



COLLECTION HELPS DESIGNERS TRAVEL THROUGH TIME

It is terrific to see students getting really excited. At Swinburne University Library, it happens a lot when they get their hands on the treasures in an extraordinary Australian history and design collection. Students have said it's like having your own Tardis (time machine) and being transported into other eras.

Hidden away on the second floor of Swinburne University Library in Prahran is one of Melbourne's best-kept secrets, the Swinburne Design Special Collection. The collection houses full historical runs of magazines such as *Australian Women's Weekly*, *Art in Australia*, *Pix*, *Architectural Digest*, *The Lone Hand*, *Art in Australia*, *The Australian Home Beautiful*, *Architecture and Arts* and much more.

Built up over many years, it provides a valuable source of magazines and publications of design significance. Both staff and students of Swinburne's Faculty of Design use these primary resources for research into the history of design in Australia.

Dr Denise Whitehouse, Senior Lecturer in Design History requires all her students to use the collection during their course work. She describes the collection as a primary source on the development of Australian art, architecture and design, particularly graphic, interior and industrial design. The



collection also includes materials on the nature of Australian society and its influence on these developments.

Although the collection contains scarce material, it is important to both the faculty and the library that the collection remains a hands-on, accessible working collection as it gives students a unique opportunity to use primary resources.

Dr Simon Jackson, also from the Faculty of Design, used the collection extensively in his research into the Scandinavian influence in Australian furniture design. He was able to access a rare series of publications held in the collection recording a series of Scandinavian design exhibitions brought to Australia between 1962 and 1976. These exhibitions captured the inspiration for many local Australian designers to explore what he says was the first taste to emerge as an alternative to the dominance of British and American style and design practice in this country.

Faculty Design Liaison Librarian Gordon Turnbull has been pivotal in building the collection and his knowledge has proved invaluable to those using the collection. He worked closely with Dr Jackson and also with Nanette Carter who curated the *Savage Luxury* exhibition at Heide Museum of Modern Art, which included items loaned from our collection. Nanette is again using the collection, this time focusing on *Australian Home Beautiful* and other magazines in her research into Australia's post war 'do-it-yourself' culture.

We are fortunate to be able to make these treasures available to our students and staff.

Gordon Turnbull

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