

#BROWNMANINAWHITEMUSEUM

David Sequeira, Creative Researcher in Residence

My residency at the Grainger has been one of the most confronting and enriching projects that I have ever undertaken. Grainger funded the museum himself and donated the collection of over 40 000 objects ranging from his handwritten scores to his underpants and toenails. Clearly, eccentricity is only afforded to the privileged. Given Grainger's patronising attitude to people of colour and his worship of blonde-haired blue-eyed Scandinavian culture, the Museum is strikingly inconsistent with the University's current values and those of my own. Accordingly, my research, which takes the form of new installations, curatorial interventions, talks and performance has been about exploring the ways in which a gay mid 50s, brown-skinned, Indian born, Australian artist/ curator/ academic who has put up his hand for the development of Australian visual arts, makes sense of museum dedicated to an openly racist composer/musician who was committed to promoting his own genius.

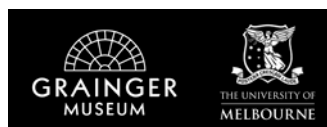
David Sequeira

We acknowledge the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation and pay respects to Elders past and present. We recognise the richness diversity brings and foster the promotion of a diverse and inclusive learning and research environment.

The Grainger Museum is the only purpose-built autobiographical museum in Australia and was established in 1938 at the University of Melbourne by Australian composer Percy Aldridge Grainger. The Grainger Collection comprises material related to Percy Grainger and the Grainger family, including archives, musical instruments, artworks, furniture and clothing, along with the music collection, including material related to Australian and international composers, musicians, and musicology.

Research, learning and creative experimentation are now the keystone activities of the Grainger Museum, offering a place for ideas and debate, cultural reflection and musical expertise. Through our inaugural research residency, David Sequeira responds through his creative practice to the life of Percy Grainger, and in particular his musical legacy, racist views and sexual interests. Through academic rigor and reflection, the Grainger Museum offers a place where we can foster a culture of not erasing the past but rather the opportunity to learn from it.

Museums and Collections



LIST OF WORKS

FOYER

Vase chord 1 (left), 2022

Discarded vases installed on sheet music manuscript drawers, Grainger Collection
University of Melbourne

Vase chord 2 (right), 2022

Discarded vases installed on sheet music manuscript drawers, Grainger Collection
University of Melbourne

Threshold, 2022

Discarded vases installed on interior portico

COURTYARD

Imagining (Buddha + Bunnings), 2022

Acrylic on fibreglass garden figures, paint swatches

MAIN HORIZONTAL AXIS

Felt Music (Music is Felt) (left and right), 2017-2022

Felt on music manuscript, collapsible music stands

Your piano is my plinth 1 (left), 2022

Discarded vases on Salon Grand piano made by Blüthner (date unknown),
Grainger Collection, University of Melbourne

Your piano is my plinth 2 (right), 2022

Discarded vases on Duo-Art reproducing piano c 1932, Grainger Collection,
University of Melbourne

50 SHADES OF GRAINGER

Whips, conducting batons, photographs, bloodstained shirt, Kangaroo pouch tone tool, Grainger Collection, University of Melbourne, Vinyl blackboard, enamel on copper eyes

In 1956 Percy Grainger deposited a locked box marked PRIVATE MATTERS in his Melbourne bank vault. He left instructions that the box was not to be opened until 10 years after his death. When the box was opened by researchers in 1971, they found an extensive collection of whips, pornography and personal photographs documenting Grainger's sadomasochist practices. Some of this material, which Grainger referred to the Lust Branch, is displayed here alongside a range of conducting batons and the Kangaroo Pouch Tone Tool, also from the Grainger Collection, in order to prompt connections between Grainger's sexual activity and experimentation and his musical activity and experimentation. All of the images in this display were taken by Grainger who taught himself photography for the purposes of recording the fruits of these sessions. Within the context of #brownmaninawhitemuseum, 50 Shades of Grainger seeks to highlight Grainger's challenging of assumptions around dominance and submission, acceptability and taboo and private and public practices.

CURVED GALLERIES

Upside down Felt Music (Upside down Music is Felt) (left and right), 2017-2022

Felt on music manuscript, collapsible music stands

1938

Family Jewels, 2022, installation comprising:
19th century museum display case, Grainger Collection, University of Melbourne

Brooches from the collection of Mrs Rosemary Sequeira

St Edward's Crown
Imperial State Crown
Imperial Crown of India
Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother's Crown
Sovereign's Orb

Crown Jewel Replicas (c.1936), England
(brass, copper, steel, velvet, synthetic fur, paste, metallic cord, (stuffing)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Gift of Mr Alex Isaacson, 1938

The White Peacock, 2022
Taxidermy peacock on art deco timber pedestal

NOT FOR KING WHITE, 2022
Acrylic on canvas

David & Elizabeth (we will never see the same colour) teal, 2022
Acrylic and gouache on board

David & Elizabeth (we will never see the same colour) yellow, 2022
Acrylic and gouache on board

David & Elizabeth (we will never see the same colour) orange, 2022
Acrylic and gouache on board

The Grainger Museum opened in 1938
Rosemary Sequeira (my Mum) was born in 1938
The National Gallery of Victoria acquired a set of replica British Crown Jewels in 1938

Each of the objects in this installation is loaded in meaning. My intention is to create layers of symbolism and multiple points of connection that form new narratives about time, culture and the intersection of personal and shared histories. The crowns and orb are replicas and yet they signify something real about the nature of colonial imperialism. The brooches are NOT replicas — they are real brooches. They are what they are — pieces of jewellery used by my mum as adornment. The combination of crowns and brooches in a 'museum' context brings into question notions reality and illusion and their relationship to hierarchy in the collection and display of museum objects. The peacock is a national symbol of India and in this case...a white symbol of India. 'The White Peacock' is the title of D. H. Lawrence's first novel. Lawrence and Grainger were born 3 years apart and both had serious mummy issues. In the corner of each of the miniature paintings is a portrait of me and the Queen. *David & Elizabeth 2022*, asks the question: could David and Elizabeth ever see the same colour? The text painting *NOT FOR KING WHITE* can be understood as bluntly coded declaration. Simply put, I'm not fucking white.

Architecture =
ARCHIVE.

David SEQUEIRA

born India 1966

ARCHIVE is
CONTEMPORARY.

live/works Melbourne

Autobiographical Museum.

visits Grainger Museum on school excursion

1979

comes back to the museum by

plays the himself throughout teenage +

Percy's clothes adult life. Eccentricity = White MALE PRIVILEGE

Creative Researcher in Residence 2021-2022

Opens 1938

Rose Sequena born 1938

NGV acquires

replica Crown Jewels 1938. WTF

opportunity to test ideas.

Grainger Museum

Must Branch? Box opened 1971
#50 Shades of Grainger
Whips, blood, photos, porn,

consent → anthropology?

WATCHING. You WATCH

Semi Circular building.

being watched

- WTF!! why?

- KOOKY!!!!

anomaly

precedence?

designed by John Gawler

Gawler... 2-2-22

#ouch -2-2-22

BUT → is connected with The Griffins!!!

THEOSOPHY ⇒

Semi circle -

Sacred geometry.

Annie Besant comes to Australia in 1908

Griffins → Blavatsky

- spiritual emancipation

- Social improvement.

Grainger obsessed with Norway.

VIKING BURIAL GROUND!!! ????

National Emblem of India

The title of first novel by

DH Lawrence (like Grainger,

he had SERIOUS mummy issues)

David SEQUEIRA?

lives New Delhi (1966-1970)

Canberra (1995-2014)

Essendon/Horfeldie (1970-1995)

John Grainger - architect - haunting legacy..

designs the Barr-Smith home in Adelaide.

connected with William Morris (major commissions)

SOCIALISM → Theosophy... #m.m.?

Adelaide theosophical society #deadend.

vibration/resonance

SYNAESTHESIA

Museum as an inhabited space

designed by GRIFFINS

GHOSTS!

haunting legacy..

connected with William Morris (major commissions)

SOCIALISM → Theosophy... #m.m.?

Adelaide theosophical society #deadend.

vibration/resonance

SYNAESTHESIA

Semi circle ???

VIKING BURIAL GROUND!!! ????

GRAINGER

New Narrative
Re-think
Linearity.

Mums brooches are real.
The crowns are not real.

makes Art that alludes to sacred geometry

Pieces - water sign
#hates to be fixed!
boxed in
loves multiple narratives.