

MEDIA RELEASE



Detail: Installation of *The Pursuit of Pattern* at The David Roche Foundation, Adelaide.

NEW EXHIBITION OPENS AT THE DAVID ROCHE FOUNDATION INCLUDING A PIECE WHICH FURNISHED MADONNA'S SUITE AT THE RITZ CARLTON

Adelaide. The David Roche Foundation, has opened a new exhibition *The Pursuit of Pattern* which showcases more than 50 rare and exquisite works of art, most of which have not been previously seen, that explore the fashion for inlaid surface patterns on furniture, objets d'art and jewellery. Each item highlights the superb workmanship that was achieved through materials and techniques mastered in the 18th and 19th centuries which are now largely lost.

Focusing on the mid-18th to mid-19th centuries, the exhibition reflects the craze for the 'antique' and the development of the neoclassical style in Britain and Europe through surface pattern. Study of the Roman ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii in the 1750's changed the future of British design when a young architect, Robert Adam, brought back with him in 1758 drawings of plants, flowers, earthenware and decorative emblems copied from the painted and mosaic floors and walls of these buried cities. Using this source material, Adam established himself as Britain's most celebrated neoclassic architect and worked alongside the most famous furniture designer and cabinetmaker of the period, Thomas Chippendale.

Martyn Cook, Museum Director says "Through a generous interstate loan *The Pursuit of Pattern* brings together a group of exquisite marquetry furniture by William Ince & John Mayhew, William Moore, John Folgham and John Cobb, contemporaries of Chippendale, who all worked in the neoclassic style. David Roche was fascinated by the work of these marqueters, but terrified of inlaid items since in Adelaide's hot dry climate it could lift and be damaged."

As the new century dawned, marquetry furniture was replaced by mahogany ornamented with ormolu mounts or brass inlay. The taste for the classical did not however diminish and David Roche collected some very fine examples of micromosaic and hardstone furniture. Foremost, the Percier & Fontaine *Bacchant Centre table*, c.1810, with its Roman micromosaic top by Clementi Ciuli that reflects the French Empire taste of Napoleon Bonaparte. Ciuli's image is of a follower of Bacchus, the ancient Roman god of wine and fertility, surrounded by a Greek key border. The hardstone, pietra dura and brass inlay furniture of leading British Regency designer, George Bullock, is represented by a *Specimen table* c.1815.

The taste for inlaid pattern had the positive effect of reviving and improving ancient techniques to meet the challenges of creating intimate personal items such as boxes and jewellery in the neoclassic fashion. Inlay techniques being particularly suited to pattern making on a small scale. Joining David Roche's collection are a wide selection of private loans that illustrate the 19th century Italian micromosaics made for the Grand Tour participants who wanted the Roman Doves of Pliny or the Colosseum to take back home on a decorated box or brooch. The detail achieved in these tiny glass mosaics is staggering.

Robert Reason, Assistant Museum Director and Senior Curator says "While the focus of the exhibition is historical we have introduced the contemporary work of two artists, Adrian Potter and Arthur Seigneur, to recognize the importance that inlay techniques can still have in contemporary Australian design. Adelaide based Adrian Potter's work *Punk*, 2009, in eleven Eucalyptus species, is a large marquetry picture of the monster Godzilla made in angry response to the architecture of Federation Square in Melbourne. Seigneur is a French-Australian cabinetmaker who learnt his trade in Paris and specialised in straw marquetry before establishing an atelier in Sydney. This centuries old technique uses rye straw, dyed and flattened into strips, which is applied by Seigneur in striking combinations of colour and pattern to modern furniture and architectural panels. Two of his signature geometric *Stools*, 2018, are displayed and stand in striking contrast to the Roche Collection straw marquetry *Port scene* c.1800."

The Ince & Mayhew *Commode*, 1770's, for a short period of time furnished the Presidential suite of the Ritz Carlton in Double Bay during Madonna's residency for her 1993 world tour. While another Ince & Mayhew *Oval side table*, c.1785, was a gift of King George V to Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester (1900-74). It shows that quality is timeless even if fashion is fickle.

The Pursuit of Pattern will be complemented by a range of talks and events.

The David Roche Foundation was the 2018 Winner - Best Attraction or Experience in the City of Adelaide.

DETAILS:

The Pursuit of Pattern

22 January to 29 June 2019

The David Roche Foundation

241 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm. Closed Sunday-Monday and Public Holidays

Cost is \$7 or \$5 concession. Children under 5 free. No bookings required. Entry to the museum wing includes the displays *Régence & Rococo* and *Neoclassic: Reimagining Empire*

www.rochefoundation.com.au

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