

Arts Centre Melbourne’s Australian Performing Arts Collection to open to the public through \$2.2 million Reveal project



Photo credit: Williams Ross Architects

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 17 OCTOBER 2022 – Historically significant performing arts costumes and objects, ranging from Kylie Minogue’s gold lame hotpants to Dame Nellie Melba’s *La Traviata* bodice, will be made available to the public to view in 2023 through a \$2.2 million project to upgrade and expand Arts Centre Melbourne’s Australian Performing Arts Collection (APAC). Unveiled today by the Minister for Creative Industries Steve Dimopoulos, MP, the Collections’ Reveal project will provide public access to some never-before-seen objects and costumes through a first of its kind behind-the-scenes visitor experience.

The new space designed by Melbourne-based Williams Ross Architects is set to open in June 2023 and will feature an upgraded and expanded storage to increase capacity for the Collection’s more than 780,000 items, ranging from costumes and accessories, designs and set models, props, photographs and scrap books, posters, programs, archives and audio and visual material. It will feature the Collection’s first ever conservation lab to preserve items onsite, and an enhanced photographic studio to continue digitisation and build on the development of online exhibitions.

Funded by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and philanthropists Virginia and Harry Boon and Maxwell and Merle Carroll Bequest, a key part of the design is an internal street allowing visitors to see curators, conservators, registrars, research, and exhibitions teams working on the collection, as well as objects and costumes in built-in display cases and 2D works on the wall. The intention is not to mimic or replace a gallery environment, but to provide ‘windows’ into what it takes to develop, manage, preserve, and share a State Collection.

“As proud custodians of The Australian Performing Arts Collection we are delighted to uncover and share this hidden treasure with the people of Victoria. We hope they will feel ownership and pride in this State Collection and all the value and benefits that it offers,” said **Arts Centre Melbourne CEO Karen Quinlan, AM.**

International pop music superstar Kylie Minogue said she was thrilled her extensive collection within the Australian Performing Arts Collection would be shared with the community.

“The Australian Performing Arts Collection is home to more than 1000 items from my career including costumes and accessories. I am so thankful that with the help of the expert and passionate Collections team, these items can be shared with generations to come. It’s so exciting that fans, music, and history lovers will be able to see some of them up close and personal amongst so many other treasures housed in the new space,” said Minogue.

One of Kylie’s iconic costumes – her Museum Dress – is set to be among ten treasured pieces from the Australian Performing Arts Collection that will be on display when the new space opens in 2023. A suite of online stories about these items will be published on Arts Centre Melbourne’s website from November.

Arts Centre Melbourne Head of Collections, Preservation and Access Samantha Hamilton said what started as a solution to a storage problem had evolved into an opportunity to share the collection and what it takes to develop, manage, preserve, and make a State Collection accessible with the Victorian community.

“The Australian Performing Arts Collection Reveal project is about deepening our engagement and sharing our Australian Performing Arts Collection with the people of Victoria including school groups, the performing arts community, and visitors to Arts Centre Melbourne. It will become a Melbourne ‘must see and do experience’” said Hamilton.

The Australian Performing Arts Collection (APAC), established in 1975, is the nation’s largest collection of performing arts history and traditions. The collection acquires performing arts material across the five key collecting areas of circus, dance, music, opera, and theatre.

APAC Reveal will remain a permanent offer at Arts Centre Melbourne. The Reimagining Arts Centre Melbourne project, part of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation, includes the Centre for Creativity at 1 City Rd. This centre will feature an Australian Performing Arts Gallery to display the Australian Performing Arts Collection and an expanded permanent home for the Australian Music Vault.

Items of significance in the Australian Performing Arts Collection

- Kylie Minogue costumes designed by Dolce and Gabbana from her Aphrodite Les Folies tour, 2011
- Tutu worn by Justine Summers in Divergence, The Australian Ballet, 1994
- Bodice worn by Dame Nellie Melba as Violetta in La Traviata, c.1908
- Wirth's Circus scrapbook compiled by Charles West, c.1905 - 1940s
- Notebooks compiled by Nick Cave
- Set model designed by Tony Tripp for Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, Melbourne Theatre Company, 1995
- Ossie Ostrich puppet from television program Hey Hey It's Saturday, c1972
- Costume designs by Roger Kirk for the role of Peter Allen in The Boy from Oz
- Spectacles worn with the Fish Dress by Barry Humphries as Edna Everage

Images can be found [here](#).

For more information visit <https://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/exhibitions-collections/reveal>

Arts Centre Melbourne acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.



Media Release

We're excited to be welcoming visitors back to all our venues for live experiences in line with the most recent Victorian Government guidelines on COVID-19. We will continue to offer engaging online experiences via our digital hub – [Together With You](#).

For more information including: our current health and safety policies; bookings for free and ticketed events; and other digital content and experiences, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au.

For more information about Arts Centre Melbourne, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of Arts Centre Melbourne on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tik Tok](#).

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For further media information and interviews, please contact Senior Advisor, Media and Communications, **Suzanne Robson** on 0407443271 or suzanne.robson@artscentremelbourne.com.au.