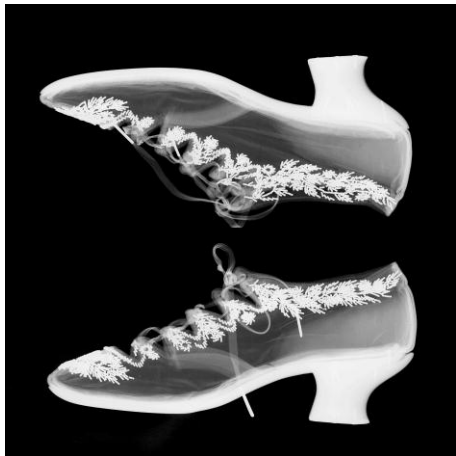


8 April 2014

## ***Fashion Detective***

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia | 9 May – 31 August 2014 | Free entry



More than 70 unattributed garments and accessories from the NGV's world-class Fashion & Textiles Collection will be examined under the microscope in *Fashion Detective*, an intriguing, investigative exhibition that seeks to uncover the people and histories behind these extraordinary pieces. Using material evidence, hearsay and forensics, along with specially commissioned fictional stories, the exhibition considers these fascinating pieces drawn from the NGV's extensive collection of over 8,000 items.

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV said "While the NGV holds one of the most substantial collections of fashion and textiles in the world, there are a large number of works that remain unattributed, and this is common throughout museum collections world-wide."

"These enigmatic objects incite our curiosity and make us question how these objects came to be; who created them, why were they made and who wore them? *Fashion Detective* will present a series of cases for close examination encouraging visitors to think differently about what we see and what we know," Mr Ellwood said.

From poisonous dyes, concealed clues, mysterious marks, fakes and forgeries, to missing persons, *Fashion Detective* is comprised of small vignettes that reveal the extraordinary stories behind these garments. Displayed within a stylised black and white exhibition design reminiscent of an ornate Victorian house, the exhibition will be a compelling encounter with the art of detection and the long forgotten makers and owners.

A range of forensic conservation techniques were employed on the works and are featured in the exhibition including X-rays, infrared photography, dye analysis and microscopy. The findings will be displayed in the exhibition alongside the garments to help visitors piece together information about the items.



*Fashion Detective* also puts some of Australia's best crime writers on the case. Kerry Greenwood, Lili Wilkinson, Sulari Gentill and Garry Disher have developed short fictions based on the works on display, creating plots, characters and narratives to build a rich picture bringing the garments to life.

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These fictions are placed throughout the exhibition as audio and are accessible on a free e-book in the space which utilises interactive multimedia technologies.



Danielle Whitfield, Assistant Curator, Australian Fashion and Textiles said, “In contrast to our current world of big brands and logos, *Fashion Detective* will stitch together imaginative histories for these anonymous garments and accessories, inviting questions about the designers and wearers. Within fashion especially, the distinction between today’s superstar couturiers and global luxury labels and the nameless dressmakers and tailors of earlier centuries, could not be greater.”

“*Fashion Detective* is an exhibition that will draw on the public fascination with the social life of clothes,” Ms Whitfield said.

*Fashion Detective* is on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia from 9 May to 31 August 2014, open Tues–Sun, 10am–5pm. Free entry.

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**Image captions, top to bottom:**

X-ray view of: **Moubray, Rowan & Hicks, Melbourne** (retailer) 1878–92 **Unknown** (manufacturer)

**Shoes** 1880–93 leather, metal, glass, silk (a-b) 10.5 x 6.7 x 22.9 cm (each) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Mr J. G. H. Sprigg, 1971

**England Doll’s dress** c.1865 silk, linen, paper, metal 53.0 cm (centre back) 15.7 cm (waist, flat) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Lady Nicholson and her daughter, 1951

**Harrods, London** (manufacturer and retailer) English est. 1834 **Travelling hatcase** 1901–04 28.0 x 46.0 x 36.0 cm (hat case) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Mr William Weatherly Mortlake, 1976

