>51</sup> Inspired by a similar group at Oxford, the Club consisted of 'those interested in the various branches of science [who wish] to promote the study of science [and undertake] field and marine work under the direction of specialists'.<sup>52</sup>

As part of Club activities, field trips were organised, focusing on the practical application of taxonomy, such as selecting, collecting and mounting specimens.<sup>53</sup> On one such field trip, Ewing gave a talk on the marine invertebrate amphioxus, which he illustrated with recently acquired and mounted specimens.<sup>54</sup> Alongside Ewing's educational history, this incident further confirms that Ewing had both a theoretical and practical understanding of taxonomy.

As Durost demonstrated in 1930, by the early twentieth century when Ewing first acquired art, collectors were continuing to utilise taxonomic practices from the eighteenth century.<sup>55</sup> As Ewing had received formal training in taxonomy through his university studies, his past academic use would have easily transferred to his new interest in art collecting. Through Baudrillard, Ewing's first use of 'representative' in 1912 and application to his later collecting practices can therefore be understood reflexively as a transposition of his academic past. By interpreting 'representative' as a partial expression of Ewing's collecting method,

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<sup>49</sup> Ewing undertook courses in Structural and Physical Botany, Comparative Anatomy, and Zoology in 1885. During 1887, Ewing studied Chemistry, Mineralogy, Botany, Physical Geology and Mineralogy. Ethel Margaret Ewing Cutten, *Papers, 1920-1990*, Box 4.3, MS 12963, SLV.

<sup>50</sup> See Prothero, *Bringing fossils to life*, 43–62.

<sup>51</sup> Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer helped found the group, stating that it 'behoves the students to do their share toward assisting the cause of science in the University'. "University Science Club," *The Age*, July 6, 1888, 5.

<sup>52</sup> "University Science Club," *The Age*, July 6, 1888, 5.

<sup>53</sup> The Club undertook fieldtrips to Moonee Ponds and Cheltenham to search for terrestrial and marine biology, and geology. "University Science Club," *The Age*, September 15, 1888, 8.

<sup>54</sup> The talk was titled, "The structure and life history of amphioxus", with specimens collected from the Maribyrnong River in Moonee Ponds. "University Science Club," *The Age*, July 12, 1888, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Durost, *Children's Collecting*, 10.

his overall structure can be understood as science-based; Ewing thus utilised taxonomic concepts to define the inclusion and exclusions of his version of Australian art history.

### **Taxonomic Art Collecting**

Considering that Ewing had a practical and theoretical understanding of taxonomy, his conceptual application presents the possibility that he applied other taxonomic practices to his collecting activities. While undertaking fieldwork as part of the Science Club, Ewing identified, collected and mounted specimens, and documented the process through an accompanying talk.<sup>56</sup> Ewing's knowledge and practical application presents the possibility that a similar systematic and scientific approach to collecting may be distinguishable across his collecting practices.

Ewing's preferred location for acquiring works of art can arguably be understood through a taxonomic lens. He overwhelmingly acquired art through solo exhibitions. Unlike the secondary art market, solo exhibitions provided Ewing with the opportunity to view a variety of samples of one artist. Through taxonomic principles, Ewing could then identify and acquire the most exemplary example of an artist's work. Ewing favoured this approach and acquired over half of his collection from such exhibitions.<sup>57</sup> Through taxonomy, such trips could be interpreted as fieldwork, with Ewing's acquisitions therefore a type of specimen selection.

Continuing this analogy, Ewing would have then undertaken close observation of potential acquisitions as part of selecting the most representative specimen available. Ewing can be seen as applying this idea when attending solo exhibitions, as evident from his copies of exhibition catalogues. In the catalogue he would systematically narrow down potential acquisitions by placing a cross, tick or line against potential purchases.<sup>58</sup> While attending the Frances Hodgkins's exhibition in 1912, Ewing marked 17 of the 74 paintings on display (fig. 81). He finally settled on two paintings, *Rosamund* (fig. 15) and *Dejeuner at the Hotel du Lion d'Or* (fig. 16). Ewing's markings could be interpreted as a type of connoisseurship

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<sup>56</sup> "University Science Club," *The Age*, 12 Jul 1888, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ewing acquired approximately 31 of the 58 works of art from solo exhibitions. He acquired only nine from the secondary art market. See Appendix 1 for acquisition details.

<sup>58</sup> Catalogues which survived and include marks by Ewing are: Blamire Young and Frances Hodgkins's exhibitions in 1912, Max Meldrum's in the Athenaeum Hall in 1913, E. Phillips Fox's Memorial exhibition at the Upper Athenaeum Hall in 1916, Bernard Hall's 1919 exhibition in the Athenaeum Hall and Arthur Streeton's 1920 exhibition in the Victorian Art Societies Gallery. See Ewing Papers, 2591/1 – 2592/2, MS 11675, SLV.

practices that involved comparative examination to determine which artwork fulfilled his taxonomic criteria of ‘representative’.

Ewing’s documentation of acquisitions also reflect taxonomic practices undertaken during scientific fieldwork. In the “Introduction” to *Makers and Making Aboriginal Collections*, Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby posit that collectors with a background in the natural sciences are more likely to provide a higher level of documentation when collecting than those lacking such education.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Ewing’s high level of documentation when collecting further demonstrates the presence of scientific practices in his collecting methods.

Ewing retained a variety of material relating to acquisitions, with most surviving documents from the early stages of his collecting career. Over the course of his collecting career, Ewing kept over 28 exhibition catalogues and several of the sales receipts.<sup>60</sup> He also retained all the receipts for the decorative arts collection acquired in London and Paris during 1921.<sup>61</sup> As the first chapter demonstrated, Ewing’s collection is unique amongst his art collecting peers in that the majority of provenance records have survived. Their existence today suggests that Ewing likely perceived documentation as an essential part of his collecting process.<sup>62</sup>

Conducting research on specimens prior to undertaking fieldwork is another taxonomic practice identifiable in Ewing’s collecting methods. This is most evident in Ewing’s purchasing of art books and journals which relate to the art and artists of his collection. Between WWI and the early 1920s, Ewing purchased an array of publications on Australian art and artists from the newly flourishing local publishing scene.<sup>63</sup> In addition to owning all Sydney Ure Smith’s *Art in Australia* journals from 1916 to 1922, Ewing also acquired books

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<sup>59</sup> Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby, “Introduction,” in *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, ed. by Nicolas Peterson et al. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008): 15.

<sup>60</sup> The receipts Ewing kept that have survived include Hilder’s *The Bridge* and *Children Playing*, Streeton’s *Domes of St Marks*, and Fullwood’s, *An English Garden*. Ewing Papers, 2592/3(a), SLV.

<sup>61</sup> Ewing may have initially retained these receipts for Australian customs requirements. Nevertheless, he continued to hold onto the receipts after his return to Australia, indicating value assigned beyond administrative purposes. Ewing Gift File, National Gallery of Victoria.

<sup>62</sup> Ewing’s daughter Margaret retained Ewing’s acquisition material and gifted the documents to the SLV and the NGV during the 1980s. See Ewing Gift File, National Gallery of Victoria, and Ewing Papers, MS 11675, SLV.

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix 6 for list of Ewing’s books. The books were gifted to the NGV by Ewing’s daughter Margaret in 1982 and are now held in the Shaw Research Library. See also *The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982), 14.

on six of the 30 artists in his collection.<sup>64</sup> When acquiring art, he may then have consulted such texts in order to determine firstly, which artist to patronise, and secondly, to identify a representative example of that artist's work. Although the influence is difficult to confirm, the presence of a corresponding book collection nevertheless indicates that Ewing actively sought to extend his art historical knowledge following WWI.

On several occasions, a corresponding chronological pattern exists between Ewing's patronage of an artist and the acquisition of related books. One such example is Ewing's patronage of Frederick McCubbin. In 1910 Ewing acquired McCubbin's painting *A Frosty Morning*, 1910 (fig. 12) and in 1912, *Peeling Potatoes*, c.1912 (fig. 82).<sup>65</sup> In 1916, Ewing acquired James MacDonald's book, *The art of Frederick McCubbin*. As previously mentioned, Ewing was also among over one hundred subscribers for the text and had *A Frosty Morning* reproduced in the book.<sup>66</sup> After McCubbin's death in 1919, Ewing maintained an interest in the reception of the artist, purchasing Alexander Colquhoun's *Frederick McCubbin, a consideration*.<sup>67</sup> Ewing's continued interest in the scholarly reception of a chosen artist may suggest that his collecting methods also included evaluating past acquisitions, perhaps as an endeavour to confirm the enduring representative quality of his overall collection.

Ewing's use of taxonomic principles while collecting can be identified beyond the acquisition stage. His approach to mounting and displaying art within the home setting is clearly influenced by taxonomy. From 1908 to 1938, Ewing displayed his art collection within his home in St Kilda.<sup>68</sup> Ewing would create sub-groups within his collection by classifying each acquisition according to medium, such as paintings, drawings, etchings and decorative

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix 6 and *Ewing gift*, 14.

<sup>65</sup> McCubbin's painting is currently titled *Untitled [Sheila]* by the Ian Potter Museum of Art. The work was previously known as *Little Housewife*, as described by Ewing in the 1938 catalogue. The Ian Potter Museum altered the name through discussion with McCubbin's daughter Kathleen, who saw the painting on display and stated that the figure was not her mother (McCubbin's wife Annie) but was instead her sister Sheila. Kathleen suggested that Sheila may have been shelling peas. However, in Colquhoun's profile of Ewing's collection in 1930, Ewing named the work *Peeling the potatoes*. Importantly, McCubbin sold a work by the same name in 1912, with *Peeling Potatoes* listed as number 28 for 15 guineas in his 1912 exhibition. I have therefore interpreted the name change as instigated by Ewing sometime between 1930 and 1938, and have thus returned the title to McCubbin's original, *Peeling Potatoes*. See *Catalogue of pictures by Fred and Louis McCubbin*, Melbourne: Atlas Press, 1912; *Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938), 28; Frederick McCubbin, *Untitled (Sheila)*, 1938.0015, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne; and, Colquhoun, "Dr Ewing's Collection."

<sup>66</sup> James S MacDonald ed., *The Art of Frederick McCubbin* (Melbourne: Lothian Book Publishing Co., 1916), 99.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>68</sup> Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

objects. He then hung works of art within respective medium groupings, with each group distinguished further by being placed in separate rooms of his house.<sup>69</sup> Ewing's curatorial approach is clearly explained through taxonomic classificatory systems. By overlaying Linnaean's hierarchical system on the concept of art and artists, Ewing can be understood as conceiving a work of art as a specimen, with the medium interpreted as the second-tiered *genus* of Linnaean's ranking system.<sup>70</sup> Ewing's decision to align works of art according to medium could therefore be seen as a classificatory undertaking, and further confirms that he directly applied taxonomic principles to his collection.

While taxonomic principles are evident in Ewing's collecting practices throughout his career, some elements waned over the course of his life. After WWI, Ewing rarely attended solo exhibitions or documented acquisitions, with few records surviving and no provenance records evident from purchases on the secondary art market. The lessening of identifiable taxonomic attributes could signify that Ewing no longer utilised scientific methods when collecting. However, Ewing's continued use of several elements, including ascertaining the 'representative' nature of an acquisition, indicates that he did not wholly disregard his scientific background.

Nevertheless, there is discernible shift in Ewing's collecting practices following WWI. Importantly, the timing of this shift corresponds to the change of narratives within his overall theme, as identified at the beginning of this chapter. Following WWI, Ewing's theme altered from a stylistic exploration to a chronological narrative. The heightened use of taxonomy during the construction of the stylistic narrative presents the possibility that this earlier structure resulted from Ewing's scientific background.

Despite stylistic and chronologically converging narratives within Ewing's collection, the overarching use of 'representative' through his collecting career suggests that Ewing conceptualised his collection, and thus his theme, through science. While Ewing's application of 'representative' as a collecting method emphasised the importance of the specimen or artwork selection, the ranking system of taxonomy instead positions the *class*, or in Ewing's case Australian artists, as the main subject of the collection. By considering Ewing's theme through his educational background, we can therefore understand Ewing's visual

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<sup>69</sup> Colquhoun wrote in *The Age* profile that: 'The pictures are, as far as is practicable in a private house, divided into sections according to the medium employed'. Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection."

<sup>70</sup> See Prothero, *Bringing fossils to life*, 45.

interpretation of art history not as the history of Australian art, but as the history of Australian artists.

### **The Evolution of Australian Artists**

The presence of scientific principles in the overlaying structure of Ewing's collection presents the possibility that the structure underlying his conceptualisation of art history is also based on scientific concepts. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Charles Taylor explains the circular reverberations of identifying partial expressions, with subsequent interpretations dependent on that of others, and ultimately on the whole.<sup>71</sup> The remainder of this chapter will evoke Taylor's notion of circularity to consider corresponding interpretations of scientific principles within the underlying structure of Ewing's theme.

Returning to the field of science, the corresponding structures directly linked to taxonomy are evolutionary theories. Pearce argues that the formation of taxonomy in 1735 was the precursor for the development of evolutionary theories.<sup>72</sup> Pearce posits that taxonomy created a 'chronological series of flat planes of knowledge' which needed to be 'linked into an intelligible lattice work by the addition of a vertical idea'.<sup>73</sup> While there were several attempts to develop evolutionary theories during the nineteenth century, the most significant was Charles Darwin's theory of evolution published in his seminal 1859 text, *On the Origin of Species*.<sup>74</sup> Darwin's book was immensely popular, selling out on the day of publication.<sup>75</sup> Pearce concludes that Darwin's theories provided taxonomy's hierarchy with a chronological structure, thus accounting for the diversity of life-forms on earth.<sup>76</sup> Taxonomy classified and recorded, while Darwin's evolutionary theories explained and rationalised what was being recorded. As the two theories were inextricably interwoven, Ewing's use of taxonomic principles may then indicate that he also applied evolutionary concepts to his theme.

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<sup>71</sup> Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," 18.

<sup>72</sup> Pearce, "Classic Modernist Collecting," 133–34.

<sup>73</sup> Pearce, "Classic Modernist Collecting," 133–34.

<sup>74</sup> Previous evolutionary theories included those by Jean-Bapiste Lamarck and Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin. See Robert O. Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," in *Making art history: a changing discipline and its institutions*, ed. Elizabeth C. Mansfield (New York; London: Routledge, 2007), 189–190.

<sup>75</sup> Darwin's book has continued to grow in popularity. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, 20 books per year were published on Darwin's theories. By the 1900s, 30 books per year were being published. During the 1950s the number increased to 50 books a year. Today an average of 160 books on Darwin's seminal 1859 text are published per year, which is described by David Dobbs as a 'Darwinian tome per 2.3 days'. David Dobbs, "Survival of the Prettiest," *The New York Times*, September 18, 2017, accessed September 19, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/books/review/evolution-of-beauty-richard-prum-charles-darwin.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Pearce, "Classic Modernist Collecting," 133–34.

Ewing would have similarly intertwined the two theories during his studies at the University of Melbourne. Significantly, the science-based emphasis of Ewing's medical degree reflected the impact of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. Although almost twenty years after publication, Ewing's courses included subjects outside of medicine that utilised Darwin's theories, including comparative anatomy and zoology.<sup>77</sup> Ewing's professors, including Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer, were also Darwin enthusiasts.<sup>78</sup> Ewing's activities in the University's Science Club similarly reflects Darwinian ideas. The talk Ewing gave on the amphioxus most likely addressed evolutionary theories, seeing that the zoological importance of the species is based on its use interpreting the evolutionary origins of vertebrates.<sup>79</sup> As taxonomy was the tool whereby evolutionary theories were examined, Ewing's use of taxonomy during the 1880s indicates that he was also trained in Darwin's corresponding explanatory system. When collecting, Ewing's use of taxonomy may have facilitated an application of Darwin's theories in order to explain and thus structure a visual history of Australian artists.

### **Ewing's Survival of the Fittest**

Significantly, the structure of European art history of the late nineteenth-century was also based on Darwin's theory of evolution. The humanist application of evolutionary theories is examined by Robert Bork in his article "Art, science, and evolution".<sup>80</sup> Bork explores the methodological and epistemological impact on art history and concludes that although diffuse, evolutionary theories are present within overarching structures.<sup>81</sup> Matthew Rampley agrees, explaining in *The Seductions of Darwin* that evolutionary theories are most identifiable in the overall form of art history.<sup>82</sup> The presence of evolutionary theories in art

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<sup>77</sup> The curriculum of the University's medical degree was based on the pre-eminent medical institution of the day, the University of Edinburgh, which incorporated a range of science subjects as part of the degree. See A.J. Youngson, "Medical education in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: the science take-over," *Medical Education*, 1989, Vol. 23, Issue 6 (November 1989): 580 – 491; and, Milton J. Lewis, "Medicine in colonial Australia, 1788–1900," *Medical Journal of Australia*, Vol. 201, Issue 1, Supplementary (July 2014): <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/201/1/medicine-colonial-australia-1788-1900>.

<sup>78</sup> Spencer is described by his biographer, John Mulvaney, as a 'second-generation Darwinian evolutionary biologist'. John Mulvaney, "Annexing All I Can Lay Hands On," in *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, ed. by Nicolas Peterson et al. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 156; "University Science Club," *The Age*, July 6, 1888, 5.

<sup>79</sup> See Nicholas H. Putnam et al., "The amphioxus genome and the evolution of the chordate karyotype," *Nature* 453, 1064 – 1071 (19 June 2008): <https://www.nature.com/articles/nature06967>; "University Science Club," *The Age*, 12 Jul 1888, 9.

<sup>80</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 187–201.

<sup>81</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 192.

<sup>82</sup> Matthew Rampley, *The Seductions of Darwin: Art, Evolution, Neuroscience* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), 7.

historical narratives of Ewing's era could therefore be identifiable within the overarching shape of the narrative.

One must first identify the shape of Darwin's theory in order to distinguish the manifestation of an evolutionary shape within an art historical narrative. Bork explains that Darwin's theory of evolution:

depend[s] upon the existence of variation within individual populations, because the principle of natural selection involves the relatively greater reproductive success of those individuals in the group that succeeds best in their environments.<sup>83</sup>

For Ewing to have structurally conceived his narrative of art history through Darwin's theory, the idea of variation may therefore exist.

The notion of variation is evident in the stylistic narrative of Ewing's theme. As discussed in the previous chapter, this section of Ewing's theme developed between 1910 and 1916, as he mapped the contemporary Australian art scene. His acquisitions during this period were stylistically diverse and disassociated from public taste and art world divisions of the time. Juliette Peers similarly observed the stylistic disparity in Ewing's early acquisitions.<sup>84</sup> Over this six-year period Ewing purchased Rupert Bunny's Whistler-inspired *The New Step*, c.1908 (fig. 13), Meldrum's tonalist works, such as *Coucher de Soleil*, c.1910 (fig. 21), Blamire Young's art nouveau-inspired *The Pasture Stance*, c.1911-12 (fig. 79), McCubbin's plein air landscape, *A Frosty Morning*, 1910 (fig. 12), Heysen's realistic watercolour landscape, *Gums in morning light*, c.1912 (fig. 18), and Frances Hodgkins's post-impressionist exploration of colour in *Rosamund*, c.1909-1912 (fig. 15). This eclectic mix combined with Ewing's stronger application taxonomic practices prior to WWI may suggest that he was structuring the collection theme through Darwin's corresponding evolutionary theory.

By interpreting Ewing's stylistic narrative of Australian art history through a Darwinian framework, Ewing's focus on contemporary artists could then be conceived as observing the evolutionary process of art history as it occurred. Ewing thus positioned himself as witnessing the stylistic development of Australian artists, as a type of deist observer.

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<sup>83</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 192.

<sup>84</sup> Chris McAuliffe and Juliette Peers, *The full majesty of nature: the collection of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing* (Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002), 7.

However, as a collector, it is Ewing who defines the boundaries of his collection, with his choice of art and artists instead positioning him as the natural selector.

### **Frederick McCubbin's Evolution of Australian Artists**

After 1916, Ewing's stylistic variation stopped, and the presence of taxonomy lessened in his collecting practices. Following WWI, Ewing modified his theme to include an exploration of the past and began to conceive art history not as a stylistic exploration but as a chronology. While Ewing continued to acquire contemporarily-produced art, stylistically his purchases instead consolidated an Edwardian-focus as he avoided modern art. While Ewing continued to apply the concept of 'representative' to acquisitions, other taxonomic practices, such as documentation and purchasing from solo exhibitions waned, as he began to favour the secondary art market. While the diminished presence of taxonomy indicates that Ewing was no longer collecting or structuring his theme according to scientific principles, the continued use of 'representative' suggests that some scientific element remained.

The altered theme and shift away from taxonomy presents the possibility that as the theme changed, so too did its structure. At this time, Ewing notably began to acquire books on the art and artists of his collection. The books may indicate that Ewing began to look towards the art world for guidance on the inclusions and exclusions of a history of Australian artists. As identified in the previous chapter, following WWI, Ewing began modelling his theme on Frederick McCubbin's history, as outlined in *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*.<sup>85</sup> McCubbin's history was based on a chronological development of Australian artists that progressed through four artists, Louis Buvelot, Walter Withers, David Davies and Arthur Streeton, with each artist representing a generation that extends the next.<sup>86</sup> Notably, McCubbin's genealogical progression also implies an overall evolutionary shape.

While Ewing most likely drew evolutionary ideas from his scientific background, the presence of such ideas in McCubbin's writings may have been drawn from the similar undertakings in European art history of the era. Lauren Golden argues that the art history was being formulated in and around the cultural impact of Darwin's 1859 text, and thus, reverberations of Darwin's theories are evident in the works of art historians such as Semper,

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<sup>85</sup> Frederick McCubbin, "Some remarks on the history of Australian art," in *The art of Frederick McCubbin*, ed. James S MacDonald (Melbourne: Lothian Book Publishing Co., 1916), 82–95.

<sup>86</sup> MacDonald, *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*, 67.

Riegl, Wölfflin and Panofsky.<sup>87</sup> Evolutionism was also a feature in the broader Australian arts culture of the time,<sup>88</sup> with the influence of Darwinian theories in Australian art history later evident in Bernard Smith's 1945 text, *Place, taste and tradition*.<sup>89</sup> The presence of Darwinian frameworks in European art histories of McCubbin's era and the later application in the Australian context may indicate that McCubbin also centred his narrative structure of Australian art history on evolutionary theories.

Yet, the linear shape of McCubbin's narrative does not reflect Darwin's emphasis on variation. Instead, McCubbin's selection of four artists to delineate a progressing linear structure more strongly reflects the evolutionary theories of the previous generation, and particularly Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who proposed descent by modification.<sup>90</sup> Bork identifies the continued presence of theories refuted by Darwin in the humanities and argues that such epistemological transferrals are instead misinterpretations of Darwin's theories.<sup>91</sup> Bork observes that:

Humanists ... tend to associate the term evolution with progressive linear development, even though Darwin's own model of biological evolution is neither progressive nor linear.<sup>92</sup>

Bork posits that the misinterpretation results from the renowned illustration of evolution as a linear sequence (fig. 83).<sup>93</sup> This iconic image portrays the evolution of humans as hominid forms progressing sequentially from apes to *Homo sapiens*. Bork concludes that the popularity of the image revitalised the cultural presence of Lamarck's disproved linear theories.<sup>94</sup> While McCubbin's linear genealogy of Australian art history reflects Lamarckian concepts, the progression of the four artists could also be interpreted as mirroring the sequential development of the iconic image of Darwin's evolution.<sup>95</sup> McCubbin, like his European counterparts, may have also utilised misinterpreted Darwinian theories of evolution to structure Australian art history.

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<sup>87</sup> Lauren Golden, "Science, Darwin and Art History," in *Raising the eyebrow: John Onians and World Art Studies*, ed. by Lauren Golden (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2001), 80–81, 90.

<sup>88</sup> For an examination of evolutionism in relation to Aboriginal art during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see Susan Lowish, "Evolutionists and Australian Aboriginal art: 1885–1915," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 12 (June 2015): <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/lowish.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> See Ian McLean, "Hegel or Darwin? The role of tendencies in Bernard Smith's historiography," *Thesis Eleven*, no. 82 (2005): 54–61.

<sup>90</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 189, 191.

<sup>91</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 196.

<sup>92</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 196.

<sup>93</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 191.

<sup>94</sup> Bork, "Art, science, and evolution," 189, 191.

<sup>95</sup> MacDonald, *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*, 67.

## Ewing's Australian School of Art

In addition to McCubbin's underlying structure referencing evolutionary theories, McCubbin's use of a positivist narrative further reflects humanist interpretations of scientific concepts. Lauren Golden, in her article "Science, Darwin and Art History", locates evolutionary theories as influencing the use of positivist narratives in European art histories of the time.<sup>96</sup> McCubbin's narrative clearly reflects positivist concepts. His four chosen artists progress towards optimality, with the linear narrative culminating in a National School of Art as represented by Arthur Streeton.

Unlike McCubbin, Ewing would have been well-versed in Darwin's evolutionary theories and the corresponding disproved theories of the previous generations. While Ewing's early constructions of his collection theme do reflect Darwinian concepts of variation, the structural shift in his narrative following WWI could also be interpreted as the application of evolutionary ideas, but this time, through McCubbin. Through McCubbin, Ewing's structure of art history can be understood as a misinterpretation of Darwin, with the past reconstrued as a positivist narrative centred on a linear chronological progression.

Ewing's later treatment of McCubbin's four artists further indicates the influence of McCubbin's evolutionary model. As discussed in the previous chapter, by 1926, Ewing owned art produced by three of McCubbin's four artists: Buvelot, Withers and Streeton. Later that year Ewing purchased two works of art by the missing artist, David Davies, *Evening, Templestowe*, c.1893–99 (fig. 54), and *Market at Dieppe*, c.1920 (fig. 55). Ewing's decision to acquire an early work by Davies provides the final, visual chronological link from McCubbin's model to Ewing's collection.

Ewing's engagement with Streeton's work also reflects McCubbin's art historical structure. McCubbin positioned Streeton at the end point of Australian art history, where progress has achieved optimality through a National School of Art.<sup>97</sup> While Ewing acquired early works from Streeton's contemporaries, such as David Davies (fig.54) and John Ford Paterson (fig.31), when acquiring Streeton's art, Ewing would only purchase the artist's most contemporarily-produced works. Ewing's second last addition to his collection, one of Streeton's final works, *White Lilac*, c.1938 (fig. 77), also echoes the conclusion of

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<sup>96</sup> Golden, "Science, Darwin and Art History," 79–90.

<sup>97</sup> MacDonald, *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*, 67.

McCubbin's structure. Although Streeton's early works may have arguably been too expensive for Ewing,<sup>98</sup> Ewing's continued acquisition of Streeton's most recent works positioned the artist, like McCubbin's structure, as the conclusion of a progressive narrative.

Ewing's acquisition of Streeton's most recent works over a 30-year period creates an additional evolutionary metaphor within the collection. This time however, the structure concerns the developing oeuvres of individual artists. In the case of Streeton, Ewing first purchased the artist's work in 1914, *The domes of St Mark's*, 1908 (fig. 24), with the chosen painting evoking the artist's recent years in Europe. In 1920, Ewing acquired a further three works (figs 36–37), which again reflected Streeton's most recent activities, this time as a war artist. In 1927 Ewing acquired a panoramic cityscape, *Sydney Harbour at Cremorne*, 1926 (fig. 60), which referenced Streeton's early career while demonstrating the more refined brushwork of the artist's mature style. Ewing concluded the artist's career in 1938 with the still life, *White lilac*, 1938 (fig. 77), which consolidated the more conservative brushwork and subject matter of Streeton's late style. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ewing similarly acquired art spanning the careers of Hans Heysen (figs. 5–6, 17–19, 25, 73–75), Jesse Hilder (figs. 22–23, 28–30), and Harold Herbert (figs. 70–72, 78). Although these additional artists did not directly reference McCubbin's selections, Ewing's treatment further confirms the presence of McCubbin's overarching structure of art history as a progressing evolutionary narrative.

## Conclusion

By extending the concept of art history to include alternative narrative practices, I have demonstrated that Ewing's collecting activities and subsequent collection reflected historical and theoretical concepts of art history of his period. Through an interpretation of 'representative' as a partial expression of Ewing's theme, I demonstrated that the overall structure of Ewing's collection was based on scientific concepts. The differing chronological and stylistic narratives were explained through a structural and thematic shift, as Ewing altered his reflexive application of Darwin's theories in light of McCubbin's humanist misinterpretation of Darwin. Through McCubbin, Ewing's structure of Australian art history shifted from recording stylistic variation to the articulation of a linear progression. Ewing's acquisitions became stylistically conservative as he consolidated McCubbin's sequence. The

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<sup>98</sup> See Shireen Huda, "Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer: Portrait of a collector," *Art Monthly Australia* 219 (May 2009): 37–40.

refinement of Ewing's theme for the 1938 donation therefore illustrates an 80-year progression of Australian artists which begins with Louis Buvelot and concludes stylistically and chronologically with Arthur Streeton. Ewing's Collection therefore maps the past and present of Australian art history as a positivist linear progression that achieves optimality in an Australian School of Art.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis posited that Dr. S.A. Ewing (1864–1941) collected a visual exploration of Australian art history. To illuminate Ewing’s theme, I centred the thesis on Ewing’s collecting activities and positioned each acquisition as part of a chronological accumulation. I positioned the accretion of his theme as reaching a zenith in 1938 when Ewing donated part of his collection to the University of Melbourne; the selections are thus Ewing’s final iteration of Australian art history.

In Chapter One, I brought to light the existence of a thriving art patronage scene in Melbourne during the early twentieth century. By surveying Alexander Colquhoun’s series on private collectors of Ewing’s era, I contributed to current research on collecting studies in Australia and demonstrated the remarkable impact and future potential of digitised print media on this field. The positive impact of philanthropy on the maintenance of collections and related archival material also emphasised the importance of public institutions as keepers of cultural heritage.

In Chapter Two, isolating Ewing’s collection theme confirmed the importance of biographical studies to the examinations of collectors, their collecting practices and corresponding collections. By utilising narratology to analyse the thematic development of Ewing’s collection, I also demonstrated the potential of interdisciplinary approaches as a means of exploring alternative aspects of collections. This approach further emphasised the necessity of engaging with provenance records and a broad range of archival material when establishing and analysing collection themes. Throughout, the focus given to Ewing’s collecting activities also highlighted his legacy as a significant collector of the day.

In Chapter Three, I demonstrated that concepts from the hermeneutic discourse can assist with the analyses of collections which lack extensive archival material. While these concepts facilitated an interpretation of the structure of Ewing’s collection theme, a more substantive engagement could have been achieved if further material relating to Ewing’s collecting practices had survived. This thesis therefore reiterates the vital role of archival material to examinations of collectors and collections in Australia.

### **Ewing’s Legacy**

This thesis demonstrated that Ewing's gift to the University of Melbourne in 1938 was identified and received as an art historical endeavour. However, the didactic potential of his collection was soon lost on staff and students. The student body immediately perceived the art as old-fashioned,<sup>1</sup> and the University Board viewed the Collection as aesthetic decoration for campus buildings.<sup>2</sup> The relative apathy for Australian art history within the developing discipline on the campus further affirmed the indifferent reception of Ewing's collection.<sup>3</sup>

By the 1970s, the permanent display of the Ewing Collection resulted in serious conservation issues for a number of the works,<sup>4</sup> and Ewing's requirement for a closed collection further alienated an already disinterested faculty and student body.<sup>5</sup> Attempts to revitalise the Collection were instead redirected towards organising a range of contemporary art exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> Throughout, Ewing's family endeavoured to maintain the art and their father's legacy, even threatening to remove the Collection from the University.<sup>7</sup> With an unenthusiastic discipline and a lack of broader cultural appreciation for Australian art, the

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<sup>1</sup> Students organised modern art exhibitions in the adjacent Rowen White Library which were popularly received by the student body. See Recent art exhibition of Melbourne artists, July 24, 1941, and August 7, 1941, Melbourne University Union Student Minutes 1923–1944, Accession 1982.0033.

<sup>2</sup> Priestly hoped that Ewing's gift would 'stimulate other owners of valuable and good pictures – especially Australian made pictures – to present examples to adorn the walls of the new building'.<sup>2</sup> Raymond Priestly to James Barrett, September 4, 1937, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

While the University has had a rich art philanthropic history since Ewing's donation, only two works can be directly identified as a direct result of his gift; these are two sketches of Bernard Hall's *Despair*, one gifted by Joseph Brown in 1985 (fig. 84) and the other by Mark McKinnon in 2012 (fig. 85). Ethel Carrick Fox was arguably influenced by Ewing's gift in 1939 when she gave two paintings by E. Phillips Fox to the Union. See "Art Gift to University," *The Age*, June 6, 1939, 7. See also Ian Potter Museum of Art, "Collection of the University of Melbourne," accessed August 12, 2014, <http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/collection>.

<sup>3</sup> Daryl Lindsay recalled a conversation with Sir Keith Murdoch and Sir John Medley that 'the Melbourne University with the [NGV] gallery collection behind it was the logical place to set up a Chair of Fine Arts'. Jaynie Anderson, "Interrogating Joe Burke and His Legacy," *MAJ Melbourne Art Journal* 8 (2005): 92. Terry Smith reminisces about his art history education at the University of Melbourne and noted the focus on European art and the exclusion of Australian art, even when Bernard Smith taught at the University. Terry Smith, "Inside out, outside in: changing perspectives in Australian art historiography," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 4 (June 2011): 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> By 1962 several works of art had 'broken frames ... broken glasses ... mould [on the watercolours] ... [a] canvas destroyed [and] inexpertly repaired and badly repainted'. The curtains around Longstaff's portrait were in a 'rotted state'. John Hugh Sutton's cast was taken to the Library and painted in colour. George Ewing to Vice Chancellor George Paton, June 27, 1962, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1962, 485 – Ewing Gallery, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

<sup>5</sup> Staff were surprised in 1970 when a valuation undertaken by Joseph Brown estimated the Collection's worth at \$75,000. New locks were immediately added to the Gallery. David Gourlay to Ray Marginson, August 21, 1970, Ewing and Cutten Files, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> See Janine Burke and Helen Hughes, *Kiffy Rubbo: curating the 1970s* (Brunswick: Scribe Publications, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Cutten donated the funds for the 1980 catalogue and her and her brother's persistent efforts resulted in a curator being hired specifically for the Collection. See Ethel Margaret Ewing Cutten Papers, 1920-1990, Box 3.2–3.5, MS 12963, SLV. See also Ewing and Cutten Files, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

significance of Ewing's Collection remained obscured, both on campus and in the wider art world.<sup>8</sup>

The Ewing family's difficulties with the University resulted in Ewing's daughter Margaret Cutten gifting the majority of her father's remaining art collection to the NGV during the 1980s.<sup>9</sup> Disquiet in the family remained, despite the resolution of several issues following the transferral of the Collection from Union House to the University Art Collection in 1990.<sup>10</sup> Soon after the transferral, Cutten removed archival material relating to Ewing and his collection from the University to the SLV,<sup>11</sup> and directed a significant trust away from the University to the Fitzroy Public Library.<sup>12</sup>

In more recent years, research and engagement with Ewing and his collection has revitalised his gift. The 2002 publication *The Full Majesty of Nature* was the first significant art historical analysis of Ewing's Collection. My ability to highlight and expand upon the 2002 publication has been aided by subsequent research on the artists, digitisation, and greater access and appreciation of archival material amongst private institutions around Melbourne.

### **Private Collections of Australian Art History**

This thesis has provided an understanding of Ewing's collection theme through Ewing himself. By positing that Ewing created a visual exploration of art history, I also positioned art collecting as a part of a broader cultural engagement with Australian art history. While the art history discipline in Australia has identified subsequent comparative endeavours by

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<sup>8</sup> Ewing's Collection was one of many underappreciated of university collections of the time. For further information, see *Cinderella collections: university museums & collections in Australia: the report of the University Museums Review Committee* (Canberra: Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> See Ewing Gift File, National Gallery of Victoria, and *The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> Disputes included which university body legally owned the collection. The University was confirmed as the legal owner, over the Student Union. When Student Union became an incorporated body in 1989, the University requested the Union pay fees for loaning, curation, security and conservation of the Collection. The Union declined and immediately returned the Collection to the University. Only at this stage was the Collection physically placed within the University's art collection in the adjacent Old Physics Building, Deakin Court. Juliana Engberg to Melinda Richards, October 17, 1989, Ewing and Cutten Files, Ian Potter Museum of Art; Daniel Rechtman to R.J. King, Rogers & Gaylard, June 12, 1990, Cutten Papers, Box 3.5, SLV.

<sup>11</sup> See Ewing Papers, 1828-1983, MS 11675, SLV.

<sup>12</sup> The fund originally consisted of \$200,000, which Margaret removed and directed towards the Fitzroy Public Library in 1990, six months before her death. Rogers & Gaylard to Margaret Cutten, July 2, 1990, Cutten Papers, Box 3.2 SLV. Margaret also transferred her portrait by McInnes and her brother's portrait by Rodway to the SLV, with the family files and photographs. Cutten Papers, Box 3.4, SLV.

private collectors,<sup>13</sup> scholars have not yet considered such collecting activities as distinct undertakings prior to and outside of the literary development.

Since Ewing's gift to the University in 1938, there have been several collector-philanthropists who have collected and donated similarly-themed collections to various nation-wide educational institutions around Australia. These include the Hinton Collection at the University of New England, acquired between the 1930s to 1950s,<sup>14</sup> the Stuartholme-Behan Collection at the University of Queensland, created between the 1940s and 1970s,<sup>15</sup> and the Joseph Brown Collection, collected from the 1960s to the 1990s, which, although originally intended for the University of Melbourne,<sup>16</sup> now resides in the NGV.<sup>17</sup> Like Ewing, all three collectors, Howard Hinton, Dr. Norman Behan and Dr. Joseph Brown, conceived their collections thematically as visual narrations of Australian art history.<sup>18</sup> Although Ewing was unlikely to have influenced the formation and donations of these collections, the prevalence of such endeavours instead positions art history-based collections as a distinctive form of art collecting in Australia.

Narrower-themed historical collections of Australian art have grown in popularity amongst collectors active from the 1950s onwards. Several have similarly been gifted to educational institutions. These include the Alec Cato Collection at Wesley College, which examines Australian art from 1900 to 1940,<sup>19</sup> and the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art, which features portraits and self-portraiture by Australian women artists from 1890, and is now in

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<sup>13</sup> Art historian Daniel Thomas identified art historically-themed collections in 1973 in the context of Joseph Brown's collection, although he noted that "it was unusual to find a private collector systematically building up a history of Australian art." Daniel Thomas, *Outlines of Australian art: the Joseph Brown Collection* (South Melbourne: Macmillan Australia, 1989), 1.

<sup>14</sup> See *Munificence: the story of the Howard Hinton Collection* (Armidale: New England Regional Art Museum, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> See *The Stuartholme-Behan Collection of Australian Art: exhibition held at the University Art Museum, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, June 1992* (St. Lucia: The Museum, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> John Poynter and Benjamin Thomas, *Miegunyah: the bequests of Russell and Mab Grimwade* (Carlton: The Miegunyah Press, 2015), 127–128.

<sup>17</sup> See Kirsty Grant et al., *The Joseph Brown Collection at NGV Australia* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Hinton wrote shortly before his death in 1951 that "My object was to provide a complete collection illustrating the development of Australian art from 1880 onwards". Joseph Eisenberg, *The year of 1933: works from the Howard Hinton Collection* (Armidale: New England Regional Art Museum, 1999), 6.

Behan stated he was inspired by Hinton's art historical theme, and collected according to Bernard Smith's conception of Australian art history in *Place, taste and tradition. The Stuartholme-Behan Collection*, 10.

Brown wrote in 1989: "To many readers this book will present a survey of Australian art. The principle aim in assembling this collection has been to illustrate, by representative examples, the course of development of Australian art over 200 years." Thomas, *Outlines of Australian art*, viii.

<sup>19</sup> Cato stated that his collection was 'by no means a definitive survey... but I feel it represents some of its major characteristics'. *The Alec Cato collection: the traditionalists of Australian painting 1900-1940* (Melbourne: Wesley College Society for the Arts, 1984), 5.

possession of the University of Western Australia.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the University of Melbourne recently received the Buxton Collection, which examines Australian artists after 1980.<sup>21</sup> Unlike other comparative gifts, the Cruthers and Buxton donations included funds to maintain the collections. The Cruthers family continues to provide financial support by funding acquisitions and assisting collection operations, including funds for exhibition programs and a curatorial advisor.<sup>22</sup> The Buxton donation included funds for a gallery to house and maintain the art and the family remains involved as part of the new gallery's board.<sup>23</sup>

A number of private collectors have also since gifted comparative art-history themed collections to regional galleries. Acquired from the 1950s onwards, these examples contain some elements of a narrative exploration of art history. One such collector is Laurence Ledger, whose collection of nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century art now resides in the Benalla Art Gallery.<sup>24</sup> A similar collection, the Mack Jost Collection, now resides in the Horsham Gallery.<sup>25</sup> William Bolton gifted a narrow-themed collection of Lionel Lindsay's work to the Toowoomba Art Gallery in 1959.<sup>26</sup> Collector Mary Turner gifted her collection of art spanning 1918 to 1980 to the Orange Regional Gallery, although she was careful to state that her collection does 'not attempt to be definitive or even widely representative' of the period.<sup>27</sup> During the 1960s to 1980s, Jack Manton created a collection based on artists from the Heidelberg School, with the collection now absorbed within the NGV's general collection.<sup>28</sup> While these examples are lesser known than their university-counterparts, the

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<sup>20</sup> See *In the company of women: 100 years of Australian women's art from the Cruthers Collection* (Northbridge: Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> The Collection was acquired by Michael Buxton and consists of 53 artists with approximately 300 works of art. Bhakthi Puvanenthiran, "Michael Buxton's \$26 million art gift to University of Melbourne will create new gallery," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 3, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Discussion between author and Gemma Weston, curator of the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art, October 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Puvanenthiran, "Michael Buxton's gift."

<sup>24</sup> Ledger created his collection between 1947 and 1972. His gift to the Benalla Art Gallery included funds for a gallery to house the collection. See *Laurence H. Ledger Collection: Australian Paintings Colonial – Contemporary* (Benalla: Benalla Art Gallery, 1985).

<sup>25</sup> See *The Mack Jost collection* (Horsham: City of Horsham Regional Art Gallery, 1986).

<sup>26</sup> See Jayson Althofer, "'Lover of the real Australia and sane art': William Bolton MBE and the Lionel Lindsay Art Gallery and Library," *The Australian Library Journal*, Volume 56, Issue 3-4 (2007): 233–250; and Jayson Althofer, "A regional romance of the storming of the art museum: Cultural contradictions of The Lionel Lindsay Art Gallery and Library," *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*, Volume 7, Number 1 (1 March 2018): 153–68.

<sup>27</sup> Ann Proudfoot, *An expanded view: the Mary Turner Collection at Orange Regional Gallery + works from the Art Gallery of NSW and the National Portrait Gallery* (Orange: Orange Regional Gallery, 2011), 6.

<sup>28</sup> The Manton collection was originally displayed within a stand-alone gallery and in an historic residence during the 1980s. See Patrick McCaughey and Jack Manton, *Australian painters of the Heidelberg school: the Jack Manton collection* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1979). See also Susanna De Vries-Evans,

presence of visual-based art historical narratives in the Australian gallery scene highlights the broader impact of this form of private art collecting on public institutions around the country.

In more recent years, a number of comparatively-themed collections have also appeared on the Australian auction market. In 1989, Sir Leon and Lady Trout auctioned their collection of Australian art from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> The Sheumack Collection featured art from the 1890s to the 1970s, and was dispersed in two auctions; the first was in 1997, and the second and final sale in 2009 after the death of the collector.<sup>30</sup> Reg Grundy explored an earlier narrative of Australian art history in his selection of art spanning from 1800–1900, which was dispersed in 2013.<sup>31</sup> Most recently, the remaining works from the Alan Bond Collection which spanned 200 years of art, were mostly dispersed in 2016 after the collector’s death.<sup>32</sup>

Collectors who were gifting and dispersing their collections from the 1980s onwards notably entered the collecting scene just as Ewing and his peers from Colquhoun’s series were leaving; the majority of newer collectors having begun their collections during the 1950s and 1960s. Such collectors could thus be conceived as the ‘second wave’ of William Moore’s ‘boom period’. The comparatively limited dispersal and increased philanthropic activities of the generation following from Ewing may suggest a cultural shift in perception of art as an individual possession to the conception of art as collective cultural heritage.

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“Tribute to a great collector: Jack Manton,” *Australian Collector's Quarterly* (November, December, January 1989–1990): 38–42.

<sup>29</sup> See *The collection of Sir Leon and Lady Trout; Everton House, Everton Park, Brisbane* (Brisbane: Christie, Manson & Woods, 1989); and, *Master works from the collection of Sir Leon and Lady Trout* (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1977).

<sup>30</sup> See *The D.R. Sheumack Collection of Australian paintings: 17 May-12 June 1983, S.H. Ervin Museum and Art Gallery* (Sydney: National Trust of Australia, 1983); and, Robyn Christie and Justin Miller, *The D.R. Sheumack Collection: eighty years of Australian painting* (Paddington: Sotheby's Australia, 1988); and, *Fine Australian and European paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and sculpture: including works from the D. R. Sheumack Collection and the Len Voss Smith Collection* (Woollahra: Sotheby's Australia, 1997); and, *Important Australian art including works from the collections of: the late Dr and Mrs D.R. Sheumack, Sydney; the late Jacqueline Crookston, Sydney; Mr Basil Sellers AM, Sydney; the late Francis Elek, London; Brookfield Multiplex, Perth and Sydney; Mrs Joan Crebbin, Sydney* (Melbourne: Sotheby's Australia Pty. Ltd., 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Reg Grundy and Joy Chambers-Grundy also stated their collecting motivation as the desire to visually ‘tell the story of Australian art’. *Important Australian art from the collection of Reg Grundy AC OBE and Joy Chambers-Grundy* (Sydney: Bonhams, 2013), forward.

<sup>32</sup> See Diana de Bussy, *The Alan Bond collection of Australian art* (Perth: Dallhold Investments Pty Ltd, 1990). See also, Richard Brewster, “Auction unites two leading players in 1983 America’s Cup victory,” *Australian Auction Review*, October 20, 2016. <http://www.australianauctionreview.com.au/auction-review/auction-unites-two-leading-players-1983-americas-cup-victory>.

Today few private collectors are undertaking Australian art history-themed collections. Billionaire Kerry Stokes is likely the only collector currently creating such a thematic collection, albeit within his other collecting streams.<sup>33</sup> Unlike collector-philanthropists who previously acquired such collections, Stokes does not intend to gift his collection to a public institution. Instead, Stokes has built and manages a standalone gallery to display his collection.<sup>34</sup> The scarcity of active collectors creating visual histories of Australian art may have resulted from the limited circulation of non-contemporary Australian art, in comparison to previous generations. The lack of comparative undertakings and the preference for narrower themes amongst collectors active over the past 40 years, including the Cruthers family and Michael Buxton, may also reflect the higher costs involved in creating such an endeavour today. Nevertheless, the continued presence of Australian art history-themed private collections in the collecting scene and institutional setting reveals a distinctive form that would benefit from further research.

While this thesis has positioned Ewing's collection as one of the earliest examples of art historical-based collections in Australia, Ewing's influence on subsequent undertakings is difficult to determine. The existence of overseas examples during Ewing's lifetime, as noted in Chapter Two in relation to Canada, presents the possibility that the formation and growth of such collections may reflect global movements, such as heightened nationalism preceding WWII.<sup>35</sup> As subsequent comparative collector-philanthropists in Australia continued to favour nationalistic content and prefer stand-alone collections maintained in perpetuity, further research may consider cultural hegemony as influencing such activities. As an early endeavour in this country, Ewing's collection nevertheless remains a pioneer of the format.

While scholars in Australian art history have recognised the distinctive form of art history themed-collections since at least the 1970s, it is difficult to determine the impact of these visual explorations on the literary narrative of Australian art. Nevertheless, as a permanent, closed collection, the Ewing Collection and others, such as the Joseph Brown Collection,

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<sup>33</sup> The main portion of the collection is housed in Perth, alongside other, smaller, thematic-based collections such as British expeditions to Antarctica. See Erica Persak, "A celebration of manuscripts in the Kerry Stokes Collection." *The Australian Library Journal*, Volume 63, Issue 1 (2014): Taylor and Francis Online.

<sup>34</sup> While Stokes's collection was housed in eight locations around Australia, he recently finished building one gallery for his collection in Perth. See "A Visit to the Kerry Stokes Collection," Royal Western Australian Historical Society, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.histwest.org.au/activities/visit-kerry-stokes-collection>.

<sup>35</sup> A comparative collection was being acquired at the University of Toronto in Canada during this period. Vice-Chancellor Raymond Priestly to Head of Anatomy Frederick Wood Jones, January 9, 1937, Registrar's corresponded (UM312) accession 1999.0014, 1938, 558 – Union House, various, Archives of the University of Melbourne.

significantly inhibit visual engagement with revisionist narratives of Australian art history. Despite this, closed collections can also provide a window into early, cultural engagements with art history, and thus present the possibility of more in-depth examinations with the history of the discipline. Comparative examinations of such collections may also illustrate the formation and perpetuation of national myths on a broader, cultural level prior to and alongside the development of the discipline in Australia.

Throughout this thesis, engaging with the theme of Ewing's collection has repositioned the collector as the author of his visual conceptualisation of Australian art history. The interplay between the self and the objects acquired highlighted the collector's role in defining the inclusions and exclusions in the collection. As this study sought to establish that Ewing created a history of Australian artists, I have focused on the inclusions of specific art and artists. Further research on this Collection can now more closely engage with the exclusions, such as Indigenous narratives and women artists. As an art history-themed collection, further studies of Ewing's collection, and others, therefore provide the opportunity to engage in postmodernist concepts of visibly authored histories.

By reassessing Ewing's collection as a visual exploration of art history, this thesis has uncovered alternative, broader cultural explorations of Australian art history that were being undertaken before and outside of the professional discipline. One important outcome of this thesis is thus the reconceptualisation of art collecting activities such as Ewing's as part of a more eclectic and inclusive engagement with the emergence of art history in Australia. While the biographical focus in this thesis positioned Ewing's art historical endeavour as idiosyncratic, the broader knowledge of 'representative' collections and alternative applications of evolutionary frameworks instead demonstrated the diversity and interdisciplinary nature of Australia's early twentieth-century art histories.

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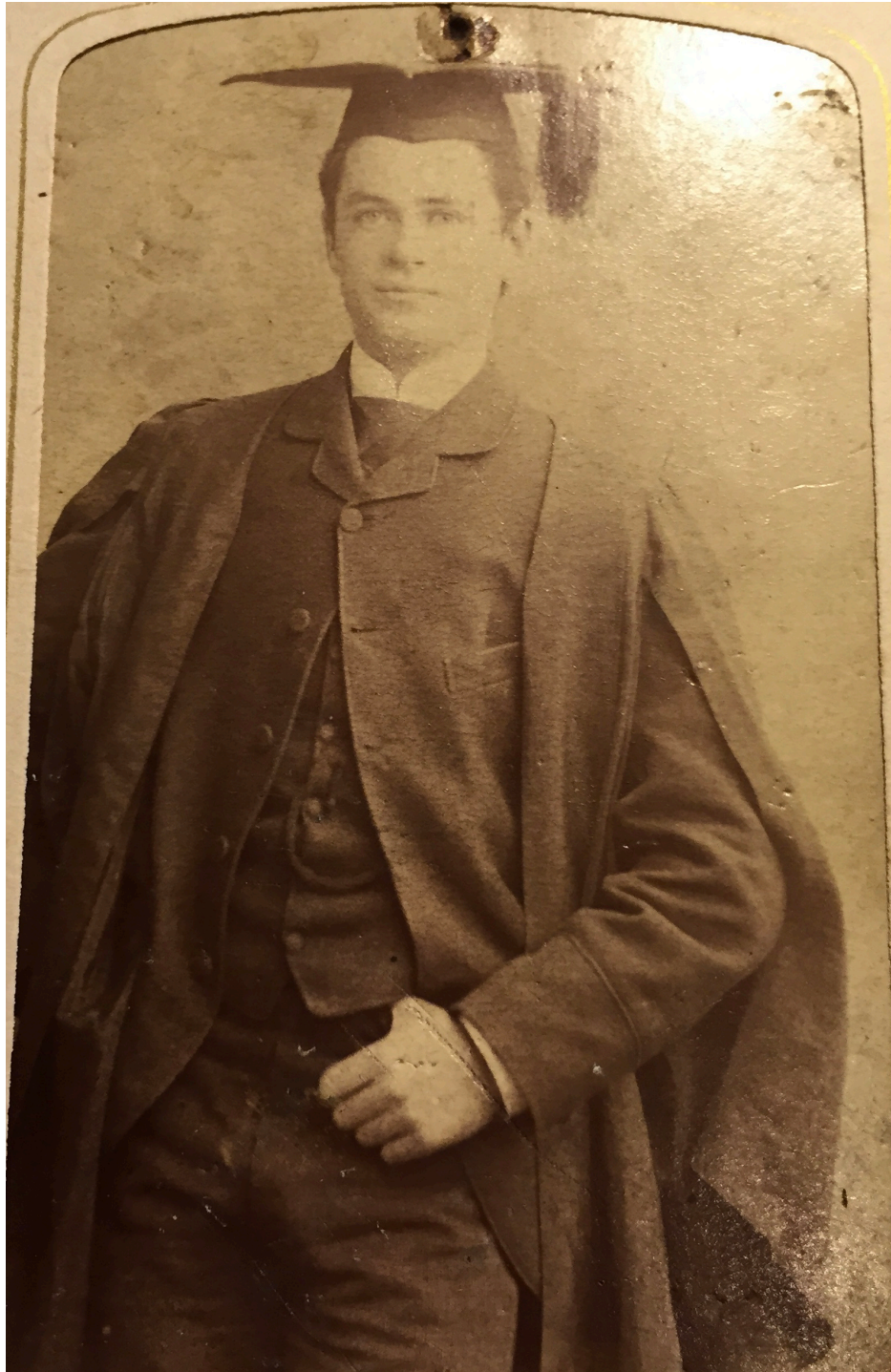


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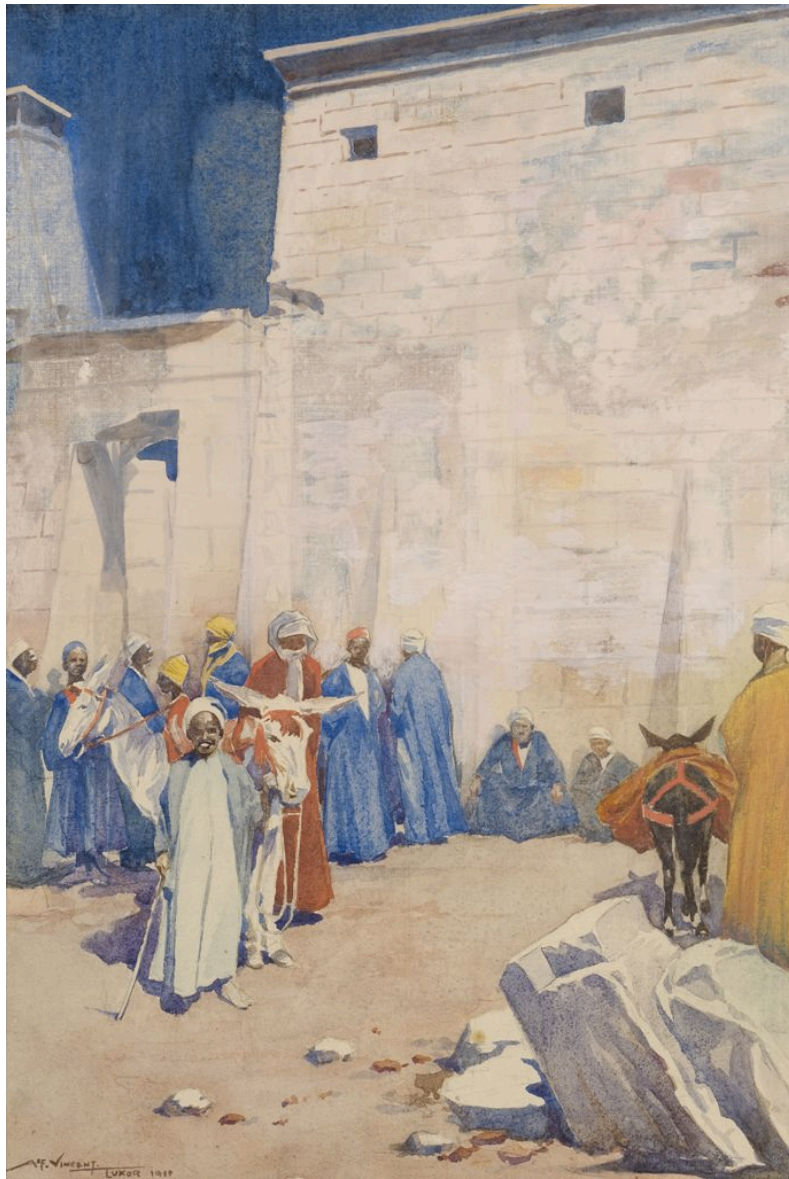


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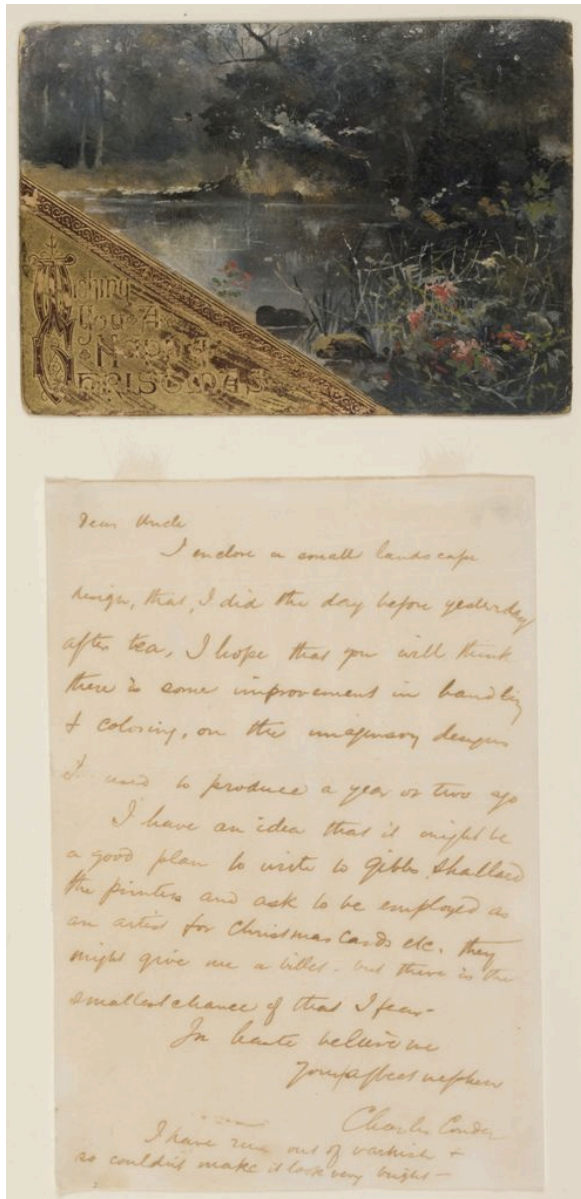


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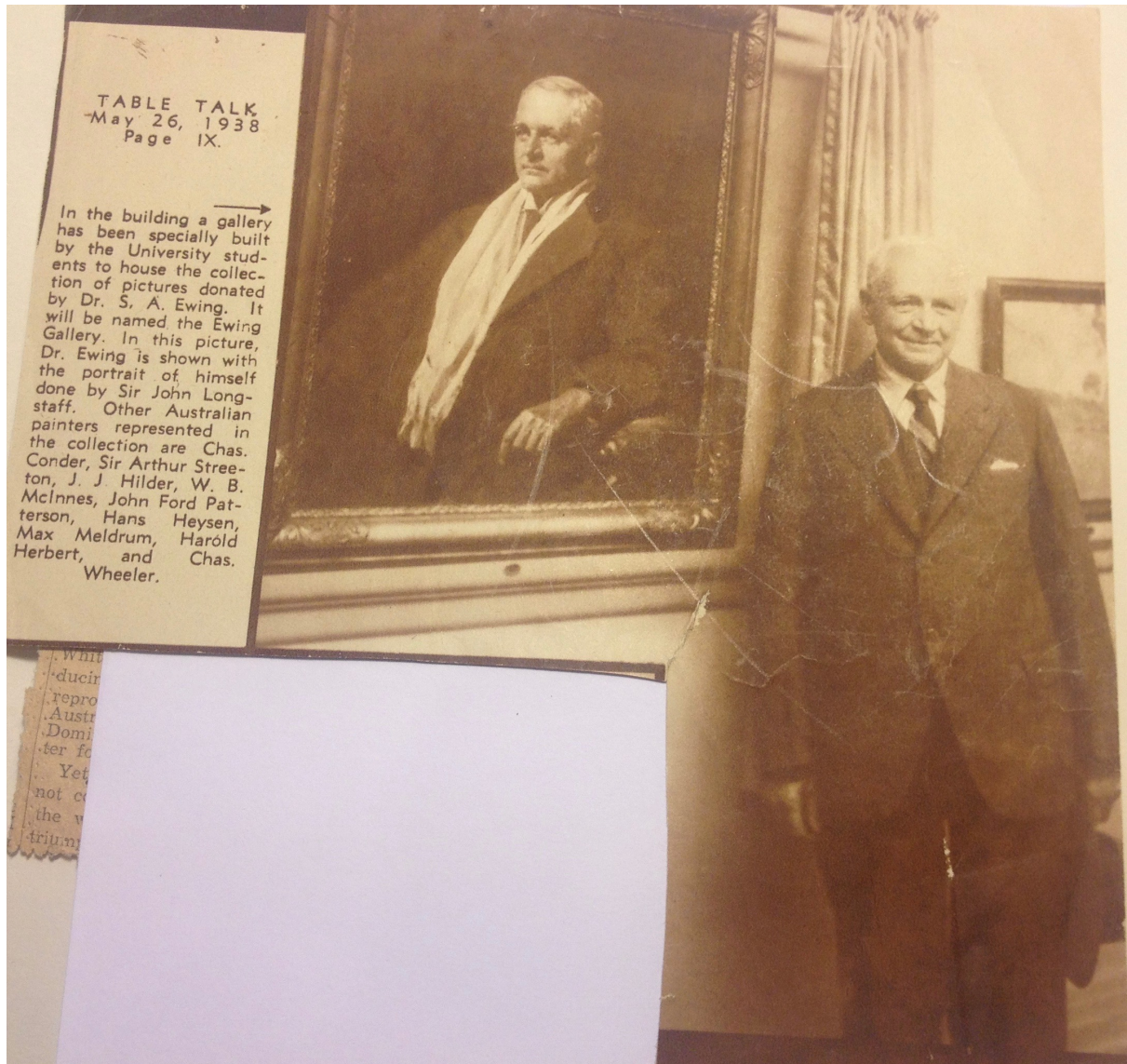


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Figure 80. Blamire Young, *The pasture stance*, c.1911–1912, watercolour on paper, 38.2 x 50.9cm, University of Melbourne Art Collection.



Figure 81. Catalogue of Frances Hodgkins's exhibition, held in Theosophical Society's Rooms, Melbourne, 1912, Ewing Papers, 2592/1 (k), MS 11675, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. Photographed by author, 2015.

|     |   |     |          |      |  |     |     |
|-----|---|-----|----------|------|--|-----|-----|
| No. |   |     |          | No.  |  |     |     |
| ✓ 1 | House of the Wisteria, Venice                                       | ... | £50      | 38   | Le Plage, Concarneau   | ... | £25 |
| 2   | Le Pont Neuf, Paris   | ... | £30      | 39   | Le Plage, Concarneau   | ... | £25 |
| 3   | Déjeuner  | ... | £55      | 40   | Le Plage, Concarneau   | ... | £25 |
| ✓ 4 | November in Dordrecht   | ... | £30      | 41   | Le Plage, Concarneau   | ... | £25 |
| ✓ 5 | The Black Scarf   | ... | £55      | 42   | Le Plage, Concarneau   | ... | £25 |
| 6   | Rosamond  | ... | £45      | 43   | Vegetable Market, Dinan  | ... | £20 |
| 7   | Fifine  | ... | £25      | 44   | In a garden...   | ... | £40 |
| 8   | The Imp   | ... | £18/18/- | 45   | In a Paris Café  | ... | £20 |
| 9   | The Green Seat  | ... | £15/15/- | 46   | Jean et Jeanette   | ... | £45 |
| 10  | Unloading Wheat, Dordrecht  | ... | £25      | 47   | Evening, Concarneau  | ... | £40 |
| 11  | Reverie   | ... | £35      | ✓ 48 | Déjeuner at the Hotel du Lion D'or   | ... | £70 |
| 12  | Normandy Pippins  | ... | £45      | 49   | April  | ... | £70 |
| 13  | "When all the world is young, lad,<br>and all the trees are green", | ... | £30      | 50   | Summer   | ... | £60 |
| 14  | The Hill Top  | ... | £70      | 51   | Tunny Boats, Concarneau  | ... | £40 |
| 15  | Madonna of the Fields   | ... | £20      | 52   | Le roi s'amuse   | ... | £25 |
| 16  | La femme se chauffe   | ... | £60      | 53   | La Dame d'honneur  | ... | £20 |
| 17  | The Apple Sellers   | ... | £35      | 54   | La Première Communion  | ... | £45 |
| 18  | Child at the Window   | ... | £15      | 55   | Mother and Child   | ... | £35 |
| 19  | Jacquelin   | ... | £18      | 56   | The Repast   | ... | £20 |
| 20  | Mother and Child  | ... | £35      | 57   | The Sleepers   | ... | £35 |
| 21  | Tunny Boats, Concarneau   | ... | £15      | 58   | Sisters  | ... | £35 |
| 22  | Tangier, the Market Place   | ... | £50      | 59   | November Evening, Concarneau   | ... | £25 |
| 23  | The Fish Market, Arles  | ... | £35      | 60   | The Caress   | ... | £40 |
| 24  | Notre Dame, Paris   | ... | £25      | 61   | La Place, Avignon  | ... | £50 |
| 25  | At the Window   | ... | £65      | 62   | Low Tide, Concarneau (mid-day effect)  | ... | £35 |
| 26  | My Studio, Concarneau   | ... | £60      | 63   | The Sabot Market, Concarneau   | ... | £50 |
| 27  | In a Devonshire Orchard   | ... | £25      | 64   | The Tow Path, Dordrecht  | ... | £40 |
| 28  | Le Petit Choux  | ... | £45      | 65   | Winter Evening, Concarneau   | ... | £30 |
| 29  | Breton Peasant  | ... | £50      | 66   | The Window Seat<br>(Awarded 1st Prize Franco-British Exhibition,<br>—Australian Women Artists' Section). | ... | £65 |
| 30  | Dutch Interior  | ... | £15 15s  | 67   | The Family   | ... | £25 |
| 31  | Market Day, Dinan   | ... | £50      | 68   | Barges on the Seine, Paris   | ... | £25 |
| 32  | Dordrecht   | ... | £40      | 69   | Montreuil-sur-Mer  | ... | £50 |
| 33  | The Fishing Fleet, Concarneau                                       | ... | £20      | 70   | The Fleet, Concarneau  | ... | £40 |
| 34  | The Fishing Fleet, Concarneau                                       | ... | £20      | 71   | The Bridge, Delft  | ... | £35 |
| 35  | Le Plage, Concarneau  | ... | £25      | 72   | Dordrecht  | ... | £30 |
| 36  | Le Plage, Concarneau  | ... | £25      | 73   | Idlers   | ... | £35 |
| 37  | Le Plage, Concarneau  | ... | £25      | 74   | Mending Nets, Chioggia   | ... | £45 |

Figure 82. Frederick McCubbin, *Peeling Potatoes (Untitled [Sheila])*, c.1912, oil on composition board, 23.9 x 34.2cm, University of Melbourne Art Collection.



Figure 83. Example of the iconic portrayal of Darwin's evolution of man. Image sourced from the *Smithsonian Magazine*, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-top-ten-daily-consequences-of-having-evolved-72743121/>.

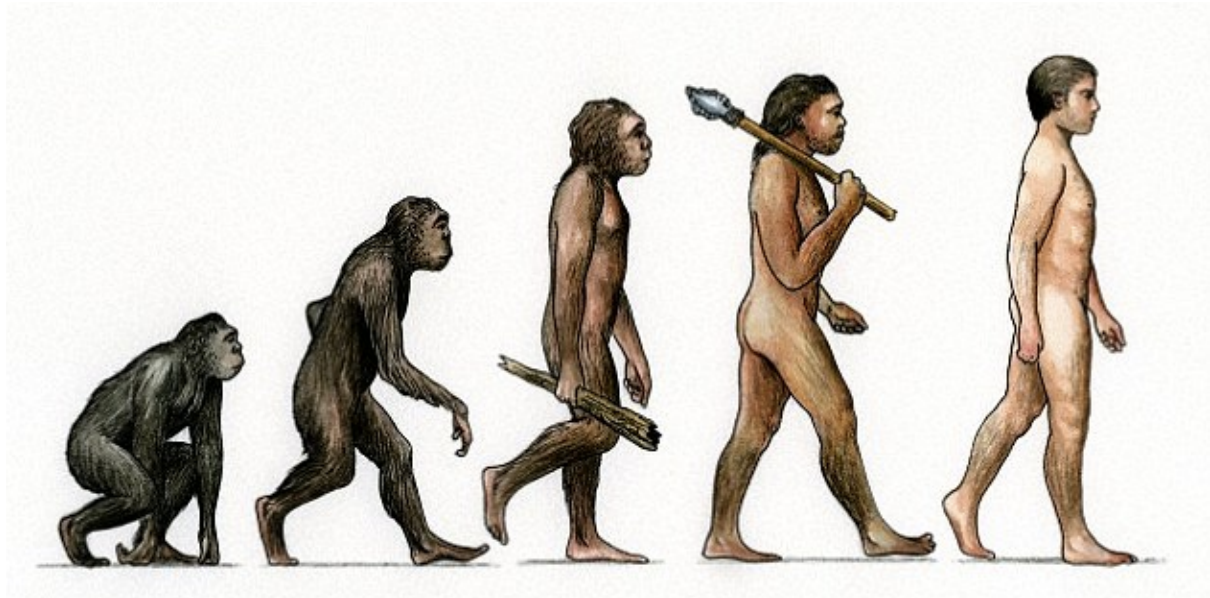


Figure 84. Bernard Hall, *Study for "Despair"*, c.1916, charcoal on brown paper, University of Melbourne Art Collection, Gift of Joseph Brown, 1985.

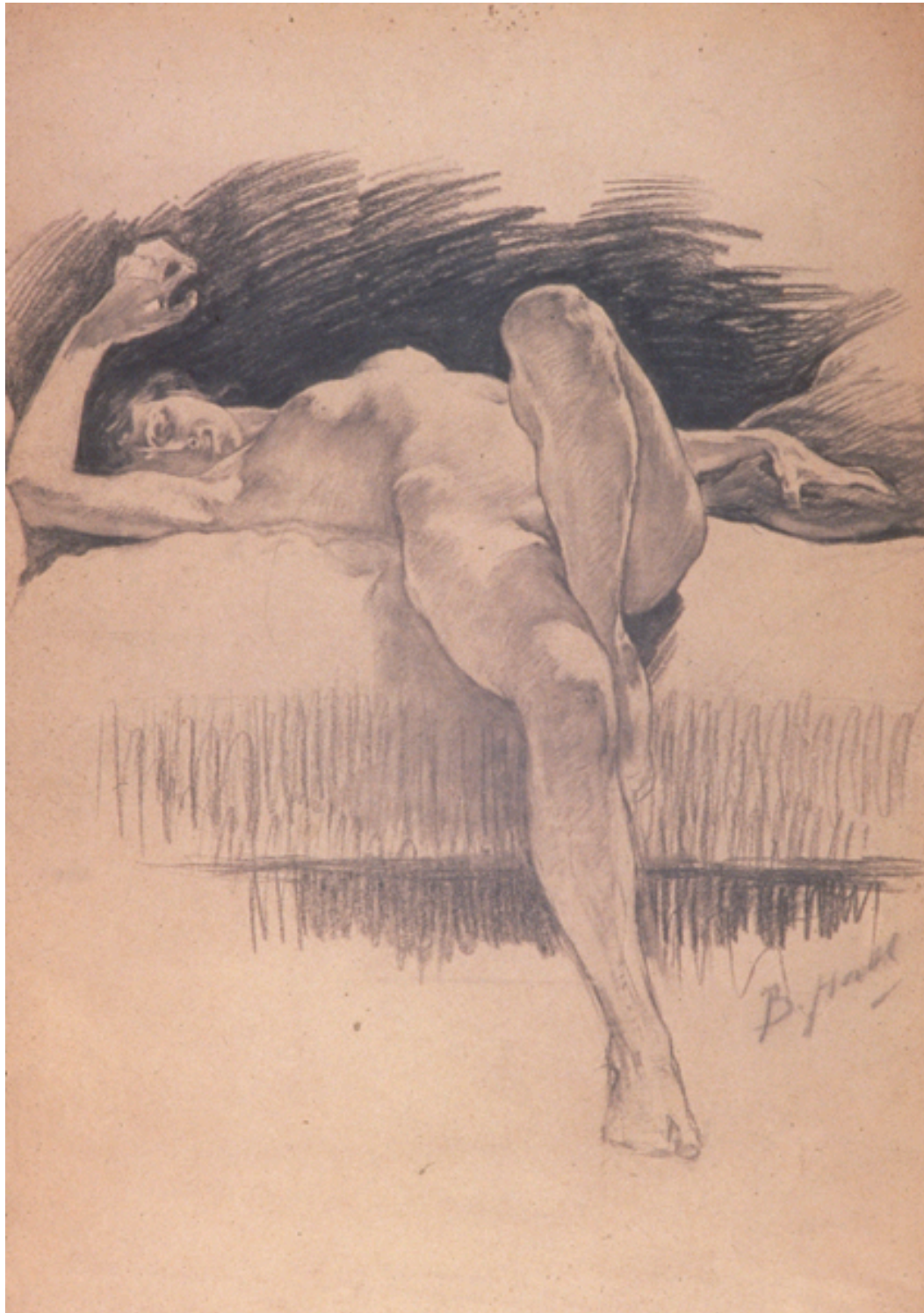


Figure 85. Bernard Hall, *Study for "Despair"*, c. 1916, pencil on paper, University of Melbourne Art Collection, Gift of Mark McKinnon, 2012.



Figure 86. San Gregorio Monastery, Dorsoduro, Venice, Italy, Google Street View, 2016.



Figure 87. Campo de la Lana, Santa Croce, Venice, Italy, Google Street View, 2016.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Acquisition timeline for the University of Melbourne’s Ewing Collection<sup>1</sup>

| Year purchased | Location of Purchase                     | Cost (Guineas) | Perceived value in 1938 gift (Guineas) <sup>2</sup> | Artist                     | Work of art                       | Date Produced | Location of Production         | Medium                     |
|----------------|--|----------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1908           | Guild Hall, Melbourne, August.           | 10.10          | 50  | Hans Heysen (1877–1968)    | <i>Venetian door and wellhead</i> | 1902          | Venice, Italy                  | watercolour on paper       |
| 1908           | Guild Hall, Melbourne, August            | 6.6            | 75  | Hans Heysen (1877–1968)    | <i>Meadowsweet</i>                | 1901?         | Wemyss, Scotland               | oil on canvas on cardboard |
| 1909           | Published July, acquired from Artist     | Unknown        | 30  | Norman Lindsay (1879–1969) | <i>Untitled (Doctor Death)</i>    | 1909          | Melbourne, Victoria, Australia | wash and pencil on paper   |
| 1910           | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, August 12–24. | 8              | 20  | Walter Withers (1854–1914) | <i>White gums</i>                 | 1907          | Unknown, Australia             | watercolour on paper       |
| 1910           | Guild Hall, Melbourne, October 18.       | 12             | 35  | Penleigh Boyd (1890–1923)  | <i>The backwater</i>              | 1910          | Lilydale, Victoria, Australia  | watercolour on paper       |

<sup>1</sup> Material collated from: Ewing Papers, 1828-1983, MS 11675, SLV; Chris McAuliffe and Juliette Peers, *The full majesty of nature: the collection of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing* (Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002); and Alexander Colquhoun, “Melbourne’s Private Art Galleries: Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” *The Age*, March 1, 1930, Trove.

<sup>2</sup> Registrar’s corresponded (UM312), 1999.0014, 1938.553–8, University of Melbourne Archives.

|      |   |    |     |                                |                                      |         |  |                          |
|------|---|----|-----|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|--|--------------------------|
| 1910 | Victorian Artist's Society exhibition, Athenaeum Gallery, Melbourne, October 19 | 30 | 75  | Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917) | <i>A Frosty Morning</i>              | 1910    | South Yarra, Victoria, Australia,              | oil on canvas            |
| 1911 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, July 24–August 24                                    | 40 | 50  | Rupert Bunny (1864–1947)       | <i>The New Step</i>                  | 1908–11 | Overseas (Europe)                              | oil on canvas            |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, May 14–25  | 15 | 50  | Constance Jenkins (1883–1961)  | <i>My lady Pincushion (daylight)</i> | 1909–11 | Overseas (Europe)                              | oil on canvas            |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, July 9–20  | 35 | 75  | Hans Heysen (1877–1968)        | <i>La terre</i>                      | 1912    | Unknown  | watercolour on paper     |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, July 9–20  | 37 | 200 | Hans Heysen (1877–1968)        | <i>Gums in morning light</i>         | 1912    | Unknown, Australia                             | watercolour on paper     |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, July 9–20  | 35 | 75  | Hans Heysen (1877–1968)        | <i>Moonlight</i>                     | 1904–08 | Unknown, Australia                             | watercolour on paper     |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Art Gallery, Melbourne, August 14–September 1                         | 15 | 50  | Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917) | <i>Peeling Potatoes</i>              | 1912    | Fontainebleau, Mt Macedon, Victoria, Australia | oil on composition board |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, November 21  | 60 | 75  | Blamire Young (1862–1935)      | <i>The pasture stance</i>            | 1911–12 | Unknown  | watercolour on paper     |
| 1912 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, November 21  | 10 | 50  | Blamire Young (1862–1935)      | <i>Myrtles and pines, Tasmania</i>   | 1912    | Tasmania, Australia                            | watercolour on paper     |

|         |   |         |              |                              |   |         |                    |                              |
|---------|---|---------|--------------|------------------------------|---|---------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1912    | Theosophical Society's Rooms, Melbourne, November 21–December 5 | 45      | 150          | Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947) | <i>Rosamund</i>                           | 1909-12 | France             | watercolour on paper         |
| 1913    | Athenaeum Art Gallery, July 22–August 2                         | 85      | 100          | Max Meldrum (1875–1955)      | <i>La route de Petit Benefice</i>         | 1910    | France             | oil on canvas                |
| 1913    | Athenaeum Art Gallery, July 22–August 2                         | 25      | Not included | Max Meldrum (1875–1955)      | <i>Coucher de soleil</i>                  | 1910    | France             | oil on canvas                |
| 1914    | Gill's Fine Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne, May               | 31.10   | 250          | Jesse Hilder (1881–1916)     | <i>The bridge</i>                         | 1909-14 | Unknown, Australia | watercolour on woven paper   |
| 1914    | Fine Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne, May                      | 6.6     | 120          | Jesse Hilder (1881–1916)     | <i>Children Playing</i>                   | 1909-14 | Unknown, Australia | watercolour on paper         |
| 1914    | Victorian Artist's Society, Melbourne, June 5                   | 63      | 315          | Arthur Streeton (1867–1943)  | <i>The domes of St Mark's</i>             | 1908    | Venice, Italy      | oil on canvas                |
| 1915    | Athenaeum, Melbourne, March                                     | 5       | 35           | Hans Heysen (1877–1968)      | <i>Gum tree</i>                           | 1912    | Unknown, Australia | pencil and crayon on paper   |
| 1916    | Upper Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, February 29                    | 20      | 50           | E. Phillips Fox (1865–1915)  | <i>Rocks and Sea</i>                      | 1911    | Normandy, France   | oil on canvas                |
| 1916-17 | Purchased between July 1916 and March 1917                      | Unknown | 100          | Jesse Hilder (1881–1916)     | <i>Landscape sketch - top of the hill</i> | 1909-16 | Unknown, Australia | watercolour on paper (laid)  |
| 1916-17 | Purchased between July 1916 and March 1917                      | Unknown | 100          | Jesse Hilder (1881–1916)     | <i>The close of the day</i>               | 1909-16 | Unknown, Australia | watercolour on paper (laid)  |
| 1917    | Artist exhibition, Savage Club, Melbourne                       | Unknown | 25           | Alfred Vincent (1874–1915)   | <i>Luxor</i>                              | 1911    | Luxor, Egypt       | watercolour on cotton canvas |

|      |  |           |     |                                    |                                 |           |                                  |                          |
|------|--|-----------|-----|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1918 | Sydney art dealer A.W Albers                                 | 262.10    | 525 | Jesse Hilder<br>(1881–1916)        | <i>The island trader</i>        | 1909-16   | Unknown                          | watercolour on paper     |
| 1918 | Fine Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne, October 17–October 31 | 37        | 50  | Norman Lindsay<br>(1879–1969)      | <i>Ballet</i>                   | 1918      | Unknown                          | watercolour on paper     |
| 1919 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne                                    | Unknown   | 100 | L. Bernard Hall<br>(1859–1935)     | <i>Dining room interior</i>     | 1910-19   | Unknown                          | oil on canvas            |
| 1919 | Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne                                    | 300       | 315 | L. Bernard Hall<br>(1859–1935)     | <i>Suicide</i>                  | 1916      | Unknown                          | oil on canvas            |
| 1919 | Baldwin Spencer Sale, Melbourne, May                         | Unknown   | 50  | John Ford Paterson<br>(1851–1912)  | <i>Evening at Croydon</i>       | 1890-1900 | Croydon, Victoria, Australia     | oil on canvas            |
| 1920 | Victorian Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne                   | Unknown   | 50  | Arthur Streeton<br>(1867–1943)     | <i>The Tintoretto fan</i>       | 1920      | Unknown                          | watercolour on silk      |
| 1920 | Victorian Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne                   | 8 Guineas | 150 | Arthur Streeton<br>(1867–1943)     | <i>The Sleeping Beauty Fan</i>  | 1920      | Unknown                          | watercolour on silk      |
| 1922 | Commissioned   | Unknown   | 30  | John Longstaff<br>(1862-1941)      | <i>Dr SA Ewing</i>              | 1922      | Melbourne, Australia             | oil on canvas            |
| 1925 | Commissioned   | Unknown   | 50  | Charles Web Gilbert<br>(1867–1925) | <i>Bust of John Hugh Sutton</i> | 1925      | Melbourne, Australia             | Plaster cast             |
| 1926 | New Gallery, Melbourne, May 11                               | 21        | 30  | Henry Fullwood<br>(1863–1930)      | <i>An English garden</i>        | 1901-18   | Crowhurst, England               | oil on panel             |
| 1926 | Fine Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne, May 13–25             | 45        | 60  | David Davies<br>(1864–1939)        | <i>Hillside, Templestowe</i>    | 1893-96   | Templestowe, Victoria, Australia | oil on canvas on plywood |
| 1926 | Fine Art Society's Gallery, Melbourne, May 13–25             | 17        | 45  | David Davies<br>(1864–1939)        | <i>Market at Dieppe</i>         | 1920      | Dieppe, France                   | watercolour on paper     |

|             |  |         |                 |                                   |   |         |                                       |                                |
|-------------|--|---------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1927        | Fine Art Society's Gallery,<br>Melbourne                 | Unknown | 100             | Arthur Streeton<br>(1867–1943)    | <i>Cremorne</i>   | 1926    | Sydney, Australia                     | oil on canvas                  |
| Before 1930 | Unknown  | Unknown | 50              | Nicholas Chevalier<br>(1828–1902) | <i>Buffalo Range<br/>from the west</i>                              | 1862    | Victoria, Australia                   | oil on milled<br>board         |
| Before 1930 | Unknown  | Unknown | Not<br>included | Louis Buvelot<br>(1814–1888)      | <i>Tree Study</i>   | 1860s   | Victoria, Australia                   | Coleraine,<br>pencil study     |
| Before 1930 | Unknown  | Unknown | 25              | Edward Officer<br>(1871–1921)     | <i>Autumn in<br/>Normandy</i>                                       | 1896–99 | Normandy, France                      | oil on canvas                  |
| Before 1930 | Unknown  | Unknown | 200             | Hans Heysen<br>(1877–1968)        | <i>The river bend</i>   | 1922    | Unknown,<br>Australia                 | watercolour on<br>paper        |
| 1937        | Fine Art Society's Gallery,<br>Melbourne                 | 20      | Not<br>included | Harold Herbert<br>(1891–1945)     | <i>Sunburst<br/>(Sunburnt?)<br/>Early Summer,<br/>Bacchus Marsh</i> | 1937    | Bacchus Marsh,<br>Victoria, Australia | watercolour on<br>paper (laid) |
| 1937        | Fine Art Society's Gallery,<br>Melbourne                 | Unknown | 45              | Hans Heysen<br>(1877–1968)        | <i>Red hills of<br/>Aroona,<br/>Flinders<br/>Rangers</i>            | 1933    | South Australia,<br>Australia         | watercolour on<br>paper        |
| 1938        | Artist   | 50      | Not<br>included | Arthur Streeton<br>(1867–1943)    | <i>White Lilac</i>  | 1938    | Victoria, Australia                   | oil on canvas                  |
| 1940        | Art dealer, W.R. Sedon,<br>Sedon Galleries,<br>Melbourne | 4       | Not<br>included | Harold Herbert<br>(1891–1945)     | <i>Eildon</i>   | 1940    | Eildon, Victoria,<br>Australia        | watercolour on<br>paper        |
| After 1920  | Unknown  | Unknown | Not<br>included | Hans Heysen<br>(1877–1968)        | <i>Untitled<br/>(Landscape)</i>                                     | 1920s   | Unknown,<br>Australia                 | watercolour on<br>paper        |
| After 1921  | Artist   | Gift    | 5               | Lionel Lindsay<br>(1874–1961)     | <i>The tinsmith's<br/>shop</i>                                      | 1921    | Sydney, Australia                     | ink on paper                   |

|            |         |         |                 |                                 |                                    |         |  |   |
|------------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|--|---|
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 100             | Louis Buvelot<br>(1814–1888)    | <i>(Waterpool) at Coleraine</i>    | 1867    | Coleraine, Victoria,<br>Australia      | pencil on paper                         |
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 35              | Louis Buvelot<br>(1814–1888)    | <i>The Creek</i>                   | 1877    | Unknown,<br>Australia                  | watercolour                             |
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 50              | Arthur Loureiro<br>(1853–1932)  | <i>Brolles</i>                     | 1882    | Fontainebleau,<br>France               | oil on canvas                           |
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 50              | Charles Conder<br>(1868–1909)   | <i>Untitled (A Christmas Card)</i> | 1886    | Sydney, Australia                      | oil on<br>cardboard and<br>ink on paper |
| After 1930 | Artist  | Gift    | 30              | Charles Wheeler<br>(1881–1977)  | <i>Winter morning, Trawool</i>     | 1905-30 | Victoria, Australia                    | oil on plywood                          |
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 20              | Henri van Raalte<br>(1881–1929) | <i>Banks of the Blackwood</i>      | 1916-20 | Western Australia,<br>Australia        | aquatint                                |
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 5               | Henri van Raalte<br>(1881–1929) | <i>The crosscut</i>                | 1920    | Western Australia,<br>Australia        | drypoint<br>etching                     |
| After 1930 | Unknown | 16      | Not<br>included | Harold Herbert<br>(1891–1945)   | <i>The beach Grey Day, Lorne</i>   | 1922    | Lorne, Victoria,<br>Australia          | watercolour<br>and pencil on<br>paper   |
| After 1930 | Unknown | 35      | 60              | Harold Herbert<br>(1891–1945)   | <i>Golden Sands</i>                | 1928    | Philip Island,<br>Victoria, Australia. | watercolour on<br>paper                 |
| After 1930 | Unknown | Unknown | 175             | Hans Heysen<br>(1877–1968)      | <i>River Flats</i>                 | 1930    | Unknown,<br>Australia                  | oil on canvas                           |

## Appendix 2. Other Australian art Ewing acquired<sup>3</sup>

| Year purchased | Artist                               | Title                                 | Cost (Guineas) | Medium                    | Location of Purchase      | Source of Information  |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1912           | Constance Jenkins (1883–1961)        | <i>Brass Shop</i>                     | 6              | Watercolours              | Jenkins Exhibition, 1912  | Markings on Constance Jenkins Catalogue 1912, Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| 1912           | Constance Jenkins (1883–1961)        | <i>Luxemburg Gardens</i>              | 3              | Watercolours              | Jenkins Exhibition, 1912  | Markings on Constance Jenkins Catalogue 1912, Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| 1912           | Blamire Young (1862–1935)            | <i>Saplings and Flowers</i>           | 15             | Watercolours              | Young Exhibition, 1912    | Markings on Blamire Young Catalogue 1912, Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| 1912           | Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947)         | <i>Dejeuner at Hotel du Lion D'Or</i> | 70             | Watercolour over charcoal | Hodgkins Exhibition, 1912 | Markings on Frances Hodgkins Catalogue 1912, Ewing Papers, SLV. Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930.                     |
| 1913           | Max Meldrum (1875–1955)              | <i>l'apres midi</i>                   | 20             | Unknown                   | Meldrum Exhibition, 1912  | Markings on Max Meldrum Catalogue 1913, Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| 1917           | Marion Jones (1892–1977)             | <i>Margaret Ewing, 1917</i>           | Unknown        | Pastel on linen           | Commissioned              | Bequest of Margaret Cutten, Cutten Papers, SLV.  |
| 1917           | Florence Rodway (1881–1971)          | <i>George Ewing, 1917</i>             | Unknown        | Pastel on paper           | Commissioned              | Originally part of Ewing Collection, 1938, but transferred to SLV at request of Margaret Cutten in 1990. Cutten Papers, SLV.   |
| 1920           | Arthur Streeton (1867–1943)          | <i>Amiens Cathedral</i>               | Unknown        | Oil on canvas             | Streeton Exhibition, 1920 | Markings on Arthur Streeton Catalogue 1920, Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| 1926           | William Beckwith McInnes (1889–1939) | <i>Peggy Ewing, 1926</i>              | Unknown        | Oil on canvas             | Commissioned              | Originally part of Ewing Collection in 1938, but transferred to SLV at request of Margaret Cutten in 1990. Cutten Papers, SLV. |

<sup>3</sup> Material collated from: *The Ewing collection* (Parkville: Ewing Gallery, Melbourne University Union, 1981); *The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982); Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection"; Ethel Margaret Ewing Cutten, *Papers, 1920-1990*, MS 12963, SLV; Ewing Papers, SLV; Ewing and Cutten Files, Gallery file, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne; Ewing Gift File, NGV; Ian Potter Museum of Art, "Collection of the University of Melbourne," accessed August 12, 2014, <http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/collection>; and, NGV, "NGV Collection and Ideas," accessed, July 15, 2016, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/>.

|             |                                  |   |         |                                    |              |   |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|---------|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Before 1930 | Walter Withers (1854–1914)       | Landscape                               | Unknown | Unknown                            | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| Before 1930 | Walter Withers (1854–1914)       | Landscape                               | Unknown | Unknown                            | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| Before 1930 | Charles Wheeler (1880–1977)      | Outdoor Study                           | Unknown | Unknown                            | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| Before 1930 | Charles Wheeler (1880–1977)      | Outdoor Study                           | Unknown | Unknown                            | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| Before 1930 | Charles Wheeler (1880–1977)      | Outdoor Study                           | Unknown | Unknown                            | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| Before 1930 | Louis Buvelot (1814–1888)        | <i>Tree Study</i> , 1860s               | Unknown | Pencil study                       | Unknown      | Donated to the IPM by Margaret Cutten in 1981. Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930. |
| Before 1930 | W. Nicholls Anderson (1873–1927) | Unknown                                 | Unknown | Minor work                         | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| Before 1930 | Asquith Baker (1869–1955)        | Unknown                                 | Unknown | Minor work                         | Unknown      | Colquhoun, “Dr. Ewing’s Collection,” 1930.  |
| After 1930  | James Quinn (1869–1951)          | George Ewing Esq., 1930s                | Unknown | Oil on canvas                      | Commissioned | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.              |
| After 1930  | Max Meldrum (1875–1955)          | <i>Study for Picherit’s Farm</i> , 1910 | Unknown | oil on canvas on composition board | Unknown      | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.              |
| After 1930  | James Quinn (1869–1951)          | <i>Portrait of George Ewing, Esq.</i>   | Unknown | Unknown                            | Unknown      | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.              |
| After 1930  | Walter Withers (1854–1914)       | <i>Nearing the Township</i> , 1897      | Unknown | Oil on canvas on composition board | Unknown      | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.              |
| After 1930  | Matthew J. MacNally (1873–1943)  | <i>Near Malmsbury</i> , 1919            | Unknown | Watercolour                        | Unknown      | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.              |
| After 1930  | Harold Herbert (1891–1945)       | Unknown                                 | Unknown | Etching                            | Unknown      | Sold through Christies in 19/07/1978 for \$500, Cutten Papers, IPM.                       |

|            |                                 |  |                    |  |         |  |
|------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|---------|--|
| After 1930 | Harold Herbert<br>(1891–1945)   | Unknown  | Unknown            | Etching                                    | Unknown | Sold through Christies in 19/07/1978 for \$500, Cutten Papers, IPM.  |
| After 1930 | Norman Lindsay<br>(1879–1969)   | Unknown  | Unknown            | Pen drawing                                | Unknown | Sold through Christies in 19/07/1978 for \$400, Cutten Papers, IPM.  |
| After 1930 | Norman Lindsay<br>(1879–1969)   | Unknown  | Unknown            | Pen drawing                                | Unknown | Sold through Christies in 19/07/1978 for \$400, Cutten Papers, IPM.  |
| After 1930 | E. Phillips Fox<br>(1865–1915)  | <i>From Cremorne, Sydney</i> , 1913                      | Unknown            | Oil on canvas                              | Unknown | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.   |
| After 1930 | E. Phillips Fox<br>(1865–1915)  | <i>Untitled (Autumn landscape with river)</i> , 1900     | Unknown            | Oil on wood                                | Unknown | Donated to the IPM by Margaret Cutten in 1983, IPM Collection, <a href="http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/">http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/</a> .   |
| After 1930 | Thea Proctor<br>(1879–1966)     | <i>The Bathers (Fan Design)</i> , 1920s-1930s            | Unknown            | watercolour on silk on card                | Unknown | Donated to the IPM by Margaret Cutten in 1983, IPM Collection, <a href="http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/">http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/</a> .   |
| After 1930 | Henri Van Raalte<br>(1881–1929) | <i>A Karri tree glade</i>                                | Unknown            | Aquatint and drypoint printed in brown ink | Unknown | Donated to the NGV from the Estate of Margaret Cutten, 1992.   |
| 1937       | James Quinn<br>(1869–1951)      | <i>Portrait of Dr Samuel Ewing FRAS</i> , 1937           | Unknown            | Unknown                                    | Unknown | List of 1937 Archibald Prize finalists, AGNSW. Location now unknown. AGNSW, “Archibald Prize,” <a href="http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/1937/">http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/1937/</a> . |
| By 1938    | Unknown                         | <i>La Chemiste</i>                                       | Unknown            | Engraving                                  | Unknown | Donated by Ewing to the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria in 1938 but location now unknown Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| 1938-41    | Harold Herbert<br>(1891–1945)   | <i>Hobart and Mount Wellington from Bellerive</i> , 1938 | Gift of the artist | watercolour on cardboard                   | Unknown | Donated to the IPM by Margaret Cutten in 1982, IPM Collection, <a href="http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/">http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/</a> .   |

### Appendix 3. Ewing's European art collection<sup>4</sup>

| Year purchased | Artist                 | Name                                     | Cost    | Medium  | Location of purchase | Source of Information   |
|----------------|------------------------|--|---------|---|----------------------|---|
| Before 1930    | Frank Brangwyn         | Unknown                                  | Unknown | Etching   | Unknown              | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930.  |
| Before 1930    | George Clausen         | Unknown                                  | Unknown | Etching   | Unknown              | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930.  |
| Before 1930    | James McNeill Whistler | Unknown                                  | Unknown | Etching   | Unknown              | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930.  |
| Before 1930    | Edmund Blampied        | Unknown                                  | Unknown | Etching   | Unknown              | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930.  |
| Before 1930    | Honore Daumier         | <i>The Advocate</i>                      | Unknown | Pen and ink drawing                                     | Unknown              | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the IPM by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>IPM Collection</i> , <a href="http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/">http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/</a> . |
| After 1930     | Honore Daumier         | <i>Advocate Reading Newspaper</i> , 1846 | Unknown | Photolithographic reproduction with some hand colouring | Unknown              | Donated to the IPM by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>IPM Collection</i> , <a href="http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/">http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/</a> .  |

<sup>4</sup> Material collated from: Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection"; Cutten Papers, SLV; Ewing Papers, SLV; Ewing and Cutten Files, University of Melbourne; Ewing Gift File, NGV; and, Ian Potter Museum of Art, "Collection of the University of Melbourne."

#### Appendix 4. Ewing's decorative arts collection<sup>5</sup>

| Year purchased | Artist                    | Name   | Cost (Guineas) | Medium                                     | Location of Purchase   | Source of Information   |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|----------------|--|------------------------|---|
| 1914           | Charles Web Gilbert       | <i>Nautilus</i>                              | Unknown        | Marble, with enamel and gilt bronze stand  | Melbourne, Australia   | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.   |
| 1921           | Saveh, Iran               | <i>Jug</i> , 13 <sup>th</sup> Century        | Unknown        | Earthenware, pigments, gold paint          | London, United Kingdom | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.   |
| 1921           | Kashan, Iran              | <i>Jug</i> , 13 <sup>th</sup> Century        | Unknown        | Earthenware                                | London, United Kingdom | 1 Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982. |
| 1921           | Kashan, Iran              | <i>Bowl</i> , early 13 <sup>th</sup> Century | Unknown        | Earthenware                                | London, United Kingdom | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.   |
| 1921           | Chelsea Porcelain Factory | <i>Toby Fillpot, seal</i> , c.1760           | Unknown        | Porcelain (soft-paste), metal, glass, gilt | London, United Kingdom | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.   |

<sup>5</sup> Material collated from: *Ewing Gift*; Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection"; Cutten Papers, SLV; Ewing Papers, SLV; Ewing and Cutten Files, University of Melbourne; Ewing Gift File, NGV; and, Ewing Trust, Fitzroy Public Library.

|             |  |  |           |                                |                        |   |
|-------------|--|--|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1921        | Derby  | <i>Allegory of Water</i> , c.1830            |           | Porcelain (soft-paste)         | London, UK             | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982. |
| 1921        | Kelsterbach Porcelain Factory, Kelsterbach   | <i>Scent bottle</i> , c.1761                 | Unknown   | Porcelain (hard-paste), silver | London, UK             | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982. |
| 1921        | A.E. Carrier Belleuse (designer), Achille-Louis Bonnuit (decorator), Sèvres Porcelain Factory, Sèvres (manufacturer) | <i>Comport</i> , 1883–1884                   | Unknown   | Porcelain                      | Paris, France          | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982. |
| 1921        | Unknown  | <i>Venus</i> , 1759–1760                     | Unknown   | Bow porcelain works, London    | London, United Kingdom | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.  |
| 1925        | Charles Web Gilbert  | <i>John Sutton</i>                           | 75 pounds | Bronze                         | Commission             | Donated to Melbourne Grammar School, Ewing Papers, SLV.   |
| Before 1930 | Miniature with hair  | <i>Robert Burns 1759–1796, Scottish Poet</i> | Unknown   | Unknown                        | Unknown                | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Refused for donation to NGV, 1982, Cutten Papers, NGV. Location now unknown. |

|         |                     |   |         |   |         |   |
|---------|---------------------|---|---------|---|---------|---|
| Unknown | Unknown             | Athlete   | Unknown | Bronze  | Unknown | Donated to Fitzroy Public Library by Margaret Cutten in 1980. Ewing Trust, Fitzroy Public Library.                      |
| Unknown | Unknown             | Reclining woman   | Unknown | Bronze  | Unknown | Donated to Fitzroy Public Library by Margaret Cutten in 1980. Ewing Trust, Fitzroy Public Library.                      |
| Unknown | Cover               | Buddhist manuscript, 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century | Unknown | Silk, wood, gold thread, opaque watercolour and gold paint on paper | Unknown | Colquhoun, "Dr. Ewing's Collection," 1930. Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982. |
| Unknown | Charles Web Gilbert | <i>Head of a Girl</i>   | Unknown | Bronze  | Unknown | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.  |
| Unknown | Unknown, Melbourne  | <i>Claret Jug</i> , c.1870                                      | Unknown | Silver  | Unknown | Donated to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982, <i>The Ewing Gift</i> , 1982.  |

## Appendix 5. Ewing's memorabilia<sup>6</sup>

| Description   | Location  | Reference   |
|---|---|---|
| Centenary medallion by Raynor Hoff, 1934<br>Centenary celebrations                    | SLV   | Donated by Margaret Cutten, 1985. Cutten Papers, Box 1.2, SLV   |
| Ewing's gold watch  | SLV   | Donated by Margaret Cutten, 1989. Cutten Papers, Box 1.2, SLV   |
| Ewing's diaries and family photographs  | SLV   | Donated by Margaret Cutten to IPM 1981, but requested the material be transferred to the SLV in 1990. |
| <i>Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery</i> , 1938, with<br>Ewing's hand-writing inside | SLV   | Donated by Margaret Cutten to IPM 1981, but requested the material be transferred to the SLV in 1990. |
| Ewing's Fellowship Certificate No. 97 and his<br>Ede and Ravenscroft gown             | Royal Australasian College of<br>Surgeons                             | Donated by Margaret Cutten, 1980. Ewing Papers, Box 2591/7b, SLV                                      |
| 3 articulated temporal bones  | Medical and Surgical Library of the<br>Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital | Donated by Ewing in 1939. Ewing Papers, Box 2591/7b, SLV  |
| Fetal skull showing the dissection of the semi-<br>circular canals                    | Medical and Surgical Library of the<br>Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital | Donated by Ewing in 1939. Ewing Papers, Box 2591/7b, SLV  |
| Case with key to 1938 Ewing Gallery   | IPM   | Ewing File, Ian Potter Museum   |
| Fiddleback Blackwood Chest with 14 drawers,<br>nineteenth century, owned by Ewing     | IPM   | Ewing Papers, Box 2591/9, SLV   |
| Medical Instruments   | Royal Victorian Eye and Ear<br>Hospital                               | Cutten Papers, Box 1.2, SLV   |

<sup>6</sup> Material collated from: Cutten Papers, SLV; Ewing Papers, SLV; and, Ewing and Cutten Files, University of Melbourne.

## Appendix 6. Ewing's book collection

### Books now located in the Presbyterian Ladies College, Melbourne<sup>1</sup>

Blair, David. *The History of Australasia from the first dawn of discovery in the Southern Ocean to the establishment of self-government in the various colonies*. Glasgow: McGready, Thomson & Niven, 1879.

Collingwood, R.G. *The principles of art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938.

Fry, Roger. *Vision and design*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1920.

McMahon, A. Philip. *The Art of enjoying Art*. New York; London: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1938.

Read, Herbert. *Art and Society*. London: Heinemann, 1937.

Read, Herbert. *Art now: an introduction to the theory of modern painting and sculpture*. London: Faber, 1933.

Read, Herbert. *The meaning of art*. London: Faber & Faber limited, 1931.

Vidler, Edward A. *The art of Hugh Ramsay*. Melbourne: Fine Art Society, 1918.

### Books now located in the Shaw Research Library, NGV<sup>2</sup>

Ashton, Julian, and Norman Lindsay. *The Julia Ashton Book*. Sydney: Art in Australia, 1920.

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<sup>1</sup> Gifted by Margaret Cutten in 1980. Ewing Papers, Box 2591/9 Papers, 1828-1983, MS 11675, SLV.

<sup>2</sup> Gifted to the NGV by Margaret Cutten in 1982. See book list in *The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing*, Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982.

Clerk, Thomas. *The works of William Hogarth, (including the Analysis of beauty) elucidated by descriptions, critical, moral, and historical (founded on the most approved authorities): to which is prefixed some account of his life*. London: R. Scholey by T. Davison, 1810.

Colahan, Colin, ed. *Max Meldrum, his art and his views*. Melbourne: McCubbin, 1917.

Colquhoun, A. *Frederick McCubbin, a consideration*. Melbourne: A. Colquhoun, 1919.

Heysen, Hans, Sydney Ure Smith, Bertram Stevens and C. Lloyd Jones. *The Art of Hans Heysen: Special number of Art in Australia*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1920.

Kunz, George Frederick, and Charles Hugh Stevenson. *The book of the pearl: its history, art, science, and industry of the queen of gems*. London: Macmillan, 1908.

*Lysistrata by Aristophanes; done into English verse by Jack Lindsay; with illustrations and decorations by Norman Lindsay*. Sydney: Fanfrolico Press, 1925.

MacDonald, James S. *Australian Landscape Painters of today*. Sydney: Art in Australia, 1929.

MacDonald, James S. *The art of Frederick McCubbin*. Melbourne, 1916.

Smith, Sydney Ure. *The art of J.J. Hilder*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918.

Smith, Sydney Ure, ed. *Australian Art Annual, 1939*. Sydney: Sydney Ure Smith Pty. Limited, 1939.

Smith, Sydney Ure and Bertram Stevens. *J.J. Hilder, watercolourist*. Sydney: Tyrrells, 1916.

Streeton, Arthur. *The Arthur Streeton catalogue*. Melbourne: A. Streeton, 1935.

Vidler, Edward A. *The art of Hugh Ramsay*. Melbourne: Fine Art Society 1918.

**Books located in the Ewing Papers, SLV<sup>3</sup>**

*Exhibition of French and British contemporary art.* Adelaide: Advertiser, 1939.

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<sup>3</sup> Ewing Papers, Box 2592/1 (k) Papers, 1828-1983, MS 11675, SLV.

## Appendix 7. Alexander Colquhoun (1862–1941)

Colquhoun was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1862. His family migrated to Australia in 1876. Colquhoun attended the National Gallery School between 1877–79, studying under George Folingsby. Following WW I, Colquhoun exhibited regularly around Melbourne, and became more involved in writing about the arts. He began writing journal articles for the *Victorian Artists Society* and *Art in Australia*. In 1919 and 1920, he published biographies on Frederick McCubbin and W. Beckwith McInnes. Between 1914 and 1922, Colquhoun was the art critic for Melbourne’s *Herald*. He then wrote articles for *The Age* between 1926 and his death in 1941. Signing as ‘A.C.’ in print media, Colquhoun wrote regular articles on European, Australian and American artists and art history. In 1934 he outlined Australian art history for the 1934 Melbourne Centenary celebration in an article, ‘A hundred years of Australian art’.<sup>4</sup> He reviewed Moore’s *Story of Australian art* in 1934, finding the text ‘the most important work of its kind yet produced in this country’, yet remained concerned about omissions of artists from the Dictionary of Australian Artists.<sup>5</sup>

In 1929, Colquhoun began writing feature series on the arts for *The Age*. His second series in 1930 was written in collaboration with John Longstaff, ‘Melbourne’s private galleries’, and profiled 18 local art collectors and their collections. One collector per fortnight was published between the February 1 to October 11 of that year. The series proved popular with the public, and at its conclusion an exhibition of select works from the collections was held in the Melbourne Town Hall. After this success, Colquhoun continued to write fortnightly or monthly series for *The Age* over the following 10 years. From 1936 till his death in 1941, Colquhoun was also a trustee of the NGV.

### Newspaper series by Alexander Colquhoun (listed by publication date)

Colquhoun, Alexander (unacknowledged). “Australian artists of to-day.” *The Age*. March 9–August 31, 1929. Trove.

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, “A hundred years of Australian art,” *The Age*, October 27, 1934, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Colquhoun, “The Story of Australian Art,” *The Age*, November 10, 1934, 4.

Colquhoun, Alexander and John Longstaff. "Melbourne's private galleries." *The Age*. February 1–October 11, 1930. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Australian artists of to-day." *The Age*. March 7–September 19, 1931. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Famous cartoonists." *The Age*. November 21, 1931–May 28, 1932. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Australian artists of the past." *The Age*. July 2, 1932–April 8, 1933. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Landmarks in the history of art." *The Age*. June 3, 1933–January 13, 1934. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Some English illustrators." *The Age*. March 17, 1934–January 12, 1935. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Notable Woman painters." *The Age*. February 16–November 20, 1935. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Some famous etchers." *The Age*. March 2–December 14, 1935. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Reproduction in art." *The Age*. March 28–June 13, 1936. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Masterpieces in art." *The Age*. July 4, 1936–March 11, 1939. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Some Half-forgotten books." *The Age*. July 18, 1936–February 25, 1939. Trove.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Who's who in fiction." *The Age*. May 27, 1939–October 26, 1940. Trove.

**Publications by Alexander Colquhoun (listed by publication date)**

Colquhoun, Alexander. *Frederick McCubbin, a consideration*. Melbourne: A. Colquhoun, 1919.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Leslie Wilkie." *Art in Australia*, no.7 (1919): 30.

Colquhoun, Alexander. *The work of W. Beckwith McInnes*. Melbourne: Alexander McCubbin, 1920.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "J. Llewellyn Jones." *Art in Australia*, No.8 (1921): 22.

Colquhoun, Alexander. *Year book of Victorian art*. Melbourne: A. McCubbin, 1923.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "The Art of William Rowell." *Art in Australia*, no.53 (1933): 25.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Carl Hampel, Man and Artist." *Art in Australia*, no.81 (1940): 31.

**Publications on Alexander Colquhoun (listed by publication date)**

*The Colquhoun family*. Castlemaine: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 1978.

Phipps, Jennifer. "Colquhoun, Alexander (1862 – 1941)." In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press, 1990.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/colquhoun-alexander-5742>.

*Alexander Colquhoun: 1862-1941: artist and critic*. Castlemaine: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 2004.

## Appendix 8. (a–r) Alexander Colquhoun’s art collectors

### 2. (a) Robert Charles Dunlop Elliott (1884–1950)

Elliott was the first collector Colquhoun profiled and remains the most published collector of the series. Elliott was born in Kyneton, Victoria in 1884. A businessman and newspaper proprietor, Elliott garnered fame during his lifetime as a Federal senator for Victoria between 1929 to 1935. A member of the Melbourne Savage Club from 1922-36,<sup>6</sup> Elliott was also a trustee of the Public Library, Museum and National Gallery of Victoria between 1924 to 1944. After the reorganisation of the institution, Elliott became a trustee of the gallery until his death. In 1927 Elliott lent his art collection to the Art Gallery of South Australia.

By Colquhoun’s profile in 1930, Elliott lived in Toorak. Colquhoun described Elliott’s collection as consisting of around 53 works of art, from a mixture of British and Australian artists. In 1935, Harold Herbert wrote another profile of Elliott’s collection, this time for *Art and Australia*. Elliott and his wife Hilda *nee* Fink gifted their art collection to the city of Mildura, forming the Mildura Art Centre.

#### Publications on Elliott:

Gardiner, L.R. “Elliott, Robert Charles Dunlop (1884–1950).” In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press, 1990.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/elliott-robert-charles-dunlop-6106>.

#### Publications on the Elliott collection (listed by publication date):

*The R.D. Elliott Loan Collection of pictures: exhibited at the Art Gallery, Adelaide, 1927*. Adelaide: Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia, 1927.

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Johnson, *Laughter and the love of friends: a centenary history of the Melbourne Savage Club 1894-1994 and a history of the Yorick Club 1868-1966* (Melbourne: Melbourne Savage Club, 1994), 262.

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: The Elliott Collection." *The Age*, February 1, 1930, 5. Trove.

Herbert, Harold. "The art collection of Senator RD Elliott." *Art in Australia*, Third series, No.58 (February 15, 1935): 23–36.

*The Elliott collection: a catalogue of works bequeathed by R.D. Elliott and Hilda Elliott*. Mildura: Sunraysia Publishing, 1998.

McIntyre, Paul. *Collection 50: Mildura Arts Centre*. Mildura: Mildura Arts Centre, 2006.

## 8. (b) William Harper Bell (1875–1942)

Harper Bell was the second collector Colquhoun profiled. Born in Geelong in 1875, Harper Bell became a dentist and was a member of the Melbourne Savage Club between 1926-1929.<sup>7</sup> Located in Camberwell, Harper Bell owned around 150 paintings, the second largest profiled by Colquhoun.

The collection focused on Australian art, with 24 works each by William Beckwith McInnes and Blamire Young. Harper Bell disliked modernist European art, describing cubist art to the press in 1930 as ‘sheer insanity’.<sup>8</sup> In 1938, Harper Bell sold 49 works of art from his collection through the Kozminsky Galleries.<sup>9</sup> The remaining collection was sold after Harper Bell’s death, at an estate auction by Leonard Joel’s in 1947.<sup>10</sup>

### **Publications on the Harper Bell collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. “Melbourne’s Private Art Galleries: The Harper Bell Collection.” *The Age*, February 15, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>7</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 9398, 1875. Death: event registration number 330, 1941, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>; Probate and Administration Files, 330/428, VPRS 28, P0003, 3615, Public Records Office of Victoria; Johnson, *Laughter and the love of friends*, 254.

<sup>8</sup> “Art in Venice: Sheer Insanity,” *The Newcastle Sun*, September 13, 1940, 5.

<sup>9</sup> “Australian Art Collection,” *The Argus*, April 2, 1938, 35; “Sale of Paintings,” *The Argus*, April 6, 1938, 22.

<sup>10</sup> The auction included art from the estates of Dr. Douglas E Stewart and Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer. “Sales by auction,” *The Argus*, September 6, 1947, 12.

## **8. (c) Samuel Arthur Ewing (1864–1941)**

Ewing was the third collector and second doctor profiled by Colquhoun. At the time, Ewing's paintings were hung in his home at 31 Grey Street, St Kilda. Colquhoun describes the collection as principally an Australian picture collection, however several international decorative art objects were also included in the overview of approximately 45 works of art. Over half of the Australian painting collection was donated to the University of Melbourne in 1938, forming the Ewing Collection and founding the Ewing Gallery.

### **Publications on the Ewing collection (listed by publication date):**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: The Ewing Collection." *The Age*, March 1, 1930, 5. Trove.

*Catalogue of the Ewing Art Gallery, Union House, University of Melbourne.*  
Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938.

*The Ewing collection.* Parkville: Ewing Gallery, Melbourne University Union, 1981.

*The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing.* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982.

McAuliffe, Chris and Juliette Peers. *The full majesty of nature: the collection of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing.* Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002.

## 8. (d) Herbert John Green (c.1868–1953)<sup>11</sup>

Green was the fourth collector Colquhoun profiled. Born in Glasgow, Scotland around 1868, Green resided in Toorak by 1930.<sup>12</sup> Colquhoun described Green's art collection as consisting of approximately 27 works of art by Australian and English artists. Artists from Sydney featured amongst the Australian selections. Green's collection was auctioned after his death in 1953.<sup>13</sup>

### **Publications on the Green collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: The H.J. Green Collection." *The Age*, March 15, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>11</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Death: event registration number 4486, 1953, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>12</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Death: event registration number 4486, 1953, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>; Probate and Administration Files, 464/049, VPRS 28, P0004, 541, Public Records Office of Victoria.

<sup>13</sup> Green's collection was auctioned alongside Keith Murdoch's art collection. "Advertising," *The Argus*, August 29, 1953, 2.

## 8. (e) Merson Sheldon Cooper (c.1868–1948)<sup>14</sup>

Cooper was the fifth collector Colquhoun profiled. Cooper was born in Somerset, England in 1868 and migrated to Australia around 1878.<sup>15</sup> Cooper became a stock and share broker and had a keen interest in horse racing. He lived in Cliveden Mansions in St Kilda at the time of Colquhoun's article.

Cooper's collection was the smallest profiled in the series, consisted of approximately 17 works of art. Half were by Australian artists, and the other half by English and European artists. Cooper's art collection was sold at auction after his death in 1948 by Leonard Joel.<sup>16</sup> Cooper was survived by his wife, Mrs X. de Bavay and his daughter, who resided in Hobart.<sup>17</sup>

### **Publications on the Cooper collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: The Merson Cooper Collection." *The Age*, March 17, 1930, 7. Trove.

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<sup>14</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Death: event registration number 6171, 1948, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>15</sup> "Death of Mr M. S. Cooper," *The Age*, June 26, 1948, 2.

<sup>16</sup> "Sales by Auction," *The Argus*, October 13, 1948, 11.

<sup>17</sup> "Death of Mr M. S. Cooper."

## 8. (f) John May (1858–1949)

May was the sixth collector Colquhoun profiled. May was born in 1858 in Moonee Ponds, Victoria.<sup>18</sup> He trained as a high school classics teacher, and began working as a stock broker just prior to WWI.<sup>19</sup> May married Esther nee Chew in 1884 and had five surviving children. He had a passion for lawn bowls and wrote a book on the topic in 1938, *Our Game*.<sup>20</sup> Around 1900, May moved to Heidelberg, where he resided at the time of Colquhoun's series.

Colquhoun describe May's collection as consisting of approximately 19 works of art. Walter Withers was the focus of May's acquisitions, as the artist had been a neighbour of the collector for 30-odd years. May likely sold his collection prior to his death in 1949.<sup>21</sup>

### Publications by May:

May, John. *Our game*. Melbourne: Wilke, 1938.

### Publications on the May collection:

Colquhoun, Alexander. 'Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Mr. John May's Collection.'" *The Age*, April 12, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>18</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 9797, 1858, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>19</sup> "Obituary: Mr. John May," *The Age*, January 10, 1949, 2.

<sup>20</sup> "Sporting personalities: No. 7 – Mr. John May by 'Skipper'," *Sporting Globe*, November 16, 1940, 3.

<sup>21</sup> By 1941, Ewing owned *Nearing the Township*, 1897 by Walter Withers, which Colquhoun notes was owned by May in 1930. The painting is a study for the painting of the same name held in the AGNSW. Ewing's daughter, Margaret Cutten, donated the study to the NGV in 1980, where it now permanently resides. See *The Ewing gift: presentations to the collections of Asian art, Australian art, decorative arts and to the library by Mrs. M.E. Cutten in memory of her father, Dr S.A. Ewing and her brother, Mr. George Ewing* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1982), 8.

## 8. (g) John Alex Graham (1870–1951)

Graham was the seventh collector Colquhoun profiled. Graham was born in Creswick, Victoria in 1869.<sup>22</sup> He was involved in the goldfields in the Creswick area, published a book on the history of Creswick in 1942.<sup>23</sup> Graham became an investor later in life, and resided on Glenferrie Road, Kooyong in 1930.

Colquhoun described Graham's collection as consisting of approximately 34 works of art predominately by Australian artists. After his death in 1951, Graham's art collection was likely sold along with the sale of his houses.<sup>24</sup> Graham bequeathed £3,000 to Ballarat for the purpose of a statue on Stuart Street, Ballarat's 'street of statues'.<sup>25</sup> The City of Ballarat decided upon a statue of Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), as the alternative to a sculpture of Shakespeare.

### **Publications by Graham:**

Graham, John. *Early Creswick: the first century*. Melbourne: Arbuckle, Waddle, 1942.

### **Publications on the Graham collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Mr. J.A. Graham's Collection." *The Age*, May 3, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>22</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number: 8078, 1869; Death: event registration number 2738, 1951, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>23</sup> "Obituary: Mr. J.A. Graham," *The Age*, March 16, 1951, 8.

<sup>24</sup> "Sales by Auction: Properties from the estate of J.A. Graham," *The Age*, October 24, 1951, 9.

<sup>25</sup> "Ballarat to honor Scott," *The Argus*, June 10, 1952, 5.

## **8. (h) Roland Ravenscroft Wettenhall (1882–1965)**

Wettenhall was the eighth collector and third doctor Colquhoun profiled. Wettenhall was born in 1882 at Carrs Plains, near Stawell, Victoria. He married Jane Vera *nee* Creswick in 1910, and had two surviving sons. Wettenhall became a doctor and specialised in dermatology. An active member of the Melbourne's medical community, Wettenhall was a foundation fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and several other Melbourne-based medical organisations. He was passionate about Victorian history and genealogy, publishing two local history books during his lifetime. Wettenhall was also an active member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Genealogical Society of Victoria, the Royal Australian Historical Society and the Australasian Pioneers' Club, Sydney.

By 1930, Wettenhall lived in Toorak and owned approximately 37 works of art. Half the collection was Australian, and the other half by English artists. The collection was spread between Wettenhall's house in Toorak and his private practice on Sprint Street, Melbourne. After his death, Wettenhall's art collection most likely remained in the family.<sup>26</sup>

### **Publications by Wettenhall (listed by publication date):**

Wettenhall, Roland, and Robert Henderson Croll. *Dr. Alexander Thomson: a pioneer of Melbourne and founder of Geelong*. Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1937.

Wettenhall, Roland. *Carrs Plains (twenty-three miles north of Stawell), Richardson Valley, Victoria, 1836-1945: a retrospect and a sketch*. Malvern: McKellar Press, 1945.

### **Publications on Wettenhall (listed by publication date):**

Wettenhall, Roland Seton. *From sea and soil: the story of Robert and Mary Wettenhall from whom the Australian family is descended*. Elwood: R.S. Wettenhall, 1985.

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<sup>26</sup> The year after Wettenhall's death, several works of art from his collection are identifiable in photographs of his son's house. "House of the week: Dr. and Mrs. N Wettenhall's Toorak house," *The Australian Women's Weekly*, October 12, 1966, 16.

Gandevia, Bryan. "Wettenhall, Roland Ravenscroft (1882 – 1865)." In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press, 1990.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wettenhall-roland-ravenscroft-9057>.

**Publications on the Wettenhall collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Dr. R. Wettenhall's Collection." *The Age*, May 17, 1930, 5. Trove.

## 8. (i) Joseph Thornton Tweddle (1865–1943)

Tweddle was the ninth collector Colquhoun profiled. Tweddle was born in Winlaton, Durham, England in 1865. He migrated to Victoria in 1887. In 1894 he married Isabel, an artist, and the couple had two daughters and a son.<sup>27</sup> Tweddle became a well-known businessman, working in wool and cattle.

In 1921, Tweddle was a trustee of the Public Library, Museum and National Gallery of Victoria till his death in 1943. In 1923 Tweddle was involved in the Australian art exhibition in London. By 1930, Tweddle lived in Auburn and owned around 50 works of art by Australian artists. Colquhoun commented that the collection covered all available wall space in the house and overflowed into the store rooms.

In 1937, Tweddle auctioned 208 paintings, etchings and other works of art by English, European and Australian artists. The auction raised funds for Tweddle's charity, the Tweddle Hospital for Babies and School of Mothercraft, which he had set up in Footscray in 1924.<sup>28</sup>

Following the auction, Tweddle gifted several paintings to the Bendigo Art Gallery, a further eight paintings to Wesley College in Melbourne, and a painting by Clara Southern to the Art Gallery of Ballarat.<sup>29</sup>

### Publications on Tweddle:

Lack, John. "Tweddle, Joseph Thornton (1865–1943)." In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press, 1990.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tweddle-joseph-thornton-8892>.

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<sup>27</sup> See Juliet Peers, "Tweddle, Isabel May (Diana) (1875–1945)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tweddle-isabel-may-diana-8891>.

<sup>28</sup> "Tweddle Pictures: a notable collection," *The Age*, October 26, 1937, 4; "Art Auction: Streeton work bring 76 guineas," *The Age*, 28 October 1937, 4. The organisation is now known as the Tweddle Child & Family Health Service and remains in Footscray. See Tweddle: Child and Health Service, "About Us," accessed June 20, 2016. <http://www.tweddle.org.au/about-us/about-tweddle/>.

<sup>29</sup> "Critic Looks at Bendigo Gallery—Much Good Art," *The Argus*, December 17, 1949; Frederick McCubbin, *Landscape, spring*, 1912, oil on canvas, 40 x 74.5cm, Wesley College. See "McCubbin: Last Impressionist 1907–1917," NGA; Clara Southern, *A cool corner*, c.1918, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 61.4cm, AGB.

**Publications on the Tweddle collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Mr. J.T. Tweddle's Collection." *The Age*, May 31, 1930, 5. Trove.

## 8. (j) Sir William George McBeath (1865–1931)

McBeath was the tenth collector Colquhoun profiled. McBeath was born on April 17, 1865 in Fitzroy, Melbourne. He was educated in New Zealand, and returned to Melbourne to work in business. In 1889 McBeath married Annie Hutchinson, and the couple had two daughters and one son.

By 1930, McBeath was living in Eulinya on Irving Road in Toorak and owned around 25 paintings and etchings by English and European artists. Colquhoun noted a further five watercolour paintings by Australian artists.

McBeath died one year after the profile.<sup>30</sup> His will directed all of his properties to be sold.<sup>31</sup> Newspapers did not report whether McBeath's art collection was also sold. The collection may therefore remain in family possession.

### **Publications on McBeath:**

Vines, Margaret. "McBeath, Sir William George (1865–1931)." In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press, 1990.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcbeath-sir-william-george-7294>.

### **Publications on the McBeath collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: Sir William McBeath's Collection." *The Age*, June 14, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>30</sup> "Sir William McBeath: Death of Fine Citizen," *The Age*, April 4, 1931, 14.

<sup>31</sup> "Sir William McBeath: Probate of his will," *The Age*, July 1, 1931, 9.

## 8. (k) Oswald Julian Syme (1878–1967)

Syme was the eleventh collector Colquhoun profiled. Syme was born in Melbourne in 1878 to the newspaper family who owned *The Age*.<sup>32</sup> In 1908 Syme married Mildred Rowe, and the couple had two daughters.<sup>33</sup> Syme became a cattle-breeder and dairy-farmer, and ran *The Age* between 1942 to 1964.<sup>34</sup>

Syme was the first collector Colquhoun profiled who lived outside Melbourne. Syme lived in Bolobek, in Macedon and owned around 55 works of art. His collection consisted of landscape paintings by Australian artists.

Following Syme's death, his art collection remained in the family. In recent years, several works from Syme's collection have been sold through Australian auction houses, including Sotheby's Australia<sup>35</sup> and Deutscher and Hackett.<sup>36</sup> The remaining art from Syme's collection possibly remains in the family.

### Publications on the Syme's collection:

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. Oswald Syme's Collection." *The Age*, June 28, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>32</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number: 8903, 1878; Death: event registration number 22177, 1967, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>33</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number: 2440, 1908, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>34</sup> Geoffrey Serle, "Syme, Sir Geoffrey (1873–1942)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1990, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/syme-sir-geoffrey-8732>; "Francis Bacon comes to Melbourne," *Australian Auction Review*, <http://www.australianauctionreview.com.au/auction-review/francis-bacon-comes-melbourne>.

<sup>35</sup> The Syme family sold *Evening, Venice*, 1908, by Arthur Streeton in 2011. See *Important Australian art: including property from the estate of the late Dr Jan Altmann: auction in Melbourne, Tuesday, 26 November 2013, 6.30 pm* (Armadale: Sotheby's Australia, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> The Syme family sold *Swings*, 1932 and *Wet afternoon*, 1929 by Ethel Spowers in 2011. See *Important Australian and international works of art: Deutscher and Hackett fine art auction, Melbourne, 30 November 2011* (South Yarra: Deutscher and Hackett, 2011).

## 8. (I) George Swinburne (1861–1928)

Swinburne was the twelfth collector Colquhoun profiled. Swinburne was born in Paradise, England in 1861 and immigrated to Melbourne in 1886. A businessman, Swinburne became involved in politics in the 1900s, and began working in government roles for the remainder of his life. Swinburne gifted the funds to set up Swinburne University (then the Swinburne Technical College). He was a trustee for the National Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria from 1910 till his death in 1928.

As Swinburne had died two years before the series, his wife, Ethel, gave the interview for Colquhoun. Ethel continued to reside in the couple's Hawthorn home at the time of the interview. Colquhoun outlined 60 paintings in Swinburne's collection, describing principally landscapes and portraiture by English and European artists. Colquhoun described Swinburne's collecting period as spanning the preceding 30 years. Ethel later described the period as from 1888 to 1925.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the other collectors profiled, Australian art formed a very small financial and physical presence in Swinburne's collection. The 8 paintings included two portraits of the Swinburne family and 6 watercolours by Harold Herbert, Hans Heysen, William Strutt and Rex Battarbee.

After Swinburne's death, his art collection remained in possession of Ethel Swinburne. In 1941, Ethel gave two portraits from the collection to the NGV, *Dorothea, 1840s* by William Etty, and *George, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Townshend, c.1801* by Mather Brown.<sup>38</sup> Ethel died in 1947, and it is unknown whether the collection remained in the family or has since been sold.

### Publications on Swinburne:

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<sup>37</sup> See *George, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Townshend, c.1801*, by Mather Brown, National Gallery of Victoria, "NGV Collection and Ideas," accessed, July 15, 2016, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/3819/>.

<sup>38</sup> See National Gallery of Victoria, "NGV Collection and Ideas," accessed, July 15, 2016, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/>.

Patrick, Alison. "Swinburne, George (1861–1928)." In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press, 1990.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/swinburne-george-8729>.

**Publications on Swinburne's collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Melbourne's Private Art Galleries: the late Mr. Geo. Swinburne Collection." *The Age*, July 19, 1930, 6. Trove.

## 8. (m) David Ferguson (c.1859–1936)<sup>39</sup>

Ferguson was the thirteenth collector Colquhoun profiled. Ferguson was born in Glasgow, Scotland.<sup>40</sup> He was living in Melbourne by the 1890s and worked in the wine and spirit trade until his death in 1936.<sup>41</sup>

By 1930, Ferguson was living in Melbourne Mansions on Collins Street in the city and owned around 26 works of art. Colquhoun described the collection as consisting mainly of art by Melbourne artists. Ferguson favoured animal paintings by Septimus Power and watercolours by Hans Herbert, with the remaining art depicting landscapes.

With no will and known surviving family, Ferguson's art collection was most likely sold after his death.<sup>42</sup>

### **Publications on Ferguson's collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. David Ferguson's Collection." *The Age*, August 2, 1930, 5.

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<sup>39</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Death: event registration number 2308, 1836, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>40</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Death: event registration number 2308, 1836, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>41</sup> "Obituary," *The Argus*, March 21, 1936, 26.

<sup>42</sup> "Advertising," *The Age*, July 3, 1936, 15.

## 8. (n) Arthur Octavius Barrett (c.1870–1964)<sup>43</sup>

Barrett was the fourteenth collector Colquhoun profiled. Barrett was born in Banbury, England around 1870. By the 1890s Barrett had immigrated to Melbourne. He married Florence May White in 1894, and the couple had six sons.<sup>44</sup>

By 1930, Barrett lived in Armadale and owned about 68 works of art. Barrett was unique amongst the collectors profiled in that his collection wholly featured art by Australian artists. Barrett also owned decorative arts, including applied art in glass and porcelain.

In 1938 Barrett auctioned his collection of 68 works of art, including paintings, watercolours, pencil drawings, pastels and etchings by 28 artists.<sup>45</sup> There were ten paintings by Arthur Streeton, eight by Blamire Young and four oil and watercolours by Walter Withers. Barrett gifted George Lambert's painting *The Bathers* to the Art Gallery of South Australia following the auction, after it was passed in at 410 guineas.<sup>46</sup> Barrett was the father of then mayor of Adelaide, Arthur Barrett.<sup>47</sup> After selling his collection, Barrett lived for a further 28 years. It is unknown whether he returned to art collecting.

### Publications by Barrett:

Barrett, A.O. *Australia's entail*. Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens Ltd, 1937.

### Publications on Barrett's collection:

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. A.O. Barrett's Collection." *The Age*, August 2, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>43</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Death: event registration number 20843, 1964, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>44</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Marriage: event registration number 3839, 1894, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>45</sup> Joshua N. McClelland, "Australian Art," *The Argus*, August 9, 1938, 4; Oriol, "The Passing Show: Calling the Guineas," *The Argus*, August 12, 1938, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Palette, "Art trend shown by auction: Streeton and Blamire Young most sought," *News*, August 25, 1939, 12.

<sup>47</sup> "A Wonderful Gift," *The South Eastern Times*, October 8, 1937, 4.

## 8. (o) Edward Bonaventure Heffernan (1882–1942)<sup>48</sup>

Heffernan was the fifteenth collector Colquhoun profiled. Heffernan was born in Fitzroy in 1882.<sup>49</sup> He became a medical practitioner and practised in Collins Street in the city and in Heidelberg.<sup>50</sup> Heffernan married Dr. Hilda Greenshields in 1911, and the couple had a daughter and two sons.<sup>51</sup> During his lifetime, Heffernan was on the council of the Victorian Artists Society.<sup>52</sup>

By 1930, Heffernan lived in Banksia Street, Heidelberg and owned approximately 36 works of art. Colquhoun described the collection as covering all available wall space in Heffernan's house. Colquhoun outlines Heffernan's collection as consisting of watercolours, drawings and etchings, with several oil paintings and lino prints included. The paintings are by Australian artists, with the drawings and etchings including English and European artists.

After his death, Heffernan's collection most likely remained in his family.

### **Publications on Heffernan's collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Dr. Heffernan's Collection." *The Age*, August 30, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>48</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 23069, 1882, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>49</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 23069, 1882, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>50</sup> "Obituary," *The Argus*, August 3, 1942, 3.

<sup>51</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Marriage: event registration number 0907, 1911, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>; "Obituary," *The Argus*, August 3, 1942, 3.

<sup>52</sup> "Obituary," *The Argus*, August 3, 1942, 3.

## 8. (p) Alfred Stanbury McMichael (1855–1938)

McMichael was the sixteenth collector Colquhoun profiled. McMichael was born in Collingwood, Victoria in 1855.<sup>53</sup> He married Ellen Robertson in 1882 and the couple had two daughters and two sons.<sup>54</sup>

By 1930, McMichael lived in Armadale and owned around 65 works of art. McMichael had been collecting for around 50 years, or at least since the 1880s. Colquhoun described the collection as featuring Australian art. McMichael had the largest selection of colonial art of collectors profiled. Colquhoun states that McMichael had a preference for oil paintings and art by Hans Heysen.

It is unknown whether McMichael's collection was sold or remained in his family after death. However, in recent years, several paintings McMichael owned have been sold by Sotheby's Australia and Deutcher and Hackett.<sup>55</sup> The provenance records indicate that the paintings may have been sold during McMichael's lifetime or shortly after his death. The location of the majority of the collection is unknown.

### Publications on McMichael's collection:

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. A.S. McMichael's Collection." *The Age*, September 13, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>53</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 9209, 1855, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>54</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Marriage: event registration number 1555, 1882, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>55</sup> Several paintings from McMichael's Collection have since been sold through Australian auction houses. For example, *Friendly Society's Gardens*, 1888 by David Davies was sold by Sotheby's Australia in 2016 – see *Important Australian & international art: auction in Melbourne Tuesday 14 August 2012, 6.30 pm* (Armadale: Second East Auction Holdings Pty Ltd, 2011); *At Eaglemont*, 1889 by Arthur Streeton was sold by Sotheby's Australia in 2016 as part of the Hans Heysen Collection sale – see *Important Australian art: auction in Sydney, 23 November 2016, Sale AU0811, 6.30 pm, Intercontinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney* (Melbourne: Second East Auction Holdings Pty Ltd, 2016); *Rainy Day*, 1888 by Charles Conder was sold at auction in 2017 as part of the estate of the late James O. Fairfax collection – see Deutcher and Hackett, Lot 13, The Estate of the Late James Fairfax AC, <http://www.deutscherandhackett.com/auction/lot/rainy-day-1888>.

## 8. (q) G.S. Rowell

Rowell was the seventeenth collector Colquhoun profiled. Little can be found of Rowell's life.<sup>56</sup>

By 1930, Rowell lived in Canterbury. Colquhoun described Rowell's collection as consisting of around 40 works of art. The majority were by Australian artists.

### **Publications on Rowell's collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. "Victoria's Private Art Galleries: Mr. G.S. Rowell's Collection." *The Age*, September 27, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>56</sup> A George Albert Rowell (1873–1940) with an Australian art and clock collection also lived in Canterbury at this time. Whether G.S. Rowell and G.A. Rowell are the same person is unable to be confirmed.

## 8. (r) Joseph Reginald Atkinson (1864–1954)<sup>57</sup>

Atkinson was the eighteenth and final collector Colquhoun profiled. Atkinson was born in St Kilda in 1864.<sup>58</sup> Atkinson worked in business during his life, at a firm founded by his father, Atkinsons and Hicks Ltd., retiring at 80 years old.<sup>59</sup> He enjoyed golf and was a member of the Kew and Frankston golf clubs.<sup>60</sup> An obituary in *The Sydney Morning Herald* described Atkinson as ‘one of Melbourne’s oldest and best-known business identities’.<sup>61</sup>

By 1930, Atkinson lived in the Kew Golf House in East Kew and owned around 28 works of art. Colquhoun described Atkinson’s collection as focusing on landscapes and cityscapes by Australian artists.

With no surviving direct relatives, Atkinson’s art collection was most likely dispersed after his death.

### **Publications on Atkinson’s collection:**

Colquhoun, Alexander. “Victoria’s Private Picture Galleries: Mr. J.R. Atkinson Collection.” *The Age*, October 11, 1930, 5. Trove.

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<sup>57</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 11862, 1864; Death: event registration number 3981, 1954, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>58</sup> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Birth: event registration number 3981, 1954, <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>.

<sup>59</sup> “Businessman dies at 90,” *The Argus*, April 17, 1954.

<sup>60</sup> “Businessman dies at 90,” *The Argus*, April 17, 1954.

<sup>61</sup> “Death of Mr. J. R. Atkinson,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 17, 1954, 4.

## Appendix 9. Collector Dame Nellie Melba (1861–1931)

Born Helen Porter Mitchell, Melba gained international renown as an opera singer.<sup>1</sup> Melba began collecting Australian art around the 1890s, while living overseas, and became known for her patronage of Australian artists.<sup>2</sup> In 1900, Melba gifted a bust of herself by Bertram Mackennal to the NGV.<sup>3</sup> By 1914, Melba's continued support was officially recognised by Melbourne's arts scene, with the Victorian Artists Society granting her honorary membership.<sup>4</sup> In 1915 Melba published *Melba's Gift Book*, a hugely successful book celebrating Australian art and literature, which was published in order to raise funds for the war effort.<sup>5</sup>

By her death in 1931, Melba had garnered renown as a collector. William Moore, in *Story of Australian Art*, positioned Melba as one of the leading collectors of the era, with her known collection then housed in Coombe Cottage in the Yarra Valley.<sup>6</sup> Coombe Cottage, now a house museum and winery, still displays a selection of Melba's collection, with art by Hans Heysen, Margaret Preston and Arthur Streeton featured.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Ann Blainey, *I am Melba: a biography* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Melba is particularly known for her support of Hugh Ramsay when the artist was sick overseas around 1900. Sarah Engledow, "Doodles of a Diva," *Portrait 36*, (June 1, 2010): <https://www.portrait.gov.au/magazines/36/doodles-of-the-diva>.

<sup>3</sup> Melba gifted the marble bust portrait by Bertram Mackennal to the NGV in 1900. After her death in 1931, Melba bequeathed an additional portrait of herself by John Longstaff, *Dame Nellie Melba*, 1923, oil on canvas. National Gallery of Victoria, "NGV Collection and Ideas," accessed September 10, 2016, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/3508/>; <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/5867/>

<sup>4</sup> Subseries 1 - Australian Artists' Association 1887 – 1962, 585/1 b MSM 482, MS 7593, Records of the Victorian Artists' Society, 1856-1995, SLV.

The Melba Memorial Conservatorium of Music was originally located in the VAS in Albert Street, East Melbourne. The Conservatorium became affiliated with Victoria University in 1994 and closed in 2008 becoming the Melba Opera Trust. Melba Opera Trust, "About," accessed September 2, 2016, <http://www.melbaoperatrust.com.au/about>.

<sup>5</sup> See *Melba's Gift Book*, London: Hodder and Stoughton; Melbourne: George Robertson, 1915. The book was hugely successful in Australia and overseas. The first edition consisted of 10,000 copies, which sold out within a month. Two further editions were published in Australia, and a print run was undertaken in London and New York. "Books of the week," *Punch*, July 22, 1915, 3; "New Editions arranged of Melba's Gift Book," *The Herald*, August 17, 1915, 8.

<sup>6</sup> William Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, Vol. 2 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Coombe Yarra Valley, "Our Story," accessed September 3, 2016, <http://www.coombeyarravalley.com.au/our-story>.

In 2015, a selection of Melba's Australian art collection was auctioned by Sotheby's Australia. The collection had been held in a Melbourne bank vault since the 1950s.<sup>8</sup> The press described the selection as a smaller portion of the larger art collection still displayed in Coombe Cottage.<sup>9</sup> Twenty-six paintings by fifteen artists were included in the sale, alongside decorative art objects and personal items. The eight women artists were notably modernists, and included Ida Rentoul Outhwaite, Nora Heysen, Thea Proctor, Hilda Rix Nicholas, Margaret Preston, Ethel Spowers and Florence Rodway. Melba acquired most of the paintings at exhibition or directly from the artist. The works were mostly produced during the 1920s, and included several landscapes, still life scenes of flowers, and figural scenes of women.

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<sup>8</sup> The collection, including the art and personal items, sold for almost \$2 million dollars. *Property from the collection of Dame Nellie Melba GBE: auction in Melbourne, 31 March 2015, Sale AU0794, 6 pm Grand Hyatt, Melbourne, 123 Collins Street, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Second East Auction Holdings Pty Ltd, 2015); Peter Fish, "Dame Nellie Melba's \$2m in trinkets top Sotheby's art and design sales," *Australian Financial Review*, April 8, 2015, accessed September 2, 2016, <http://www.afr.com/lifestyle/arts-and-entertainment/art/dame-nellie-melbas-2m-in-trinkets-top-sothebys-art-and-design-sales-20150407-1mg8y8>.

<sup>9</sup> Michaela Boland, "Melba's descendants give the Dame's collection a public sale debut," *The Australian*, February 9, 2015, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/melbas-descendants-give-the-dames-collection-a-public-sale-debut/news-story/71b67303629b174d9c34fa43fbcf3956>.

**Appendix 10. Selections from Nellie Melba’s art collection sold by Sotheby’s Australia, 2013.<sup>1</sup>**

| <b>Artist</b>                     | <b>Title</b>                                  | <b>Year</b> | <b>Medium</b>                   | <b>Year purchased</b> | <b>Location of purchase</b>            | <b>Price paid by Melba (Guineas)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Arthur Streeton (1867–1943)       | The Windsor Damsel, Fishing                   | 1903        | Oil on canvas                   | Unknown               | Purchased from the artist              | Unknown                              |
| Arthur Streeton (1867–1943)       | Strood Hill                                   | 1904        | Oil on canvas board             | Unknown               | Purchased from the artist              | Unknown                              |
| Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884–1961)    | The Canny Fish Wife                           | c. 1910     | Chalk and pastel on paper       | 1922                  | Fine Arts Society’s Gallery, Melbourne | 20                                   |
| Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884–1961)    | The Moorish Archway                           | 1912/1914   | Chalk and pastel on paper       | 1922                  | Fine Arts Society’s Gallery, Melbourne | 20                                   |
| Hans Heysen (1877–1968)           | Zinnias                                       | 1914        | Oil on Canvas                   | 1915                  | Athenaeum, Melbourne                   | 80                                   |
| Charles Bartlett (1860–1940)      | The Floating Barber Shop: Eastern River Scene | 1915        | Watercolour and pastel on paper | Unknown               | Purchased from the artist              | Unknown                              |
| Ida Rentoul Outhwaite (1888–1960) | Jack O’Lantern                                | 1916        | Ink and wash on paper           | 1916                  | Fine Arts Society’s Rooms, Melbourne   | Unknown                              |
| Ida Rentoul Outhwaite (1888–1960) | The Pool                                      | 1916        | Ink and wash on paper           | 1916                  | Fine Arts Society’s Rooms, Melbourne   | Unknown                              |
| Hans Heysen (1877–1968)           | Roses   | 1921        | Oil on canvas on board          | Unknown               | Purchased from the artist              | Unknown                              |
| Elioth Gruner (1882–1939)         | The Picnic                                    | 1922        | Oil on canvas on board          | 1922                  | Gayfield Shaw’s Gallery, Sydney        | Unknown                              |

<sup>1</sup> See *Property from the collection of Dame Nellie Melba GBE: auction in Melbourne, 31 March 2015, Sale AU0794, 6 pm Grand Hyatt, Melbourne, 123 Collins Street, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Second East Auction Holdings Pty Ltd, 2015).

|                              |  |         |                                      |         |                           |         |
|------------------------------|--|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| Thea Proctor (1879–1966)     | Lady with Camelias                       | c. 1923 | Watercolour and pencil on paper      | Unknown | Purchased from artist     | Unknown |
| Margaret Preston (1875–1963) | Plaid Bow                                | 1925    | Hand-coloured woodcut on paper       | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Margaret Preston (1875–1963) | Christmas Bells                          | 1925    | Hand-coloured woodcut on paper       | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Margaret Preston (1875–1963) | Hibiscus                                 | 1925    | Hand-coloured woodcut on paper       | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Margaret Preston (1875–1963) | Protea                                   | 1925    | Hand-coloured woodcut on paper       | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Thea Proctor (1879–1966)     | The Fountain                             | 1925    | Hand-coloured woodcut on paper       | Unknown | Gift of the artist        | Unknown |
| Ethel Spowers (1890–1947)    | The Noisy Parrot                         | 1926    | Colour linocut on paper              | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Nora Heysen (1911–2003)      | Still Life                               | 1927    | Watercolour on paper                 | Unknown | Purchased from artist     | Unknown |
| Ethel Spowers (1890–1947)    | Nursery Rhyme                            | 1927    | Colour linocut on paper              | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Percy Leason (1889–1959)     | Still Life with Oriental Figure and Vase | Undated | Oil on Canvas Board                  | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Norman Lindsay (1879–1969)   | Rescuing the Maiden                      | Undated | Watercolour, pencil and ink on paper | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Norman Lindsay (1879–1969)   | Sunbathing on a Rocky Outcrop            | Undated | Watercolour on paper                 | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Norman Lindsay (1879–1969)   | Rescuing the Maiden                      | Undated | Watercolour, pencil and ink on paper | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| W. B. McInnes (1889–1939)    | Petunias                                 | Undated | Oil on canvas                        | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| W. B. McInnes (1889–1939)    | The Moorish Potter at Work               | Undated | Oil on canvas board                  | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |
| Florence Rodway (1881–1971)  | Portrait in Blue                         | Undated | Pastel on paper                      | Unknown | Commissioned              | Unknown |
| William Tibbitts (1837–1906) | Royal Hotel Ferntree Gully Victoria      | Undated | Watercolour, pen, ink on paper       | Unknown | Purchased from the artist | Unknown |

**Appendix 11. Hans Heysen, *Venetian Wellhead*, watercolour on paper, 1902 (fig. 5)**

This painting illustrates the piazza adjacent to an old Benedictine abbey, San Gregorio (fig. 86). The Abbey is adjacent to the Santa Maria della Salute, on the west side of Salute. Despite Heysen's description of the location, the painting is not a faithful rendition of the San Gregorio piazza. While the background features the San Gregorio gothic façade, the wellhead in the scene is not from the same location. The wellhead located in the piazza is made of white istrian marble, ornamented scrolls and positioned on a square-shaped base with flat, even pavement underneath. Heysen instead portrays a circular, stained and chipped red verona marble wellhead on a circular base on uneven pavement, which appears similar to a wellhead located on the nearby island of Santa Croce, at Campo de la Lana (fig. 87) next to the Botanic Gardens where Heysen also painted.

*Venetian wellhead* arguably illustrates two locations, with the scenes merged in the middle-ground, between the separation of the uneven pavements around the wellhead and the foundations of the building. Confirmation of the joined scenes is evident from the additional window and altered position of the plaque on San Gregorio wall.

## Appendix 12. Ewing and Savage Club's Art Union<sup>1</sup>

Ewing helped found the Art Union Club in 1925 with fellow Savage Club members and artists, Harold Herbert and Charles Wheeler.<sup>2</sup> The Union's purpose was to buy Australian art for the Club. Savagers would donate funds on a regular basis for the purpose of the three Union representatives, Ewing, Herbert and Wheeler, to purchase art for the Club.<sup>3</sup>

Several months after the formation, the Union was split into two groups consisting separately of artists and non-artists.<sup>4</sup> Ewing and two other non-artist members, N. Lilley and D.N. Trener, were to choose the art. Herbert and Wheeler acted in an advisory function as part of a sub-committee. The reasoning behind this separation is unclear and whether it was the result of a rift is unknown. However, Ewing remained long-term friends with both Herbert and Wheeler, so it was most likely amicable. The last mention of the Union is Club records in 1927, indicating that the Union disbanded sometime after, possibly as a result of the Great Depression.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900–1941.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of Committee Meeting, September 25, 1925, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900–1941.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of Committee Meeting, October 10, 1925, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900–1941.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of Committee Meeting, March 25, 1926, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900–1941.

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of Committee Meeting, August 25, 1927, *Annual Committee Reports*, Melbourne Savage Club, 1900–1941.

**Appendix 13. Charles Conder's letter on *Untitled [A Christmas Card]* (fig. 40)<sup>6</sup>**

Dear Uncle,

I enclose a small landscape design, that, I did the day before yesterday after tea, I hope you think there is some improvement in handling + colouring, on the imaginary designs I used to produce a year or two ago

I have an idea that it might be a good plan to visit Gibbs Shallard the printers and ask to be employed as an artist for Christmas cards etc. They might give me a billet – but there is the smallest chances of that I fear –

In haste believe me

Your affect nephew

Charles Conder

I have run out of varnish + so couldn't make it look very bright –

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<sup>6</sup> Chris McAuliffe and Juliette Peers, *The full majesty of nature: the collection of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing* (Parkville: The Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2002), 77.