

inspired!

design across time



How does inspiration become reality? What do objects mean to us? How have interpretations of design and decorative arts shifted over time? *Inspired! Design across time* is a rich exploration of these questions featuring more than 800 objects, from the 1700s to now, drawn from the Powerhouse Museum's collection of Australian and international decorative arts and design.

Inspired! uncovers the ways in which designers, makers, industries and entrepreneurs interact to make extraordinary objects. It reveals the passion of creators, the power of objects and the pleasure they give people who use and treasure them. *Inspired!* explores concepts such

as beauty and function, style and substance, tradition and innovation. It shows how changing values and attitudes influence design and shape our taste and imagination.

Students will be able to consider furniture, fashion, textiles, graphics, glass, ceramics, jewellery and metalwork in the contexts of design, technology and cultural history. These teachers notes present a broad introduction to the layout and themes of the exhibition. They contain syllabus links for visual arts, design and technology related subjects and further resources in print and on line.

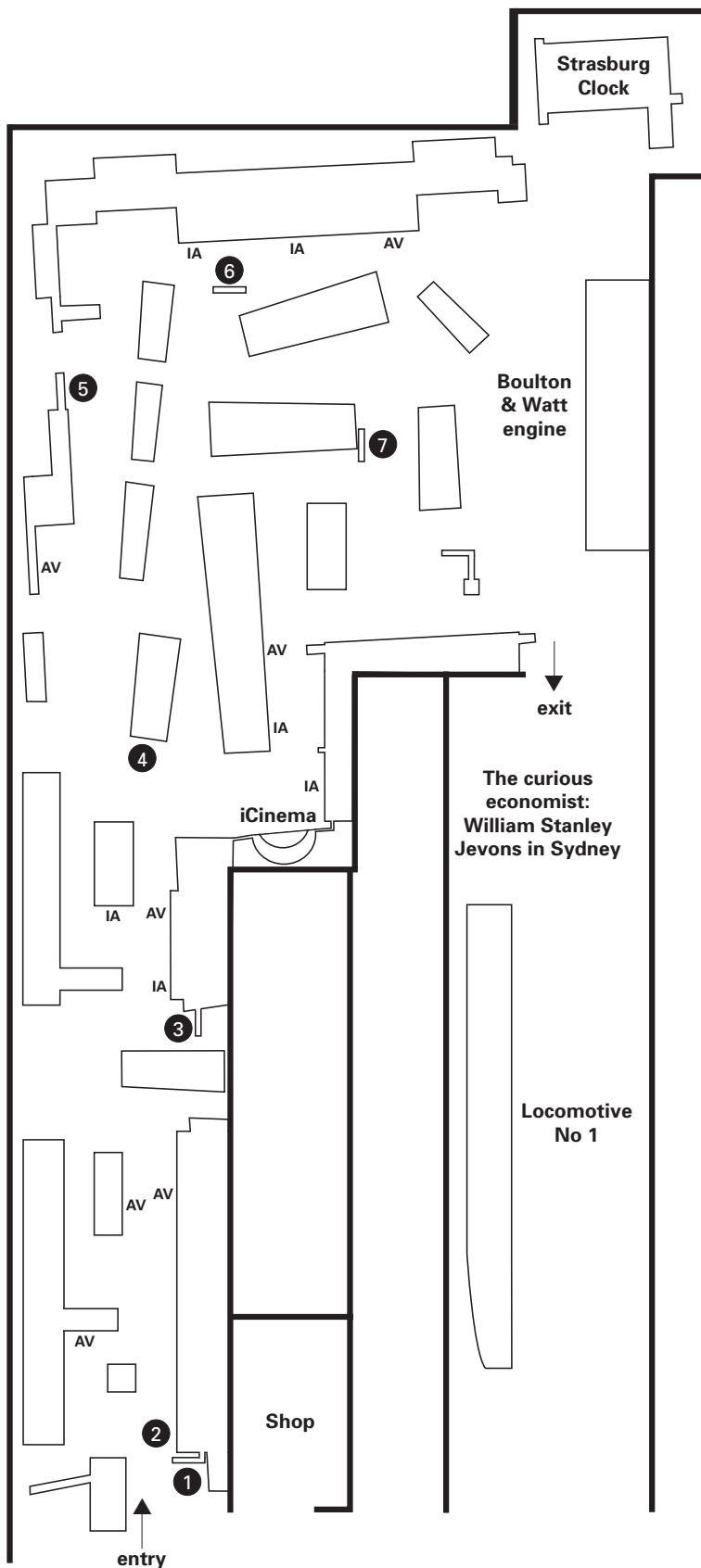
Floorplan

The *Inspired!* exhibition is organised in reverse chronological order, starting today and going back 300 years.

A timeline of local and international events is included on each of the theme panels (2–6 on the floor plan).

1. Introduction
2. Going global: design and the marketplace
1960s to now
3. Mark of the maker: the crafts revival
1940s to now
4. New century, new look
1900s to 1950s
5. Design in the industrial age
the 19th century
6. Australia: adapting to a new world
the 19th century
7. Age of Enlightenment
the 18th century

AV Audiovisual
IA Interactive



Syllabus links

Primary

Creative arts

Appreciating visual arts

- AES1.3 Recognises some of the qualities of different artworks and begins to realise that artists make artworks.
- VAES1.4 Communicates their ideas about pictures and other kinds of artworks.
- VAS1.3 Realises what artists do, who they are and what they make.
- VAS1.4 Begins to interpret the meaning of artworks acknowledging the roles of artist and audience.
- VAS2.3 Acknowledges that artists make artworks for different reasons and that various interpretations are possible.
- VAS2.4 Identifies connections between subject matter in artworks and what they refer to, and appreciates the use of particular techniques.
- VAS3.3 Acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks.
- VAS3.4 Communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.

Science and technology

Built environments

- BEES1.1 Explores and identifies ways in which built environments suit their users.
- BES2.1 Creates, models and evaluates built environments, reflecting consideration of functional and aesthetic factors.
- BES3.1 Creates and evaluates built environments, demonstrating consideration of sustainability and aesthetic, cultural, safety and functional issues.

Information and communication

- ICES1.2 Recognises and uses various means of communication.
- ICS2.2 Creates and evaluates information products demonstrating an understanding of the needs of particular audiences.
- ICS3.2 Creates and evaluates information products and processes, demonstrating consideration of the type of media, form, audience and ethical issues.

Products and services

- PSES1.5 Recognises the relationship between everyday products and people's needs.
- PSS2.5 Creates and evaluates products and services, considering aesthetic and functional factors.
- PSS3.5 Creates and evaluates products and services, demonstrating consideration of sustainability, aesthetic, cultural, safety and functional issues.

Secondary

Technology (Stage 4)

The exhibition is especially relevant for the Products focus area as it covers a range of artefacts including:

- accessories design — design projects may result in bags, hats, masks, belts
- fashion design — design projects may result in clothing, presentations to display fashion design
- industrial design — design projects may result in toys, mechanisms, furniture, leisure products, production systems
- jewellery design — design projects may result in products for body adornment and personal expression.

The exhibition could also assist in the Information and Communication strand as it uses a range of media — text, audiovisual, graphical and electronic — to communicate the aesthetic, cultural and functional aspects of design across time.

Specific outcomes include:

- design processes that respond to needs and opportunities in each design project
- factors influencing design
- the roles of designers and their contribution to the improvement of the quality of life.

Design and Technology (Stages 4 and 5)

The exhibition is especially relevant for these design focus areas:

- accessory
- digital media
- fashion
- furniture
- graphical
- interior
- jewellery
- packaging
- promotional.

Specific outcomes include:

- identifies/analyses and applies a range of design concepts and processes
- describes/evaluates and explains the impact of past, current and emerging technologies on the individual, society and environments
- describes/analyses the work and responsibilities of designers and the factors affecting their work.

Visual Arts (Stages 4 and 5)

The exhibition will particularly help students in their critical and historical studies. For their art-making practice it will help students to:

- learn about the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- see how artworks may be differently interpreted by artists, writers, critics and historians
- identify and describe the purpose, audience and context for viewing artworks
- identify how practice in the visual arts in different times and places is conditioned by a range of interests
- see Australian and international artists, designers, architects from different times and places with a focus on those with an iconic status and others who are relevant to the cultural and personal interests of students
- see artists who make works shaped by subjective, structural, cultural and postmodern values and beliefs.

It extends the concept of artist into these forms: designers, printmakers, multimedia artists/designers, photographers, architects, interior designers, fabric and textile artists/designers, and ceramicists. Students will see artworks created for different purposes: personal, functional, decorative, symbolic, social, cultural and political.

Visual Design (Stage 5)

The exhibition is especially relevant to the object design form where students can investigate:

- the body as a site for visual design, eg jewellery
- iconic symbols
- ceramic wares
- habitat design
- fabric
- containers as a site for visual design.

It will assist students to learn about:

- the field of visual design in terms of design traditions, conventions, activities and customs
- how visual designers have responded to particular or predetermined criteria, social structures, audiences, resources and technological change
- the individual and collaborative practices of visual designers in the field of visual design.

Students preparing major works for:

- Design and Technology (Stage 6)
- Textiles and Design (Stage 6)
- Technological and Applied Studies Life Skills (Stage 6)

will find the exhibition and references listed here valuable and inspiring!

Tertiary students

As a broad history of design innovation, this exhibition will be of great interest to tertiary students of fine arts, design, ceramics, textile design, fashion, interior design, graphic design, industrial design and jewellery as well as students of architecture and built environment studies.

Going global: design and the marketplace 1960s to now

The radical social, cultural and technological changes of the 1960s ushered in a new era of design. Plastics, a young consumer market and the emergence of creative new manufacturing industries, particularly in Italy, dramatically changed the 'look' and popularity of design.

Since the 1980s, design has become a global phenomenon. Top international designers enjoy the status of superstars, and design — from furniture to fashion to homewares — is successfully marketed through a range of widely promoted signatures, brands and labels. New technologies are constantly explored and global communications and distribution have effectively dissolved national design boundaries.

Australia has been part of this international design revolution, nurturing many young designers who have gone on to establish successful national and international careers.



Wiggle chair, designed by Frank Gehry, United States, 1972, made by Vitra Germany, 2002. Purchased 2003.

Mark of the maker: the crafts revival 1940s to now

The crafts revival is a strong contemporary movement that started as a rejection of what was seen as the impersonal nature of industrial modernism. Craftspeople preferred an independent way of life making handmade objects from natural materials.

From the 1940s they developed an enthusiastic market of those who wanted to use and enjoy objects that showed the mark of the maker. Their effective organisations and networks influenced the establishment of new education courses and galleries, and encouraged travel and exchange.

Today craftspeople, artists or designermakers continue to create objects through working skilfully and directly with their materials. They explore a range of cultural and historical traditions to develop their own ideas in new contexts and enjoy national and international reputations for their work.

Many embrace new technologies and processes alongside the old and collaborate in different ways to make their work.



Devilish chaos, glass bowl by Toots Zynsky, Netherlands, 1995. Purchased 1996.

New century, new look 1900s to 1950s

The upheaval of two world wars in the first half of the 20th century saw far-reaching changes to the way people lived. Machine technology, improved communications and the emergence of a classless society inspired new ideas about being 'modern'. Modernism, in its many forms, became the defining international design concept of the period.

Pre-World War I functional modernism focused on geometric shapes, new industrial materials and primary or neutral colours. Richly-coloured objects and dress designed in the inter-war Art Deco style drew on Cubism and 'exotic' cultures. By the 1950s, modernism had reinvented itself through a return to nature as a source of inspiration in Scandinavian and Italian design.

Often mass produced but also handmade, by mid-century an impressive range of modernist furniture, ceramics and other decorative articles defined the contemporary interior. After World War II, the launch in Paris of Christian Dior's New Look collection in 1947 re-established the city as the world's fashion capital.



Evening dress, sequined and beaded silk, probably made in France about 1925. Gift of The Fashion Group International of Sydney, 1984.

Design in the industrial age the 19th century

A fast-growing urban population created unprecedented demand for domestic and luxury articles in a Europe transformed by the industrial revolution. Fashionable clothes, new tableware and furnishings signalled individual taste and ensured 'respectability'.

Factory production and continuing technical advances enabled manufacturers to offer an impressive range of goods for every pocket. Major firms, and even countries, competed with each other through ever-changing designs and novel materials that were shown off in international exhibitions.

The design of decorative objects was largely inspired by past styles and 'exotic' cultures. History and rich ornament were admired. Reacting to the excesses of these revivalist styles, in the late 1800s the British Arts and Crafts movement, Aestheticism and Frenchborn Art Nouveau provided new points of reference and guided fashionable living. Some of their ideas anticipated modernism of the next century.



Kettle and burner on stand, designed by Christopher Dresser, England, 1878. Purchased 1991.

Australia: adapting to a new world the 19th century

From 1788, what Australians wore and how they chose to furnish their homes reflected both their resourcefulness in a new land and the decorative styles and social influences of Britain and Europe.

Skilled silversmiths, potters and furniture makers soon established workshops and industries. They adapted known technologies to accommodate new materials and the challenges of isolation. Many used Australian motifs of flora and fauna as an expression of their identity in this new place.

Significant patrons commissioned objects for their homes or to commemorate important events. Wealth created by the gold rushes increased opportunities and demands, and displays in large international exhibitions demonstrated Australia's growing skills and resources.



Cricket trophy by William Kerr, Sydney, about 1879. Gift of W T Kerr, 1938.

Age of Enlightenment the 18th century

The 18th century was a time of great change: old beliefs and superstitions gave way to modern science and ideas based on observation, experiment and reason. From classifying plants to collecting antiquities, researchers in all fields published their findings, inspiring artists, designers and the eager-to-learn general public.

The century also shaped two contrasting art styles — playful Rococo and calm Neoclassicism — and gave birth to Europe's first modern consumer societies. With the advent of factory production and increasing prosperity across all levels of society, many more people could afford new clothes, tableware and household articles.

Royalty and the aristocracy financed the manufacture of the finest objects, textiles and fabrics. In Britain, artists, craftspeople and industrial entrepreneurs, as well as noble patrons, fostered luxury industries such as those of porcelain and silver.



Vase in blue jasper, decoration designed by Henry Webber after Charles Le Brun for Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, England, 1786–90. Gift of Powerhouse Members, 1990.

Further resources

Available from Powerhouse Publishing

A free hand: forty years of Australian crafts, Grace Cochrane, 1990. A concise introduction to the people and trends that have influenced Australian crafts.

A material world: fibre, colour and pattern, Christina Sumner (ed), 1990. Explores the techniques used to make and decorate fabrics.

Australian gold & silver, 1851–1900, Eva Czernis-Ryl (ed), 1997. Jewellery and presentation pieces that reveal the creation of a uniquely Australian style.

Bayagul: contemporary Indigenous communication, Steve Miller et al, 2002. Looks at communication and culture as the means of expressing identity.

Beyond architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin in America, Australia and India, Anne Watson (ed), 1998. Discover the lives and work of these two influential architects.

Christian Dior: the magic of fashion, Louise Mitchell et al, 1994. Documents the impact of Christian Dior with a special focus on his influence in Australia.

The cutting edge: fashion from Japan, Louise Mitchell (ed), 2005. The story of Japanese fashion revealed through the work of 19 avant-garde designers.

Mod to Memphis: design in colour 1960s–80s, Anne Watson, 2002. Vibrant and adventurous designs by key international and Australian designers.

Our place: Indigenous Australia now, Steve Miller (ed), 2004. Celebrates continuity and innovation in Indigenous art and culture.

Visions of a republic: the work of Lucien Henry, Ann Stephen (ed), 2001. The extraordinary life and beautiful work of French-Australian artist Lucien Henry.

For more Powerhouse publications visit:
<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/publications>

Powerhouse websites

Decorative arts and design collection online

Research significant objects in the Museum's collection.

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/decarts.asp>

Australian designers at work

Meet six Australian designers.

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/designersatwork>

Sourcing the muse

Explores the creative process of fashion designers.

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/sourcingthemuse>

Electronic swatchbook

Fabric designs, from the 1830s to the 1920s, that you can use freely in your own creations.

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/electronicswatchbook>

Behind the scenes

Go behind the scenes at the Museum.

<http://projects.powerhousemuseum.com/virtmus>

HSC technology syllabus support

Case studies in design, technology and cultural diversity.

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/hsc>

Australia innovates

Looks at the past, present and future of Australian innovation.

http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/australia_innovates

Sydney designers unplugged

Find out what it takes to be a product designer.

<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/unplugged/index.php>

Other relevant publications

Decorative arts and design from the Powerhouse Museum, Powerhouse Publishing, 1991

Bogle, Michael, *Design in Australia 1880–1970*, Craftsman House, 1998

Kaplan, Wendy (ed), *Designing modernity: the arts of reform and persuasion 1885–1945*, Thames and Hudson, 1995

Maynard, Margaret, *Fashioned from penury: dress as cultural practice in colonial Australia*, Cambridge University Press, 1994

Raizman, David, *History of modern design*, Laurence King Publishing, 2003

Ayers, John, *Porcelain for palaces, the fashion for Japan in Europe, 1650–1750*, Oriental Ceramic Society, 1990

Butler, Roger, *Poster art in Australia: the streets as art galleries — walls sometimes speak*, National Gallery of Australia, 1993

Yarwood A T, *Samuel Marsden, the great survivor*, Melbourne University Press, 1977

Fischer, George and Gould, Barret, *Scandinavian ceramics and glass, 1940s to 1980s*, Schiffer Publishing, 2000

Gleeson, Janet, *The arcanum, the extraordinary true story of the invention of European porcelain*, Bantam Press, 1998

Cochrane, Grace, *The crafts movement in Australia: a history*, UNSW Press, 1992

Eldershaw, M Barnard, *The life and times of Captain John Piper*, National Trust of Australia 1973

Timmers, Margaret (ed), *The power of the poster*, V&A Publications, 1998

Hiller, Bevis, *The style of the century*, G&B Arts International, 1998

Barovier Mentasti, Rosa, *Venetian glass 1890–1990*, Arsenale Editrice, 1992

Please note

The websites referred to in these notes were available and suitable at the time of publication. We advise teachers to check sites before recommending them to students.

**For more information on the exhibition
Inspired! Design across time,
visit the Powerhouse Museum's website
<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com>**

For more information about education support or your booking, contact Education and Visitor Services at the Powerhouse Museum:
Telephone — (02) 9217 0222
Fax — (02) 9217 0441
Email — edserv@phm.gov.au

Please note: these notes were correct at October 2005. Object changeovers occur periodically, if you plan to see specific objects check at the time of booking.

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