



## 2025 Frank Van Straten Fellowship

July 2025 – June 2026

Guidelines for Applicants

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Collections staff with the Carte de Visite Album, c.1860s-1870s. Purchased, 1992. Casamento Photography 2010.



Reg Livermore - Take A Bow exhibition, Gallery 1, Arts Centre Melbourne, 2012. Presented by Australian Performing Arts Collection, Arts Centre Melbourne.

All images provided by the Australian Performing Arts Collection, Arts Centre Melbourne. Cover images:

1. Inside the Australian Performing Arts Collection store. Photograph by Mark Gambino.
2. Notebook compiled by Nick Cave, 1984-1985. Gift of Nick Cave, 2006. Photography by Dan Magree Photography.
3. Costume design for Juliet's wedding dress, *Romeo and Juliet* 2011. Designed by Akira Isogawa. Gift of The Australian Ballet, 2012.

## Arts Centre Melbourne

At Arts Centre Melbourne, we bring people together for remarkable experiences.

Arts Centre Melbourne sits on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. The site has been a gathering place for storytelling, community and culture for First Nations people for millennia. In recent times, the same place has become home to the Melbourne Arts Precinct – one of the largest concentrations of cultural and creative organisations and artists in the world. Built into the banks of the Birrarung (Yarra River) and extending below the water table, Arts Centre Melbourne was constructed with ingenuity, guts and sheer determination. This limitless imagination and creativity are reflected in the performances, events and experiences on and beyond our stages.

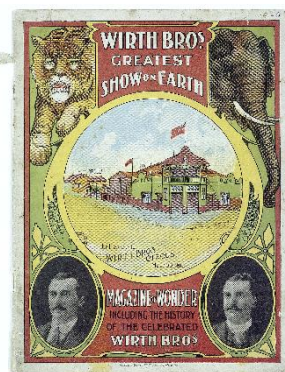
As we reimagine what a future performing arts centre could look like, we are approaching our future with the same ambition, faith and courage with which we were founded. Our ever-evolving program speaks as much to who we are, as to who we could be. Our partnerships, government and philanthropic support, commissions, education, and digital offers see the best emerging and established artists, makers and presenters bring their art to life.

Together we inspire and connect audiences, no matter who or where they are. We are proudly home to four Resident Companies: The Australian Ballet, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Theatre Company and Opera Australia. We are also home to many of our state and national performing arts companies and major festivals including Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Victorian Opera, Circa, Bell Shakespeare, RISING and Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

We invest in world-leading technical capability and training through our Arts Industry Learning program to provide the performing arts sector with more of the skills it needs to flourish. We support the mental health and wellbeing of our sector through the Arts Wellbeing Collective – a preventative health initiative that promotes positive mental health in the performing arts industry. We share stories of contemporary Australian performing and visual arts through our custodianship and display of the world-class Australian Performing Arts Collection, Australian Music Vault and Public Art Collection. We believe that hospitality is at the heart of a shared experience – from the moment we welcome visitors until they head home.



Skull cap worn by members of Circus Oz, 1980. Designed by Trina Parker. Gift of Circus Oz, 1986.



Programme, *Wirth Bros Greatest Show On Earth*, 1926. Gift of Robert Mitchell, 1998.



Gown worn by Jill Perryman as Dolly Levi in the Gordon Frost Organisation production of *Hello, Dolly!* Designed by Tim Goodchild. Gift of John Frost, The Gordon Frost Organisation, Cultural Gifts Program, 2001. Photograph by Jeremy Dillon.

## Australian Performing Arts Collection

The Australian Performing Arts Collection is an internationally significant, constantly evolving contemporary artistic resource.

Arts Centre Melbourne is the proud custodian of the Australian Performing Arts Collection (APAC), which is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of Australia's circus, dance, music, opera and theatre heritage.



Costume worn by Angus Young of AC/DC, c.1973. Gift of Angus Young, 1988. Photograph by Mark Ashkanasy

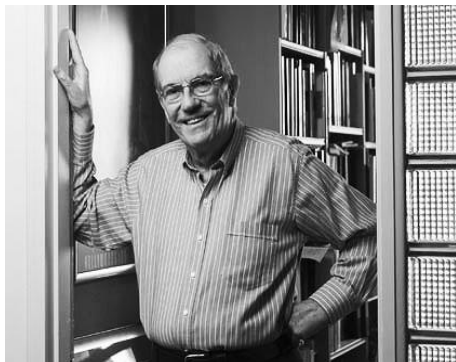
Collecting began in the late 1970s, and two early major acquisitions were the J. C. Williamson Theatre Archive and the Dame Nellie Melba Collection.

Today, the collection holds over 850,000 objects, including major acquisitions from Kylie Minogue, Nick Cave, Barry Humphries, Bell Shakespeare and The Australian Ballet.

Drawing on the APAC, we tell the stories of performance and performers through the extraordinary objects that have shaped lives and organisations, from concept designs to costumes, from personal and production archives to photography.

In addition to exhibitions, displays and a searchable online catalogue, the Australian Performing Arts Collection is accessible through a dedicated Research Centre.

## Frank Van Straten AM



Mr Frank Van Straten AM

Frank Van Straten AM (1936-2024) studied Australian theatre history for over 50 years and became Australia's foremost theatre historian. He played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Australian Performing Arts Collection. He was the first archivist at what was then the Performing Arts Museum, and its founding director, holding the role for almost a decade until 1993. Frank Van Straten has done more than any other individual to seed this rich collection and secure its longevity.

The Frank Van Straten Fellowship helps bring the Australian Performing Arts Collection to life through high-quality research and/or creative works that resonate with diverse audiences.

The Fellowship not only produces new research in the performing arts and cultural sector but helps ensure the extraordinary collection has further opportunities to inform, engage and inspire audiences.

The Frank Van Straten Fellowship is generously supported by The Van Straten and Turley Foundation. Arts Centre Melbourne is grateful for this commitment and ongoing support.

## The Frank Van Straten Fellowship

### Aims and Objectives

- The key objective of the Frank Van Straten Fellowship is to bring untold stories held within the [Australian Performing Arts Collection](#) (APAC) to diverse audiences.
- The Fellow will be given time and support to undertake research aligned to APAC's key subject areas: circus, dance, music, opera and theatre (which includes comedy, vaudeville and magic).  
A grant of up to \$15,000 will be offered to assist the Fellow with travel, research and living expenses.
- Access to collections and staff expertise one day per week on a Monday or Tuesday.

### Favoured Outcomes

- Podcasts, articles, web pages, online exhibitions, displays, talks, performances and/or other creative outcomes arising from the Fellow's research.
- Projects that reveal stories from the collection by embracing our values of Leadership, Creativity, Equity & Inclusion and Accountability.
- Expanding the discoverability of the APAC for distinct new audiences.
- Projects that might collaborate with or bring the collection to diverse community groups.
- Creating project outcomes that build in equity of access as well as subject matter.
- Creating new connections with other collections and/or organisations through inter-disciplinary research.
- Where appropriate, mainstream, and industry-specific media coverage.
- Improving APAC catalogue and conservation data (through the Fellow's research) in conjunction with ACM collections staff.
- Where possible ACM may digitise collections which the successful Fellow uses for their research and make them available online later (where permissible under copyright law).

### Fellowship Requirements

- Grant ACM the first right of publication in any format of the results of their research.
- Deposit a copy of any work produced with the ACM Research Centre with a non-exclusive license for use, in perpetuity.
- Potentially provide relevant website content (e.g., up to three blog posts and content for up to five social media posts).
- Be available for publicity purposes, including interviews with the media, to promote the results of the Fellowship.
- Acknowledge the support of ACM and The Van Straten and Turley Foundation, and use the branding of ACM in any/all publication or promotion – ensuring internal review/approval of materials prior to publication/public release.
- Ensure the Fellowship aligns with ACM's values of Leadership, Creativity, Equity & Inclusion and Accountability.
- Give a presentation of the outcomes of their Fellowship to ACM staff and volunteers.
- Provide a written progress report halfway through their Fellowship and prior to their second progress payment to relevant ACM staff.
- Submit a short, written report, noting all the collection materials utilised as part of the Fellowship, at the conclusion of the Fellowship detailing the benefits and outcomes and prior to their final progress payment.



## Eligibility

- Applications are open to people over the age of 18 years with interest or expertise in any performing arts discipline or form of expression.
- Digital media artists, visual artists, musicians, composers and writers in all disciplines and subjects including historians, independent scholars and creators working either in collaboration or independently are eligible to apply.
- Previous recipients of a funded ACM Fellowship and ACM staff are not eligible to apply for this Fellowship.

## Application Process

Applicants will be asked to submit:

- A Curriculum Vitae
- Names of two referees including their contact details
- 300-word project proposal explaining the focus, anticipated outcomes of their project and how it meets the objectives of the Fellowship.
- Fellows should ensure that their proposal supports ACM's cultural values

Following a shortlisting process, successful applicants will be asked to submit a detailed 1,000-word proposal outlining the project, and specific outcomes and benefits to APAC. At this point, they will also be asked to submit a budget outlining how they will use the funds and draft proposed timeline for the project (up to 12 months duration).

Applications are to be submitted online via: <https://careers.artscentremelbourne.com.au/>

## Selection Process

Applications will be shortlisted according to the following criteria:

- The proposed project – its significance, originality, outcomes and relevance to the aims and objectives of the Frank Van Straten Fellowship and ACM values.
- Direct outcomes are outlined that clearly tell stories from the APAC.
- The potential of the proposed project to reach an online audience.
- The calibre of the applicant as demonstrated by their publications, track record, portfolio, experience, ability to complete projects on time and references.

It is highly recommended that the applicant contacts the Research Coordinator to discuss your proposal prior to applying.

Applications will NOT be considered where:

- Clear and specific outcomes are not outlined.
- Specific themes and stories proposed are already addressed internally.
- The proposal is not concerned with storytelling (for instance projects concerning conservation studies, exhibition development, digitisation or other collection management practices).
- Specific APAC material is not identified for use in the project.

Selection panel:

- The selection panel will consist of ACM staff and independent professionals with relevant industry experience.
- Following the shortlisting process and review of the detailed proposals, the chairperson of the selection panel will contact referees and applicants may be requested to attend an interview.
- The selection panel's recommendation and a report are prepared for approval by the relevant ACM executive(s) for a final decision.
- Following the acceptance of the offer of the Fellowship, unsuccessful applicants will be advised by email. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback on their proposal.

## Time Frame

- Applications for the 2025 Fellowship will close at 5:00pm, Sunday 23 March 2025.
- Applications will be assessed by the panel in March and short-listed applicants for the final round will be asked to submit a 1,000-word proposal by 5:00pm, Friday 2 May 2025.
- The successful applicant will be notified by 5:00pm, Monday 26 May 2025.
- The successful applicant will be asked to attend an induction day at ACM in early July, after which their Fellowship will commence on an agreed date (provided there are no access restrictions).
- The Fellow will liaise with the Research Coordinator regarding onsite access.
- The Fellowship must be completed by 30 June 2026 after which they will receive their final payment.

## Intellectual Property

- ACM cannot grant copyright licences to third parties (i.e. Fellows) for collection material where it is not the copyright owner or is authorised to exercise intellectual property rights in the material.
- All copyright in the works created by Fellows during the course of the Fellowship continues to remain property of the creator.
- Fellows grant ACM the first right of publication in any format of the results of their research.
- After completion of the Fellowship and submission of the final report, Fellows grant ACM a non-exclusive licence to reproduce and use the material created during the course of their Fellowship. This will be done in ways designed to promote the Fellowship and ACM. The Fellow will be credited in all reproductions of their work.

## Previous Fellowship recipients

### 2020 Fellow – Dr Kate Rice

Inaugural Fellow, Dr Kate Rice researched a number of historical theatrical performances bringing some forgotten stories of the Australian stage to life. Dr Rice researched and produced the podcast series *Performing the Past* that included the impact of the 1918 Flu pandemic on theatres.

### 2021 Fellow – Cathy Pryor

Cathy Pryor's project *Rare Flowers and Golden Butterflies: Stories of women and magic from the Australian Performing Arts Collection* focused on the careers of three female Magicians – Esme Levante, Myrtle Roberts and Moi-Yo Miller. Cathy produced a podcast in partnership with Radio National and an online exhibition.

### 2022 Fellow – Angela Bailey

Angela Bailey's fellowship *The GLAD Project* explored the often-secreted queer lives of performance artists, including legendary musical theatre singer Gladys Moncrieff (known as 'our Glad'). One of Angela's outcomes included an installation at the Victorian Pride Centre as part of the 2023 Midsumma Festival.

### 2023 Fellow – Amaara Raheem

Amaara's fellowship examined the Chunky Move collection and re-created the performance piece *C.O.R.R.U.P.T.E.D. II*, an early work from 1991 held in the collection. The project was done in partnership with Chunky Move.



Con Colleano, studio portrait on a wire, c. 1930s. Gift of Mrs W. Colleano, 1979



## **2024 Fellow – Ali McGregor**

Ali's fellowship is a deep dive into the life of opera singer Nellie Stewart, a contemporary of Melba. The outcome of this fellowship will be a draft of a show to be performed in the future, exploring Nellie's life and the challenges she faced to balance the personal with the professional including motherhood, the rigor of performance, relationships and the values of contemporary society.

## **Further information**

Further information on the Fellowship, including links to the above previous Fellowship projects can be found [here](#). Alternately, to discuss the opportunity further, please contact:

Claudia Funder  
Research Coordinator, Collections, Arts Centre Melbourne  
Email: [researchservice@artscentremelbourne.com.au](mailto:researchservice@artscentremelbourne.com.au)  
Mobile: 0418 550 993  
Workdays: Monday – Wednesday