Potter Museum boosts Academic Programs

The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, has made two significant appointments to its Academic Programs team to help drive student engagement with the Museum across the entire campus.

Experienced museum professional Dr Heather Gaunt has been appointed Curator Academic Programs (Research). She joins the Potter from Museum Victoria, where she worked as collection manager in Indigenous Cultures. An Arts and Music graduate from the University of Melbourne, Dr Gaunt has a Post Graduate Diploma in Art Curatorship, PhD in Australian Book History, and was awarded a Fellowship with the State Library of Tasmania in 2005.

Ms Xanthe Jujnovich has been appointed Curator Academic Programs (Undergraduate). Ms Jujnovich has a Master of Arts (Hons) First Class in Art History from The University of Auckland. She was previously Director of Auckland Community Learning Centre and worked at Auckland Art Gallery in curatorial and access, and at the National Gallery of Victoria. An experienced educator, she developed Auckland’s regional access program, Art on the Move, engaging a team of tertiary students in arts interpretation. With this expanded team in Academic Programs the Potter has extended its reach into the University’s undergraduate and higher degree programs.

Acting Director of the Potter, Christopher Menz, said he is delighted to welcome Dr Gaunt and Ms Jujnovich to their positions, which are of immense significance to the work of the museum.

“One of the most valuable ways the Potter can contribute to University research and learning is by being a focus for multi-disciplinary projects, taking in undergraduate and post-graduate student cohorts.

“The Academic Programs arranged at the Potter, for the benefit of such a wide range of participants across the campus, are a vital part of the Museum’s contribution to the academic life of the University”, Menz said.

In one key project that Dr Gaunt has initiated, Infrastructure, Engineering, Computing and Information Systems, undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff will work on a ‘people movement’ data collection project examining ‘people flow’ in the Potter gallery spaces. This data is then fed into a technology based solution which may help to bridge the cultural gap that exists for many visitors, between their comfort zone of known experience, and the environment of the art museum. Art History and Art Curatorial students may also work to generate content for a mobile application.

“This project allows the Potter to be at the centre of a really cutting-edge and cross-disciplinary project, providing the essential experimental test bed with ongoing client input.

“A key to ‘selling’ Academic Programs to academic staff is finding a common ‘language’ to discuss possibilities across such a wide range of disciplines, such as mixing art history with computer science.

“The challenge is to forge new initiatives that take advantage of the Potter’s unique location in the hotbed of intellectual dynamism that is the University at its best.

“The Potter can offer artworks, exhibitions, a building environment, sets of statistics (eg visition), a ‘case study’ for advertising/marketing/business skills/Intellectual Property/indigenous issues... the list is endless, and is limited only by our ingenuity in finding connections with students and academics with their current coursework or future research directions. We want to use the Potter to encourage students from any discipline in the skills of thinking openly and broadly.” said Dr Gaunt.

More than 1,500 students came to the Potter for weekly tutes during semester 2 through Academic Programs, and that number is scheduled to double in future semesters as more initiatives come to fruition.

ENDS

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Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am - 5pm: Saturday and Sunday 12 - 5pm (Free admission)