

E U I C A

L Y P T U

S D O M

Large print guide

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Eucalyptusdom
Large print guide

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Powerhouse Museum
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
500 Harris Street
Ultimo NSW 2007
Australia
+ 61 2 9217 0111

maas.museum

The Powerhouse honours the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Museum was built — the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We respect their Elders, past, present and future and recognise their continuous connection to this place.

We respectfully advise First Nations audiences that this exhibition reckons with the Museum's colonial collection practices and includes objects and materials of and from Country. Let us use this momentum of truth-telling to shift the conversation of cultural institutions and our responsibility.

THE GARDEN PALACE

This story begins here. At the Garden Palace, sprawled across Sydney's Domain, in a valley beneath ridges; some still, some no longer thick with forest red gums (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*).

A storehouse, its tally, showing off a vast amassing of the Australian colonial project in the 90 years since 1788 when 12 ships dropped anchor in nearby Warrane (Sydney Cove). The Sydney International Exhibition Building was built in just eight months to open on 17 September 1879; over a million people visited its seven-month display.

Showcases of the continent's natural history housed in an edifice of wood, stone, and metal from this place: 1 million metres of timber; 2.5 million bricks; 220 tonnes of galvanised corrugated iron. Wooden downpipes. A wooden dome lined with stars. Wooden curlicues of leaves carved from seasoned eucalyptus, the wrong shape for the tree from which they came. A strange kind of loss in translation.

Restocked, after the Exhibition, with the stuff of government departments — papers; surveys; census documents alongside museum and society collections, artworks, artefacts, instruments. All fine fuel when the whole place ignites on 22 September 1882. The queen herself, Victoria cast in bronze, transformed into a molten relic.

The key to the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum, the colony of New South Wales' exhibit and precursor to the Powerhouse, survives. Ready to lock or unlock.

The Sydney International Exhibition

Colour lithograph: *Garden Palace, front view*, set in a cardboard mount and framed. Made by Emrik & Binger, in either Sydney or London, England, circa 1879. This grandiose structure stood for three years until, on 22 September 1882, a fire took less than five hours to reduce it to rubble and destroy the contents. The next day, the Sydney Technological Industrial and Sanitary Museum Committee met and resolved to rebuild New South Wales' collection. The hundreds of objects from the Powerhouse Collection on display in *Eucalyptusdom* represent a small part of their efforts.

The Burning of the Garden Palace

Lithograph: *Burning of the Garden Palace, Sydney*, produced and published Gibbs Shallard & Company, Sydney, NSW, 1882.

Gift of Richard Thomas Baker, 1906

Book: *The Burning of the Garden Palace*, produced from paper and buckram by the NSW Government Printer, 1882.

Gift of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Library 1986

Key: To the Technological Industrial and Sanitary Museum, Garden Palace. Maker unknown, Sydney, NSW, circa 1879.

Gift of Professor A Liversidge, 1908

Molten relic: Fragment from a statue of Queen Victoria destroyed in the 1882 Garden Palace Fire. Cast in bronze by Marshall Wood, possibly in Great Britain, 1879–80.

Gift of Royal Australian Historical Society, 1981

Watercolour: *Burning of the Garden Palace from Eaglesfield, Darlinghurst*, inscribed 'sketched at 5:55am, Sep 22/82', by an unknown artist, 1882.

On loan from the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Purchased from Peter Walker Fine Art, May 2015

Ruins after the fire

Photographic records:

Reproductions of glass plate negatives produced by the NSW Government Printing Office to document the ruins of the Garden Palace after it was destroyed by fire in 1882. The photographs were taken from a variety of locations in and around the site, including the Royal Botanic Garden, Government House, and Macquarie Street.

Reproduced courtesy of the NSW State Archives

Jonathan Jones

Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi

Our understanding of Australia's relatively recent colonial past often has holes, tears or blind spots, things that as a nation we would prefer not to remember. Much of our work is to acknowledge this failed history and to the best of our ability repair it, so that the next generation can build on stronger foundations.

Garden Palace study (The Sydney International Exhibition): Featuring excerpt originally published in *The Australasian Sketcher with Pen and Pencil*, 30 August 1879, supplement.

Garden Palace study (The Garden Palace — general view of the interior): Featuring excerpt originally published in *The Illustrated Sydney News*, date unknown, pp. 12–13.

Garden Palace study (Destruction of the Garden Palace — start of the fire, as seen by the watchmen): Featuring excerpt originally published in *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 25 October 1882, p. 1.

Garden Palace study (The New South Wales Court at the Sydney Exhibition): Featuring excerpt originally published in *The Australasian Sketcher with Pen and Pencil*, 22 November 1882, p. 140.

Hand-cut 19th-century newspaper etchings

On loan courtesy of the artist

THE EUCALYPTOGRAPHERS

It's Baron 'Blue Gum' Ferdinand von Mueller's word, 'Eucalyptography': Victoria's government botanist from 1853, and later director of Melbourne Gardens, he coins these terms — 'Eucalyptography', 'Eucalyptographia', 'Eucalyptographer' — as he compiles volume after volume on these distinct Australian trees.

'Still the subject was so large and the perplexities surrounding it so many that even now he offers his observations in these decades as only fragments toward a some-day complete monograph,' the journal *Nature* reports in 1880.

Eucalyptographers abound at the re-named Technological Museum: Joseph Henry Maiden (director 1880–96); Richard Thomas Baker (director 1896–1922); Charles Francis Laseron (collector and curator, 1906–29). Deep in the business of economic botany. These men mine the eucalypts; wood panels, bark samples, kinos, gumnuts, oils. They document and catalogue; glass plates, microscope slides, botanical illustrations.

Edward Harold Fulcher Swain (NSW commissioner for forests 1935–1948) names their industrious new realm 'Eucalyptusdom'.

The trees seep into art, design and culture; Art Nouveau motifs mirror their beautiful forms. Teacup, saucer and cake-plate sets bring the outside inside. Does a piano with a eucalypt lid sound different notes in this air?

Gumnut Babies promulgate national identity and cheer the troops. Seeds are sent around the world, colonising other continents. The wood of one gum tree, harvested, seasoned, shaped, formed into a sledge, accompanies Laseron on a great expedition toward the South Pole. Crafted in Sydney's St Peters, and sent to traverse such cold space, so far away.

Nicholas Mangan

Cutting

Settlers valued eucalypts for their timber and oil and in extracting these destroyed the prized trees. This violence is reflected in the video with axes, saws and a crow screeching as if from the heartwood. It is a materialist film in that it asks the audience to think about how the wood was handled. The camera enacts its own process of cutting and visual handling. Reactivating relics from the past is an attempt to draw out spectres of earlier times, without romanticising them.

HD video, 16:9 ratio, colour, stereo sound, looped, with cinemaphotography by Dimitri Zaunders. Mounted on steel pallet crates containing wood samples from the Powerhouse Collection, collected 1890–1925.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021, courtesy of Sutton Gallery

Hardwoods and their Economics

Four 10-foot timber planks: Demonstrating how different varieties of eucalypt timbers were used in construction.

Tallow Wood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*): Collected from Hastings and Manning Rivers, NSW. Acquired 1889.

Gift of W.S. Campbell Esq., Mines Department, 1889

Ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*): Taken from Colonel McArthur's stables at Elizabeth Farm, Rose Hill, NSW, erected 1793.

Gift of W. Swann, 1905

Wollybutt (*Eucalyptus longifolia*): Collected from Jervis Bay, NSW. Acquired 1891.

Broad-leaved iron bark (*Eucalyptus siderophloia*): Collected from Erina Creek, Hawkesbury River, NSW. Acquired 1889.

“The principal hardwoods used in buildings of every variety ... are those obtained from the Eucalypts ... Ironbark is specified in the largest warehouses and factories for beams, uprights or storey posts as iron girders are less reliable in case of fire, when they expand and buckle quickly,” Extract from *The Hardwoods of Australia and their Economics* (1919), by R.T. Baker.

Botanical Illustrations

Eucalypt studies: Botanical paintings depicting various species of eucalypts and highlighting the commercial uses of their timbers, oils and kinos. Watercolour on paper by Agard Hagman, mounted on canvas, 1880–90. Commissioned for the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum by its first Director Joseph Henry Maiden; a botanist who was a zealous collector and cataloguer of Australian flora. These illustrations were part of the ‘Timber Courts’ display within the Museum’s extensive showcase of the ‘Australian vegetable kingdom’ that opened in 1893.

Economic Botany

Reproduction of a receipt: From the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew to Technological Museum Curator J.H. Maiden. Sent from London, England on 27 May 1891, and received in Sydney, Australia 19 October 1891. Recorded in the Powerhouse Museum Record Series, Inwards Correspondence, 1881–1952.

Record of an outgoing letter: Dated 8 July 1886 from J.H. Maiden to collector William Bauerlen. From the Powerhouse Museum Record Series, Letterbook Volume 1, 1883–1887.

“... collect gums and resins and other substances of economic importance, for we aim at making our collections as complete as possible in vegetable substances of any kind whatsoever which are of any use to man.”

Currency: A £20 bank note of the type issued by the Commonwealth of Australia between 1914–38. Depicting the cutting of blue gum on Bruny Island, TAS, circa 1895.

Xylotheque

Photographs: Reproductions of two photographs taken circa 1908 of the Museum's 'Timber Courts' where an extensive showcase of objects from the 'Australian vegetable kingdom', including a xylotheque (library of wood samples), was displayed.

Eucalypt specimens: This selection demonstrates various organic timber inclusions, such as wood grain, abnormal growth, insect damage and bark textures. From the Museum's xylotheque — an extensive library of natural wood specimens collected at the behest of J.H. Maiden and Richard Thomas Baker between 1883–1924. R.T. Baker was an economic botanist and curator who succeeded Maiden as Museum Director. Baker shared his predecessor's interest in the commercial potential of Australian flora and also expanded the focus of the Museum to include the applied arts.

Includes gifts of NSW Forestry Department, Goulburn Museum, Richard Chappelow, R.T. Baker, J.H. Maiden, C.F. Laseron, J v de Coque, Miss G. King, C. French, Robert Thornton, William Bauerlen, J.I. Haycroft, Captain Jackson, and R.H. Poyne

Jazz Money Wiradjuri

Garrandarang

There is an ancient landscape beneath our feet. One full of care, of knowledge, of love and song. No colonial intervention can alter the truth of Country. This work is not a eulogy to the forests that should stand here, it is a reminder they still stand. As Australian forests dwindle, our eucalypts spread unwelcome offshore. Do our ancestors follow them, to continue a relationship older than time? In the face of climate disaster, how can we return to listening to our trees, caring for Country?

Video projection

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Barks and Kinos

Glass jars: Containing barks and kinos from various species of Australian eucalypt. Collected at the behest of J.H. Maiden over the period 1886–92. Kino is a name for the gum-like substance that oozes from eucalypts giving them their colloquial name ‘gum trees’.

Includes gifts of J.H. Maiden, Rev Dr W. Woolls, William Bauerlen, E.J.L. Audall, R. Harper, and Professor Tate

A Eucalyptographer Abroad

Eucalypt sledge: Crafted from spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*), with metal, natural fibre and leather. Made by Alexander Worsfold, St Peters, NSW, 1911. Used by the naturalist, collector and curator Charles Francis Laseron when he took leave from his role at the Museum to act as a scientific advisor on the Sir Douglas Mawson-led Australasian Antarctic expedition of 1911–14.

Gift of the Australian Museum, 1967

Newspaper clippings: The Sunday Times, 11 July 1915, Sydney, NSW. Headline reads *LASERON HONOURED BY KING: For Work with Mawson Expedition.*

Antarctic medal: Presented to C.F. Laseron in London, England, in 1915. Silver and ribbon, made by Sir Bertram Mackennal circa 1914, NSW.

Letter: From Sergeant C.F. Laseron, Hospital Ship ‘Gurkha’, dated 13 May 1915. To ‘Mr Baker’, received 13 July 1915.

Letter: From Sergeant C.F. Laseron, written at a family member’s house in London, undated. To ‘Mr Baker’, received 12 August 1915.

Five postcards: From ‘The Gumnut Series’ designed by May Gibbs, Sydney, NSW, 1914–18. Printed on cardboard.

Mountain Ash Marker

Timber specimen: Mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*). Extracted from Gandangara Country (near Katoomba, NSW), at the behest of the Museum in 1901. This object speaks of a colonial desire to collect objects representative of expansion. Based on scant evidence, some markings on the specimen were surmised to have been made by Gregory Blaxland, William Wentworth, and Lieutenant William Lawson when they made their first crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813; with an inscription stating so added by the Museum. The object also bears the markings of fire and heat, profound evidence of a moment in time that was not recorded by the Museum.

Beale Piano

Upright piano: Made from unspecified timber and metal by Beale & Company, Annandale, NSW, Australia, 1918. The manufacturer, founded in 1902, were renowned for using Australian timbers. Beale & Co pianos were highly sought after with notable purchases made by the Governor General in 1905 and Queen Mary in 1925.

Gift of Wendy Marfleet, 2013

Sera Waters

Suckers: Coat of (Lopped) Arms

Industrious colonial homemakers co-opted the eucalypt into their needlework and home-craft traditions as a vigorous symbol of Australianness. Of course, the truths of colonisation were not embroidered upon their doilies, aprons or samplers. Reworking traditions my ancestors imported to these shores, echoing motifs found in the Powerhouse collection, while using repurposed linen and threads are all methods of reckoning with the past. In looking back, as well as forward, grief arises. Eucalypt suckers are hopeful symbols of re-growth.

Found gumnuts, repurposed vintage linen, various threads.

Thanks to Melinda Rackham, Natasha Amer, Jade Orr and Julia Robinson.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Australian Flora Applied to Art

Jewel box: Recorded as 'White beech' carved with 'gum leaves and berries', lined with green silk. Designed and made by Miss Constance Evans, Sydney, NSW, 1905–10.

Trinket box: Copper, featuring a gum blossom design in repousse. Made by Maude F. Prosser, Adelaide, SA, 1905–15.

Box and ashtray: Both in silver, gilt and enamel with gum blossom designs. Made in Germany, circa 1912.

Eucalypt tiara: Silver, gold, topaz, and fabric, in the Art Nouveau style. Made by Charles Lefebure of Lefebure and Sons, Paris, France, circa 1900.

Purchased with funds donated by the Patrons of the Powerhouse, 1984

Perfume bottle: Mold-blown glass, with stopper. From the 'Bouchon Eucalyptus' range, by René Lalique et Cie, Wingen-sur-Moder, France, 1919–25.

Eucalypt vase: Bone china porcelain, painted by Fred Hancock for Doulton & Co, Burslem, England, 1891–1902.

Gift of John and Arthur Shorter, 1932

Gum lady vase: Porcelain, hand painted. Design by Maida Wright, SA, 1915–27.

Gift of Dr R.J. Lyons under the Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, 1991

Gum tree vase: Earthenware, made by Doulton & Co, Burslem, Staffordshire, England, circa 1910.

Gum blossom vase: Copper. By Maude F. Prosser, Adelaide, SA, circa 1910.

Eucalypt vase: Porcelain. By Delinieres & Co, France, handpainted by Laurence H. Howie, Adelaide, SA, 1910.

Gumnut candlestick: Copper. By Mildred Creed, Sydney, NSW, circa 1910.

Waratah wall tiles: Glazed ceramic. Made by the Australian Tessellated Tile Co. Mitcham, VIC, 1914.
Gift of Bill Blinco, 1983

Coal box and shovel: Steel, with gum designs in repousse. By Mr Caldwell, Ballarat, VIC, circa 1912.

Plant stand: 'Rose mahogany' with designs of 'Eucalyptus corymbosa'. By Miss M. Taylor, Sydney, NSW, circa 1912.

Floral leadlight: Stained-glass. By George Hulme, Sydney Technical College, Sydney, NSW, 1900–07.

Gumnut plaque: Copper, design in repousse. Made by Elizabeth Soederberg, Sydney, NSW, 1909.

Marquetry tray: 'Murray River red gum', inlaid with a gum leaf motif. By William Johnson, Sydney, NSW, 1916.

Gums in the Parlour

Tea sets and plates: Featuring Australian flowering gum motifs, hand-painted by various artists, after designs by Marian Ellis Rowan. Produced by Royal Worcester Porcelain Co Ltd, Worcester, England, 1906. This set was one of 200 items acquired at the behest of R. T. Baker for inclusion in 'Australian Flora Applied to Art', a gallery that opened at the Museum in 1906.

Painting: Watercolour on canvas and paper. Originally recorded as *Eucalyptus viminalis*, later notated as 'White Gum'. By Gladstone Eyre, NSW, circa 1910.

Timber and Flora

Hardwood planks: Representing 76 varieties of eucalypts found across Australia. All cut, finished and labelled with their species at the Museum, between 1886–1932.

Includes gifts of West Australian Department of Woods & Forests, W.D. Francis, W.A.W. de Beuzeville and Mr H McRae

Crouch binocular microscope: Used by R.T. Baker. Made from brass, glass, and wood by Henry Crouch, London, England, 1880-1888.

‘Mueller Medal’: Blank bronze medallion, representative of the accolade awarded by the Australasian Association for Advancement of Science to R.T. Baker in 1921.

Gift of Australian Museum, 1961

Books: *The Hardwoods of Australia and their Economics*, by R.T. Baker, 1919 and *The Australian Flora in Applied Art*, by R.T. Baker, 1915. Both made by NSW Government Printer, Sydney. R.T. Baker authored eight books in total, seven in the field of ‘eucalyptography’.

Three Medals: All awarded by the Panama & Pacific Exhibition, San Francisco 1915, to NSW Technological Museum. Gold medal for a ‘Collective Exhibit of Prepared Timbers’. Silver medal for an ‘Exhibition of Royal Worcester Plate and Doulton Ware with Decorations of Australian Flora’. Medal of Honour for ‘Collective Exhibit of Eucalyptus Oils and Tannin Barks’.

Julie Gough Trawlwoolway

Witness

In the first 40 years post British colonisation, the Aboriginal population of Lutruwita (Van Diemen’s Land/Tasmania) ‘fell’ from more than 7000 to less than 50 people. In 1830 Lieutenant Governor Arthur ordered pictographic placards be placed on trees to communicate that Tasmanian colonists and Aboriginal people who attacked the other would receive equal justice, but no colonist was charged with our Ancestors’ murders. Hundreds of attacks against colonists by Aboriginal people were recorded, while only a few dozen against Aboriginal people have surfaced. The gaps and silences in history written by the victors compelled this ongoing journey to map and record our erased history, witnessed by old trees that still stand at the sites of our devastation.

Seven channel 4K video installation, 16:9 ratio, sound, 7 screens. Edited by Jemma Rea

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

APPLICATIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Each tree, a column of life, thick with deeper relationships than those of ecology or hybridity; more complex than ongoing exchanges of oxygen, carbon, and water. Stay with the water for a moment. A single sugar gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) can pipe 1100 litres of water through the ground each day — a great arboreal pump.

The first water source the British take over in Sydney is the Tank Stream. The pipes they make to carry its waters are crafted from the hardwoods of various species of ironbark trees; transporting water beneath the landscape that held it; holds it still.

Millennia of applications and demonstrations — trees for story, trees for healing, trees for shelter, trees for food — all unknown, unseen by these convicts and marines with their other-hemisphere ideas about knowledge and resources; about industry.

Time passes. Different barks and leaves make different coloured paper; the paper makes the books and maps that document the trees. One set of books is made of different timber; a literal library of arboreal colours and tones.

You can read different stories from these volumes: books that echo fragments of forest, remnants of landscapes. The Tank Stream was driven underground in an act of early colonial disruption. But it is still alive; still flowing. While the long-time knowledge of these trees rises to the surface again and again. Spotlit, preserved, reclaimed; still flowing.

Atlas No. 1

Book with fold-out map:

Commonwealth Forestry Bureau. Atlas No. 1: The distribution of the more important timber trees of the genus Eucalyptus, by C.E. Carter, manuscript by authority of L.F. Johnston, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1945.

Wheels

Cart wheel: Made from blue gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) for the felloes (rim) and northern grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus siderophloia*) for the spokes and box.

Purchased from D Hardy & Sons, Redfern, NSW, 1907

Buggy wheel: Cross-section of a timber Sarven style wheel hub for a horse-drawn buggy. Made from spotted gum (*Corymbia maculate*), recorded at the time as 'Eucalyptus maculata', and 'Blue gum', by J.E. Bishop of West Wheel Works, 60 Bay Street, Sydney, NSW, 1917.

Gift of J.E. Bishop, 1927

Damien Wright and Bonhula Yunupingu Gumatj clan, Yolŋu

Bala Ga Lili (Two Ways Learning)

*Wanhakali (Other Side) —
Gurrnjan Djarratawun Wanga
(Black Lighthouse)*

Matjala (Driftwood)

Djambatj Mala ga Garungu (Great Hunter and Gatherer)

This set of three sculptures is part of an ongoing, circular, cross-cultural collaborative project. Our task is to find a sculptural and poetic language, through a combination of traditional European joinery and Yolŋu craft skills, to understand and impart our bond. Here we tell a disruptive narrative, ours is a disruptive relationship. What should look like a contradiction is a promise. What should keep us apart, draws us together.

Approximately 10,000 year-old petrified timber remnant (red gum), Gadayka (stringy bark), copper wire, epoxy resin, found glass, tung oil finish

Djambatj Mala ga Garungu commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021 with loans courtesy of Sally Dan-Cuthbert Gallery

Pipes, Posts and Piles

Two sections of ironbark pipe:

Removed in 1923 from or near Wynyard Barracks, Margaret Street, Sydney, NSW.

Ironbark post: Removed from Camperdown Cemetery, Sydney, NSW, 1925. Believed made circa 1850.

Gift of P.W. Gledhill, 1925

Ironbark pipe section: Removed from early colonial plumbing used to divert water from the Tank Stream, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW.

Gift of G.E. Petersen, 1935

Wire bound pipe: Ironbark water pipe with dovetail joinery, tarred and bound with wire. Believed made 1875–1910.

Gift of Don Divola, 1988

Bridge remnant: Cross-section of an ironbark pile from the original Lapstone Hill Bridge, NSW, built in 1867.

Bridge relic: Cross-section of an ironbark pile from an early bridge at Emu Plains, NSW. Built between 1810–50.

Gift of NSW Government Railways, 1925

Timber Library

Set of 95 timber samples:

Representing different varieties of Australian timbers, predominantly eucalypt species. Wood and leather, embossed in gold with botanical names. Made by The Technological Museum, Sydney, NSW, 1920–40. In 1889 the Museum began a formal partnership with Sydney Technical College (the precursor to TAFE NSW), that continued till the 1970s.

Papers, Pulps and Chips

Papers and pulps: Demonstrating variations from processing 10 species of eucalypt. Produced through research into the use of Australian hardwoods to make paper conducted by Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry, Melbourne, VIC, 1923.

Gift of the Institute of Science & Industry, 1923

Woodchips: Unbleached, soda pulped, messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*). Made by Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry, Melbourne, VIC, 1924.

Gift of the Institute of Science & Industry, 1924

Furniture and Friezes

Wood carving study: Blossoming gum branch design, carved in spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*), by R.H. Crimp under the tuition of Miss Bannister at Sydney Technical College (then part of the Museum), Sydney, NSW, 1910.

Decorative plaque: With leaf motif carved in white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*). Made at Launceston Technical School, Launceston, TAS. Acquired by exchange from Launceston Technical School, 1896

Chair: In the Hepplewhite style, designed by Sir Ronald G. Munro Ferguson (Governor General of Australia 1914–20). Carved in white stringybark (*Eucalyptus eugenioides*) by Frederick William Tod, Sydney, NSW, 1918.

Waratah frieze: carved in alpine ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*), by F.W. Tod, Sydney, NSW, 1916.

Feeding birds frieze: carved in white stringybark (*Eucalyptus eugenioides*), by F.W. Tod, Sydney, NSW, 1916.

Flannel flower frieze: carved in Sydney blue gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*), by F.W. Tod, Sydney, NSW, 1916.

Curlicue: Louis XV style design in carved in jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), by F.W. Tod, Sydney, NSW, 1916.

Vera Hong

Let Me Pass Onto You

Coming to know a forest through walking, is an act of learning, an exploration of intergenerational relationships, knowledge and questions of custodianship. This portrait of the Blue Gum Forest, on Darug Country, in the Grose Valley, Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, contemplates an ancient place that inspired a conservation movement. Transformed after fire and flood, the forest is in concurrent stages of martyrdom and regeneration. The 70-metre tall *Eucalyptus deanei* are estimated to be up to 1200 years old, but sadly the reproductive capacity of the Blue Gum Forest from this point is unknown.

Production, cinematography and editing by Vera Hong with Craig Bender (cinematography) and James Peter Brown (composition and sound design) featuring Eric Avery (violin composition and performance). Thanks to advisors Wyn Jones, Dr Ruth Longdin, Andy Macqueen OAM, Grant Purcell, Jacqueline Reid, and Chris Tobin.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Turned Timber

Pedestals: Made by teachers and students at the Sydney Technical College circa 1900–30. Made from various species of eucalypt, with label descriptions including ‘mountain ash yellow wood’, ‘Sydney blue gum’, ‘blackbutt’, and ‘forest mahogany’.

Jonathan Jones
Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi
and
Dr Uncle Stan Grant Snr AM
Wiradjuri

untitled (Dharramalin)

This work considers the element of *mandang* (wood), which as a material has many significant meanings for Wiradjuri; including the connection to the guardian ancestor Dharramalin who is central to men’s initiation ceremonies. His voice can be heard in the thunder and is evoked by the *muydigang* (bullroarer). Trees that were growing pre-colonisation, and bore witness to our practices, have been used to create eight sentinel prints. This work is part of the Wiradjuri *gulbanha* (philosophies) project.

Paper, ink, wood, gum leaves, ochre, 5.1 surround soundscape. Sound design by Luke Mynott, Unison Sound, with piano by Anthony Partos, Sonar Music.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Wukun Wanambi

Marrakulu clan, Yolŋu

Mittji

That tree has sacred names: *Wanambi*, *Binykurrngu*, *Mawulul*. It is a person of my clan, the Marrakulu. This group of trees is me and my family. *Mittji* means a group of people. When we cut the skin or bark and use it in the Law it can cleanse us. When the skin has been cut from the trunk that is the bone of us, the *Wanambi* people. When the spirit men chop the ancestral tree it falls into the water known as *Gudultja*. And there the honey children came. When we see the flowers blossoming we sing *dhanarra* and it reminds us of the spirits of people who have gone and will bloom again.

Twelve *larrakitj* made from *Gadayka* (Darwin stringybark or *Eucalyptus tetradonta*), some handpainted with natural ochre pigments and acrylic fixative

Commissioned and purchased by Powerhouse, 2021

SPECTRES AND SENTINELS

Imagine the texture of a smooth Eucalyptus trunk; holding a different kind of time, slow progress compared to the seconds, minutes, hours of our daily chronologies.

Trees that grow, one by one, through decades, centuries, sometimes millennia. Trees that evolve over millions of years.

The oldest known eucalypts are pressed into South American earth as Gondwanan-era fossils, more than 50 million years old. The trees' genes reveal a lineage stretching back another 50 million years again.

The world changing around them; themselves changing — propagation, hybridisation, evolution. What they have seen. What they have endured.

Sugar, water and oxygen make a tree bud and fruit and grow. Fire can scar, can destroy some; can spark in others vibrant new growth.

There's a paradoxical vivacity in that. Trees so resilient even in contest against the hard, cold power of steel.

The eucalypt resists the axe, blunting and bouncing its blades. Heavy chains level their assault, culling the forest. Trees ripped away in a tiny fraction of time, theirs or ours.

Axes. Pitsaws. Anchor chains. Impositions upon a network of roots holding fast deep in the ground. Houses, people, farming, industry rush into spaces where nature is pushed away.

Tree stumps pock felled landscapes as at the third government farm cleared at Castle Hill in the early 1800s. Violent disruption, transformation, change.

Those trees left overseeing; oversight. The wind a whisper of itself in their remaining leaves.

Timber-Felling Tools

Wood-chopper's block: White ash (*Eucalyptus Fraxinoides*), as cut by competitive axeman Curtis Bennett at the Goulburn Agricultural Show in March 2021.

On loan, courtesy Dean Cross

Tree-felling axe: In the 'Old English' style. Made of metal and Maiden's wattle (*Acacia Maidenii*).

Gift of Alice King, 1921

Anchor chain: Section originating from a 122 metre 'anchor chain' that was used for tree-ripping — felling trees by pulling them over and upending their roots — QLD, 1950–2000.

Gift of anonymous donor, 2002

Pit saw: A timber saw operated by two people, one above the log and the other below it, in a pit. Believed to be late 19th century.

Tree-felling wedge: Made from wood. Used by champion woodchopper Tom Kirk, including at the Royal Agricultural Society Easter Show, Sydney, NSW, 1930–39.

Gift of Tom Kirk, 1984

Tree-felling board: Made from wood. Used by woodchopper Charley Winkel in competition at the 1939 Royal Agricultural Society Easter Show, Sydney, NSW.

Gift of Tom Kirk, 1984

Spectres and Sentinels

Glass plate negatives: Depicting various species of eucalypt trees, some being enjoyed by those at leisure, others in the process of being felled for timber. Originally produced by various makers including Kerry and Co. and Henry King, both of Sydney, NSW. Circa 1880–1923. Some examples are reproductions.

Includes a gift of Australian Consolidated Press under the Taxation Incentives for the Arts Scheme, 1985

“As it is, I often look at these timbers and wonder if they will not shortly become as dead as the Dodo, but still I hope their conversation is now near at hand,” extract from *Cabinet Timbers of Australia* (1913), by R.T. Baker.

Allotments and Farms

Tree blaze: The remains of a red ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) used as a reference tree at Mulgoa, NSW, in 1936.

Gift of Mr J.T.C. Richmond, 1967

Painting: *Government Agricultural Establishment Castle Hill*, watercolour on paper, 1806. Maker unknown. Dated and titled on reverse in ink and pencil.

On loan from Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

Dean Cross

Worimi

Without You I am Nothing **(Curtis Bennett/White Ash)**

After the arrival of non-Aboriginal people on our continent innumerable eucalyptus trees fell to provide the timber that built the colony. Within 100 years the swinging axe of the colonial project transformed into the competitive axe of the agricultural show — as woodchopping transitioned from the practical to the spectacle. The competitors embody an intimacy toward their foe, understanding deeply the timber's origins, nuances, strengths, and weaknesses. Revealing a delicate dance antithetical to the violence of the sport's origins.

4K video featuring Curtis Bennett (axeman). Cinematographer, Gotaro Uematsu. Composer, Emily Fishpool. Editor and colourist, Daniel Jobson. Filmed with the generous permission of the Goulburn Agricultural Pastoral and Horticultural Society and the Goulburn Mulwaree Council. Heartfelt thanks to the Bennett family. Filmed on the unceded lands of the Gandangara people.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

ALCHEMY

Eucalyptus acaciiformis, *E. agglomerata*, *E. aggregata*, and so it goes. More than nine hundred species of eucalyptus, corymbia, angophera — the eucalypts. The number is never exact. No magic to this changeable accounting, just new experiments; revealing more and more. This tree the small form of that one; this a hybrid; this a whole new species.

At Castle Hill in 1945, new stands of trees are planted to pose questions in the Museum's laboratories nearby. How yields can be improved; how oil is best extracted. Stills and sieves and flasks and buckets; viscometers and saccharimeters.

Later, Australia's monopoly on eucalyptus oil disappears with cheaper, faster overseas production. New means of transformation come with new technologies. By 1978 the Museum's research is disbanded.

The astringent fragrance from a crushed leaf; the comforting strength of its powerful oil. Eucalyptus' aroma always tucked inside undamaged foliage, just as the trees themselves are packed with different knowledge.

Stop. Listen. Think. Be with these trees a while, wherever you find yourself. Let their sound, smell, look and feel infuse you. There are more ways of knowing than those measured in labs.

Cycles, returns and evolutions. From the facts of catalogues, from every knowledge that lies beyond them, more and more conversations emerge. Presumptions and divisions and hierarchies can melt away, as surely as a statue transformed by fire.

This ongoing exchange between trees, place and people.
Can you hear it now?

Eucalypts and their Essential Oils

Letter: Dated 4 May 1922, from the University of Melbourne Registrar to Henry George Smith, congratulating him on being awarded the Syme Prize. H.G. Smith joined the Museum staff in 1884 as a signwriter and by 1899 held the joint titles of economic chemist and assistant curator.

Medal: The 1922 David Syme Prize for Research, awarded by Melbourne University to H.G. Smith for phytochemical research, conducted at the Museum, with eucalypt oils. Made from copper alloy.

Book: *A Research on the Eucalypts and their Essential Oils*. Co-authored by R.T. Baker and H.G. Smith, published by NSW Government Printing Office, Sydney, NSW, 1920.

Images: Four annotated black and white photographic proofs on paper. Documenting commercial eucalypt oil distilling practices in Australia circa 1902 by companies such as J Bosistos & Co of Melbourne, VIC and F.H. Faulding & Co of Adelaide, SA.

Research monographs: Two examples of the kind made by the Museum in the early 20th century. *Some Western Australian Eucalyptus and their Essential Oils* (1905), and *Commercial Eucalyptus Oils (Bulletin No.2)* (1944).

Distillations

Eucalypt oils: Seventy glass bottles with stoppers containing samples of different varieties of eucalypt oil distilled by the Technological Museum Sydney, NSW, 1900–40.

Saccharimeter with tripod: Part of the set 'Saccharimeter A Penombres', an optical instrument used by H.G. Smith between 1890–1920 to test sugar solutions. Made from brass and iron, by Jules Duboscq, France, 1890.

Viscometer: Used by H.G. Smith and other staff in the Museum's phytochemical laboratory to measure the thickness, or viscosity, of liquids — including eucalypt oils. Made from metal and rubber, by W & J George Ltd, Birmingham, England, circa 1890.

Anna May Kirk

Pyriscence: After Fire

Bushfire — that sublime force of catastrophe and rebirth — has mutated into something not even the eucalypt can survive. Two lungs of glass — a material transformed by fire and breath — flow together with oil of *Eucalyptus globulus*. These lungs of convergent plant, animal and technological origin are branching, networking and respiring in hybrid breaths. A remaking of the evolutionary past to confront the perils of the present, as seen through the prism of an imagined future in multispecies collaboration with the fire-adapted eucalypt.

Hand blown glass, eucalyptus oil, silicone tubing, steel, lightbox, and an atomiser distributing eight scents formulated in collaboration with Ainslie Walker: *Blue Mallee, Eucalyptus citridora, Eucalyptus radiata, Eucalyptus dives, English Rose, Soil After Rain, Water, Bushfire Smoke and Technology*.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Yasmin Smith

STARS (Castle Hill Plantation 2021)

This site-derived installation is produced exclusively from materials collected from the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences' former eucalypt research plantation on Bidjigal land at Castle Hill. The work is conceived in two phases, with the second phase to be installed in Spring. Inorganic elements a tree derives from the soil, and water that nourish it remain in its cellular fibre after death. These glazes reflect trace metals retained by the plantation leaf-fall and one burnt eucalypt tree. A shifting spectrum of colour grows like an apparition of the gum tree. A manifestation of the tree's own memory — it's physical, biological and chemical essence. Humans also retain trace elements from the universe. We are all literally made of stardust.

Phase one: Plaster moulds of plantation floor

Phase two: Stoneware with leaf-fall ash-glaze, stoneware slip with spotted gum ash-glazes

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Nicole Barakat in collaboration with Rohingya Women's Development Organisation. Contributing artists: Sajeda Bahadarmia, Shamim Ara Solaiman, Riham Solaiman, Wafa Solaiman, Mahmuda, Aisha Aisha, Maryam Bi, Syanida Syanida, Shakira Shakira, Khaleda Fazul Ahmad, Shahira Rafiqul, Shazan Begum, Marzeyya Azimullah and Jannakar Alam

***It will be a memory for me,
I have learnt so many things
from this tree***

Embedded within the fibres of this cloth are memories of time, of learning and connecting; of being in kinship with family and community, of language and the warmth of home-cooked meals. We are reminded to say to the eucalypt: **السلام عليكم**, as-salaam alaykum, Peace be upon you; as taught by our mothers, to show respect and gratitude. As we gather her leaves and bark from the ground, we pay our respect to Darug Country and the Elders whose Nation we gather and create on.

Silk cloth steam-printed and dyed with Eucalyptus leaves and bark, hand embroidered with cotton thread

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Prospecting

Letter: From R.T. Baker to the Trustees of the Mountain Reserve, Lawson, NSW, dated 24 April 1899. Seeking permission for the Museum's collector William Bäuerlen to collect eucalypt leaves from Adeline Falls and Nellie's Glen.

Letter: From H.G. Smith to W. Bäuerlen at the Grand Hotel, Lawson, NSW, dated 27 April 1899. Providing detailed directions to a tree believed to be a 'spotted gum' from which the Museum wished to obtain leaf samples.

Sketch map: Drawn by H.G. Smith showing the location of trees to be investigated by W. Bäuerlen in the Blue Mountains, NSW, 1899.

Memorandum: From R.T. Baker to W. Bäuerlen at the Grand Hotel, Lawson, NSW, dated 4 May 1899. Acknowledges receipt of 18 bags of eucalypt leaves and states the 'spotted gum' samples are being 'put through the still'.

Eucalypt leaves: Four ounces donated to the Museum as part of a 'Materia Medica' collection of botanical specimens prized for their medicinal properties.

Gift of Burroughs Wellcome & Coy, 1914

Dyeing experiments: Assorted documentation and samples from experiments with eucalypt extract dyes conducted by H.G. Smith at the Museum circa 1918. Paper, fabric and natural dye.

The Spirit of the Tree

Documentary film: *The Spirit of the Tree*, depicting the commercial production of eucalypt oil from the narrow leaf eucalypt (*Eucalyptus cneorofolia*) by F.H. Faulding & Co. on Kangaroo Island, SA, circa 1927.

Courtesy of National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

Phytochemistry

Images of distillation: Hand-coloured, plastic, photographic transparencies, by photographers unknown. Depicting various aspects of research and industry related to eucalyptus oil distillation in Australia, 1880–1960.

Gift of David Sheedy, 2007–14

“We look forward to the time when science shall discover new commercial openings for these oils; and in the increased demand that will then necessarily arise, New South Wales will secure her share of the production,” extract from *A Research on the Eucalypts: Especially in Regard to their Essential Oils*, by R.T. Baker and H.G. Smith.

Lucy Simpson

Yuwaalaraay

Mayabuu (still, continuing)

This work holds ground and speaks of transfer. It remembers cycles of life and long-time (both back and forward) and maps movement through space and story. Embedded with the essence of Country and developed in response to collected materials held at the Powerhouse, it brings to the fore conversations about value, balance and release. This work was created with practices and processes guided by the lessons of Yuwaalaraay philosophy, moral lore, ceremony, and continuity. It acknowledges Country, the importance of relationships, and the interconnected kinship systems woven into the story of Bibil (bimble box / *Eucalyptus populnea*).

Digital print: Yuwaalaraay and Gadigal earth pigments and plant dyes on silk

Digital recording: *Mayabuu* composed, performed and recorded by Nardi Simpson

Thanks to cultural and creative collaborators and mentors: Ted Fields Jnr, Nardi Simpson, Tom Barker and the Goondee Keeping Place, Liz Williamson, Joanna Fowles, Think Positive Prints, and Chris Chen

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

First Nations Fashion + Design

Curated by Grace Lillian Lee

First Nations Fashion + Design is an Indigenous corporation established by emerging designers with a shared longing to see First Nations design talent take prominence on the Australian fashion scene. This collection showcases nine designers, and design partnerships, from our collective. Each garment reflects eucalypt species endemic to the designers' homelands and expresses their deep connection to Country. These works speak to the significance of eucalypt trees across a range of knowledges including science, medicine, cultural burning, land regeneration, cultural knowledge, ceremony and sovereignty.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Eva Nargoodah

Walmajarri

Jonian Ivy Nargoodah

Walmajarri, Nyikina

Margaret Albert, Rukaji Designs

Nyul Nyul, Bunaba, Bardi Jawi

For Rukaji Designs

Untitled 2021

Robe and dress: Silk, natural eucalypt dyes

Lillardia Briggs-Houston

Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta,

Gangulu

Binyal (River Red Gum)

Draped gown: Hand dyed habotai silk with ink lino print overlay, gumnuts, river red gum bark dye, river red gum sap

Elverina Johnson
Kunganji Gurugulu, Indinji
Gimuy

Gugu Biiapa

Wearable sculpture: Paperbark

Grace Lillian Lee
Meriam Mir

Our Branches

Wearable sculpture: Cane, cotton
webbing, goose feathers (treated),
assorted plastic beads

Teagan Cowlshaw, Aarli
Nyikina, Bardi, Nyul Nyul

Manawan (Eucalyptus Tree)

Hooded jumpsuit: Digital print on textile
design by Clair Helen (70% linen, 20%
cotton, 10% hemp)
Shoulder piece: Gold stamped, remnant
leather

Brianna Enoch, Jarawee
Kaantju, Quandamooka

Rebirth of New Life

Strapless gown: Digital print on satin

Cheryl Creed, Murrii Quu
Couture
Gunggari, Pitta-Pitta, Bindal,
Quandamooka

Lady Eucalypt

Gown: Lycra, leather, satin and tulle

Penny Evans
Gamilaroi

Waabigu maragalгаа
(Grandmothers' hands)

Necklace and lap lap: White clay, iron
oxide, pooling glaze, black slip, black
raffia, native hibiscus, emu feather
string

Paul McCann
Marrithiyel

Crown of Sovereignty

Crown: Eucalyptus gumnuts, textile,
metal, acrylic, adhesive

Jane Sheldon

Eucalyptus Wind Rose

Where Powerhouse now stands, eucalypts once grew. The sound installation, *Eucalyptus Wind Rose*, is an effort to reanimate that now absent forest.

Two distinct layers of sound have been constructed. The first is an ambient environmental texture of breath, a material that entangles us in perpetual exchange with trees; the second, a garden of sonic ‘blossoms’, responsive to the movement of visitors through the exhibition.

Wind roses are meteorological tools that collect wind data at a given location. In this work, historical wind roses relevant to this site — on Gadigal land — are used as sound maps, informing the design of each sonic blossom.

Composition, sound design and voice:
Jane Sheldon
Violin: Véronique Serret
Recording engineer: David Trumpanis
Mastering: Bob Scott

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

RELATED EXHIBITS

In *The Steam Revolution*,
level 2

Luna Mrozik Gawler

Place Unknown: A Speculative Taxonomy

This text-based fabulation conjures the spectral presence of the eucalypt as it haunts the history of steam power in colonial Australia. Linking four pieces of machinery and the eucalypt genus they historically encountered, this work uses a queer and posthuman lens to consider the agency and kinship of the lively and vibrant ecosystems of land and waterways disrupted by the industrial and agricultural revolution. By centering the eucalypt in the foreground of a hybrid history co-composed by animals and plants alongside humans and machines, *Place Unknown* asks how troubling dominant accounts of the past might contribute to the creation of symbiotic futures founded in multispecies care.

Video projection

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

On the Powerhouse
forecourt

Craig Burton

Line of Fire

This garden installation is a symbolic composition representing the adaptation of eucalypts through contact with fire. A fire-resistant stone plinth signals a space that can be activated by ceremony or performance. The central island features burnt stumps that reference eucalypts destroyed by bushfires and land clearing. Various eucalypt species, with an understory of indigenous *Poa* grasses, represent the rebirth of the endangered eucalyptus woodland. Sandstone 'logs' echo the Sydney Basin Hawkesbury Sandstone found in nearby remnant cliffs and quarries around Ultimo and offer seating where visitors can gather.

Commissioned by Powerhouse, 2021

Eucalyptusdom was realised through a multidisciplinary collaboration between creative partners with the support of the Powerhouse team.

Embedded artist

Agatha Gothe-Snape

Lead Curator

Sarah Rees

Curators

Emily McDaniel (Wiradjuri Nation)

Nina Earl

Project Coordinator

Anna Gardner

Literary interpretation

Ashley Hay

Spatial design

Vania Contreras

Architectural design

Richard Leplastrier AO

Jack Gillmer (Worimi, Biripi Nations) of SJB

Adam Haddow of SJB

Lighting design

Nick Schlieper

Sound installation

Jane Sheldon

Visual identity

Studio Ongarato

Forecourt landscape

Craig Burton

