

# Research Directions

Office of Research Services

## ***CAPTURING HISTORIC COLLECTIONS***



**Ms Robyn Stacey from the School of Communication Arts and the Plant and Food Science Research Centre, has received funding from the Australia Council for the Arts to create a series of photographic and digital works that re-contextualise the historical natural history collections of the Macleay Family. These are housed at the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney and Elizabeth Bay House.**

Natural history as a science is very dependent upon visual images to identify, catalogue and systematise knowledge. Straddling both art and science, photography and digital imaging are an excellent means of conveying to the public not only the scientific importance of these collections but also their artistic, iconic and cultural significance.

The collection contains pieces associated with some of the most famous names in Australia's scientific history. These include Lawrence Hargrave's box kite, Douglas Mawson's pick-axe, entomological and zoological material collected across Indonesia and Malaysia by Alfred Russel Wallace, and a flea collected by Charles Darwin himself.

'The collection is a unique example of the growth of science in this country, and the development of scientific practices and theories around the world during the nineteenth century' Ms Stacey explained. 'The research project will seek to provide new insights into early Australian science and its practitioners through the collection of material that reveals information and knowledge not possible through science alone'.

**Project title:** *Historic collections – reappraised.*

● Funding has been set at: \$13,500.

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