



Fowler & Co., London, England  
Porcelain phrenological bust c. 1890  
Private collection

**B**RIGITA OZOLINS has engaged with the collections of Narryna, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, to present Death Mask at Narryna for Dark MOFO 2017. Narryna encourages dialogue between past and present through inviting artists to rediscover museum collections. Art interventions work well in historic houses through the opposition of 19th century and contemporary aesthetics. Our audiences enjoy that frisson.

Brigita is a Hobart-based artist and academic. She is best known for her large-scale installations that explore the links between language, history and identity such as *Kryptos* (2011) at MONA. She has also developed site-specific work for the State Library of Tasmania, the Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, Salamanca Arts Centre, Ten Days on the Island and the State Library of Latvia. Ozolins exhibits in solo and group exhibitions and is represented by the Bett Gallery.

Ozolins was attracted by the confronting readings of the death mask. The death mask was created by taking a plaster mould of the face or head of the deceased. Australia's earliest surviving sculpted portrait is probably the life mask of the Rev. Robert Knopwood (1761-1838) made by Colonial Surgeon, Dr. James Scott. Narryna possesses Knopwood's death mask.

In Australia the creation of death masks for phrenological analysis was an aspect of the race and class-based ideology that accompanied colonization. A judge could direct that the body of a criminal sentenced to death be dissected and anatomized after execution. In an era that looked to a physical resurrection at the Last Judgment, being denied burial in consecrated ground was a punishment and violence beyond execution.

Ozolins was inspired to develop her installation by photographs by John Watt Beattie of his Port Arthur Museum, Elizabeth Street, Hobart. In June 1922 Beattie had acquired the death mask collection of librarian, Alfred J. Taylor (1849-1921)

formerly housed in Taylor's private museum at South Hobart. Part of Beattie's collection (including the death masks) was later purchased by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. The records of the extensive Taylor and Beattie collections are a rich resource for understanding phrenology in Tasmania where the convict system has cast a long shadow.

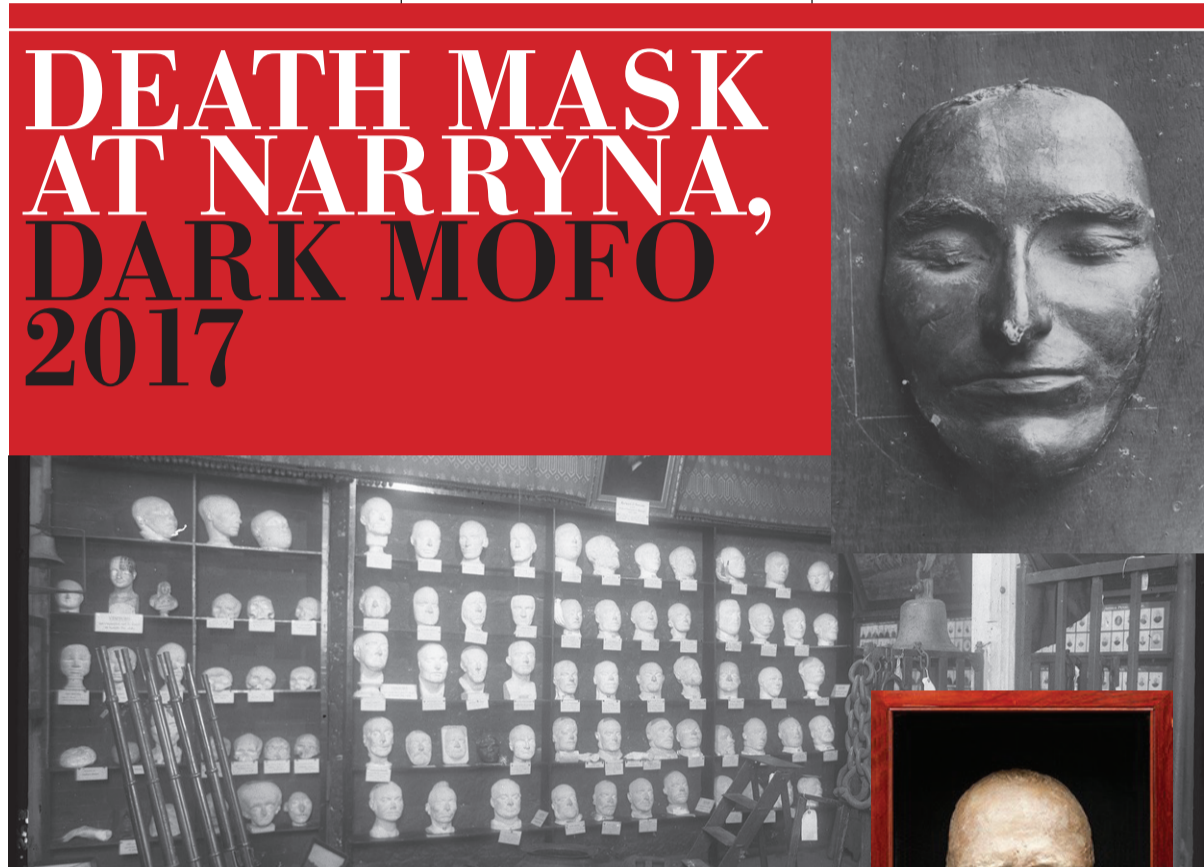
The 'science' of phrenology was developed in the late 18th century to determine personality types, intellect and human behaviour by examining the shape of the skull. In 1796 the Austrian physician, Franz Joseph Gall, noted that the brain is the organ of the mind and that brain areas have localized specific functions. His colleague, Johann Kaspar Spurzheim then mapped the skull as 35 individual 'organs' and linked each one with a specific physical, mental or moral 'faculty'. The area above the ears, for example, was designated as the zone of destructiveness. Gall and Spurzheim noted this area was prominent in violent men. Spurzheim believed that the first 19 of these 'faculties' existed in other animal species. This led to the identification of 'regressive' tendencies.

Phrenologists were trained the 'read' heads by feeling the contours of the skull. In the 19th

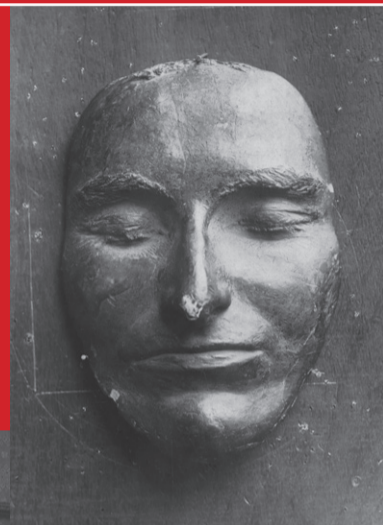
century they were consulted like palm readers or astrologers. From the 1860s Charles Darwin's theories of evolution led to reliance on phrenology in determining an individual's criminal proclivities.

Beattie's photograph of his Museum includes a phrenological bust and Taylor's collection contained standard phrenology types that were circulated to institutions and collectors. Phrenology involved contrasting the crania of geniuses with criminals. Taylor's collection included busts of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia (1712-1786) and Lord Brougham (1778-1868) a celebrated British statesman and scientist. Taylor's updated his 'great men' with the death mask of Marcus Clarke (1846-1881), author of *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1870-74).

Taylor's death masks of executed criminals included murderers: John Knatchbull, executed at Darlinghurst Gaol, Sydney in 1844; Richard Copping who murdered his lover and first cousin, Susannah Stacey, at Bream Creek, Tasmania in 1878; Henry Morgan executed at Ararat Gaol, 1884 and the poisoner, Martha Needle (1863-1894). Melbourne Gaol appears to have created multiple death masks from its executed criminals. Several Beattie col-



John Watt Beattie (1859-1930), Beattie Studios. Beattie of his Port Arthur Museum, Elizabeth Street, Hobart (the site of the Cat and Fiddle Arcade)  
Silver gelatin photograph c. 1922 Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery



Top: John Watt Beattie (1859-1930), Beattie Studios  
Death mask of William Westwood executed on Norfolk Island for murder in 1846 aged 26. Silver gelatin photograph c. 1922 Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Above: Unidentified follower of Dr. James Scott (1790-1837, active in Hobart from 1820) Death mask of the Rev. Robert Knopwood (1761-1838). Plaster Narryna Heritage Museum collection

lection death masks have hair or eyebrow fragments embedded in the plaster. These evidently had a ready market. A cast of Mrs Frances Knorr, the Brunswick Baby Murderess, hanged on 15 January 1894, was noted in Taylor's private museum in June 1895.

After World War II a horror of eugenics that had led to the Holocaust led to the destruction of death masks. Only a few from the Taylor / Beattie collection have survived. The belief that physical appearance and inherited character traits could explain and predict criminal behaviour lost ground in the 20th century. The new social science of criminology and further developments in psychiatry led to criminal behaviour being assessed in terms of upbringing, social background and the mental health of the individual.

## NARRYNA FOR CHINESE VISITORS

**T**HE China Trade is important to the history of Tasmania. The British East India Company was established in 1600 to obtain rich cargoes of porcelain, silks, tea, lacquer, zinc and spices from China and South East Asia. It licenced 'free mariners' such as Narryna's builder, Captain Andrew Haig, to carry out the trade. Tasmania is named for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) captain, Abel Tasman, who named the island in honour of Antony van Diemen, Governor of Batavia (Jakarta).

This aspect of Tasmania's relationship with China is less well known than the 'Tin Dragon' story of mining by Chinese emigrants in Tasmania's north-east. Narryna is sharing these stories with Tasmania's Chinese residents and visitors through Chinese language guides in simplified Chinese characters (for visitors from China and Singapore) and traditional Chinese characters (for visitors from Taiwan and Hong Kong). Go to [www.tmag.tas.gov.au/narryna](http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/narryna)

## GEORGIAN GLASS ROADSHOW

**A**NDY McConnell, well-known to viewers of the Antiques Roadshow, came to Narryna in February to take TMAG Friends, Narryna and ADFAS members on a journey through the history of glass. Andy is a great raconteur. One participant reverently brought along a family heirloom piece for appraisal. Andy swiftly filled the glass with wine which he quaffed. His appraisal was 'wine tastes much better from hand-blown Georgian glass'. Thank you to the Friends of TMAG for donating the proceeds of this highly entertaining event to Narryna.

Andy McConnell quaffs wine from an 18th century glass while Rosanna Cameron awaits an appraisal.





## NARRYNA HERITAGE MUSEUM

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## NARRYNA COUNCIL

NARRYNA'S governing Council comprises

President: Richard Watson, Secretary: Scott Carlin, Treasurer: Sally Ord, TMAG Director: Janet Carding, Community representatives: Rowanne Brown, Ann Cripps, Anne Horner, Myfanwy Kernke, TMAG representatives: Patricia Sabine and Chris Tassell.



Eve is the daughter of Antony Langdon and step-daughter of Rose Flynn who operate the Montacute Boutique Bunkhouse adjoining Narryna. Montacute is named for Eve's ancestor, Captain William Langdon's property, Montacute near Bothwell which was in turn named for Langdon's birthplace in Somerset, England. Like Narryna's builder Captain Andrew Haig, Captain Langdon (1790-1879) was renowned for giving safe passage to emigrants to Tasmania. For Eve, the trunk taken by Miss T. S. Bromley on Captain Langdon's ship, the *Norfolk* c. 1835 symbolizes the adventure and danger of sea travel that brought emigrants to Tasmania.

Above: Jackson Wiggins, a descendant of Thomas Wiggins, holding a violin inscribed 'Tasmania' c. 1840 made by Thomas Wiggins.

Left: Eve Langdon with a trunk taken on Captain Langdon's ship, the *Norfolk* c. 1835.

## SCRIMSHAW EXHIBITION

IN ASSOCIATION with *Scrimshaw – the art of the Mariner*, Colin Thomas gave lectures and talks to groups as varied as the Australiana Society Tasmanian chapter, Tasmanian antique dealers, Maritime Museum of Tasmania, Battery Point Community Association, Macquarie Probus and the Athenaeum Club. During the exhibition Colin travelled to the 29th annual Scrimshaw Symposium at the

New Bedford Whaling Museum, Massachusetts, USA to give a talk on scrimshaw in Tasmanian collections. USA participants were impressed by holdings on this side of the globe. As a folk art with international connections, Colin has been able to attribute several Tasmanian scrimshaw pieces to known makers.

Watch this space for a follow-up talk by Colin on his USA tour.

Above: The exhibition was launched with a talk by Colin Thomas for Narryna members and the newly-formed Australiana Society – Tasmanian chapter

Below: For the exhibition, a whaling cauldron owned by Charles Seal (1801-1852) was hoisted into Narryna's forecourt. Charles Seal (1801-1852) was a merchant, pastoralist, shipowner and whaler. His twelve ships included the *Aladdin* and the *Maria Orr*. The *Maria Orr* was named for Maria Lempriere (née Lackey, formerly Orr) the businesswoman who was Narryna's owner 1847-1884.



Ann Cripps and Liam Peters



Richard Watson, Jon Taylor and friends



Janet Carding and Warwick Oakman

## NARRYNA AS CUSTODIAN OF COMMUNITY HERITAGE

NARRYNA hosts education tours for around 2,000 students a year who come to learn about life in an early 19th century merchant's house. Narryna's collection was sourced from across Tasmania and many Tasmanians are connected with Narryna as the custodian of their family history. We enjoy learning from the students. Students whose heirlooms form part of the collection have a lot to teach about a sense of place and how Tasmania's cultural heritage informs their identity.

Narryna's violin for example was made by Thomas Wiggins (1803-1884) who was born at sea aboard HMS *Calcutta* to Samuel and Susannah Wiggins. Samuel was a Royal Marine in the party of Lieutenant Governor David Collins who established the first European settlement at Risdon Cove. Thomas's was the first birth recorded in Van Diemen's

Land's official baptismal register. Thomas Wiggins received a grant in the Sorell district in 1823 and, typical of Tasmania, his family has retained a connection with Sorell ever since. Narryna has hosted a Wiggins reunion and Jackson examines his ancestor's violin each time he visits.



## A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

NARRYNA was established as the Van Diemen's Land Memorial Folk Museum in 1955 and opened to the public on 30 November 1957. It thus celebrates 60 years as a museum in 2017/18.

Narryna's Council aims to secure a financially sustainable future for the museum. We need your support to refurbish Narryna's outbuildings for education, community and revenue-generating uses:

- A large shed has been reconditioned as a flexible events space
- Courtyard outbuildings are being refitted as a kitchen for

events (funding for the building 'envelope' received)

- A WC's block will be redeveloped with the addition of gardening and events equipment stores
- A kitchen garden will be re-instated as the basis for schools programs and to generate recognition of the importance of Narryna as part of Rev. Robert Knopwood's garden.

Other important building, interiors and collection projects under way are:

- Recreation of the original decorative treatments of the dining room, front doorcase and portico, funded by a Copland Foundation grant.
- Rehousing part of our nationally-significant costume collection through a National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant
- A new website will host exhibitions of collection highlights
- Restoration of the borders of the front garden.



## UPCOMING NARRYNA EVENTS

Dark MOFO Open daily 10am-6pm and Fri-Sat evenings 6pm-10pm with festival bar 9-21 June

Narryna closed for annual cleaning and maintenance July-August

Narryna celebrates 60 years as a museum 30 November 2017

Christmas Craft Spirit Market Saturday 9 December