

MEDIA RELEASE

ICONS: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES

Priceless, microscopic, ancient, controversial, lucky and one-of-a-kind are just a few of the ways to describe the objects from the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) that are on display in *Icons*, opening at the Powerhouse Museum on 15 October 2016.

Chosen from a collection of over 500,000, these objects have been specifically selected to challenge visitors to interrogate the notion of what makes an icon, and think more deeply about what makes an object significant to a community, a place and a time.

MAAS Director, **Dolla Merrillees**, said the choice of what to include wasn't always easy.

"Finalising which objects to feature in *Icons* sparked lively discussions within the team. Everyone has a different notion of what makes an icon, which is really the point of the exhibition, but in a collection as broad ours, the proposition poses vast possibilities."

"From the priceless Boulton and Watt rotative engine, to the Apple 1 computer and cochlear implants, these are objects which have changed and shaped the world, and tell a story of creativity, ingenuity and innovation," said Ms Merrillees.

Icons curator and MAAS Head of Curatorial, **Jacqui Strecker**, says the exhibition also examines the role of Museums as collecting institutions that shape our understanding of the past and anticipate our future.

"Museum collections are heavily influenced by notions of taste, connoisseurship, knowledge, judgement and historical significance. There is a definite skill to interpreting our contemporary context and discerning what is likely to hold significance in 10, 50 or 500 years' time. In *Icons* we were able to present some of the Museum's most admired and valuable objects alongside lesser known and more eccentric items, inviting a second look as they each have an important story to tell," said Dr Strecker.

Coinciding with the opening of *Icons*, MAAS has developed an app enabling visitors to take a self-guided tour of the exhibition and discover the stories behind each object. In a first for the Museum, the exhibition also uses cutting-edge 3D scanning technology to allow visitors to explore 3D models of a selection of the objects via interactive touchscreen displays.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue which includes essays by leading curators and award-winning Australian author Drusilla Modjeska, that contextualise the collection's significance to modern Australia and future generations.

Discover treasures from across time at *Icons*, an exhibition exclusive to the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

Exhibition details:

What: *Icons*

When: opening 15 October 2016

Where: Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris Street, Ultimo NSW 2007

Read more: <https://maas.museum/event/icons>

Catalogue details:

Icons from the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Collection

Available from October 2016 at MAAS Store or online at

<https://maas.museum/product-category/book/>

RRP \$39.95

MAAS App available via the Apple and Android app stores from 15 October.

About the Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences

The Powerhouse Museum, alongside Sydney Observatory and Museums Discovery Centre, is part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS), Australia's contemporary museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences. The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has a vast and diverse collection of over 500,000 objects.

For media enquiries, contact:

Eli Wallis, Senior Publicist | eli.wallis@maas.museum | 9217 0564 / 0402 359 016