

FOREWORD

Thanks to the advantages of ‘perfect binding’, *Explorations* 53, like its immediate predecessor, is free from space constraints and contains more pages than most previous issues. It features several substantial articles and notes on a variety of French-Australian topics.

Thierry Vincent, a curator at the Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle du Havre, recounts the story of a forgotten Aboriginal necklace he rediscovered in the Museum’s collections in 2005. The author makes a convincing case that, contrary to its labelling, which indicates a New Caledonian provenance, the artefact was acquired at Port Jackson in 1804 by artist and naturalist Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, a member of the Baudin expedition. After his death the necklace was eventually incorporated into the collections of the Museum. Thierry Vincent traces not only the itinerary of the necklace but also the changing fortunes of the Museum in war and peace.

The second article is by Sabine Cotte, a French art conservator who lives and works in Melbourne. It is an account of her collaboration with Mirka Mora, a celebrated artist and Melbourne icon, also of French-Australian background. In her description of the work involved in preserving Mirka Mora’s public artworks Cotte provides an insight into the world of art conservation. By presenting three case studies, she sheds light on the respective importance of the original intention of the artist and her input in the restoration project and the role of material and time constraints and cultural sensitivities.

In the ‘Documents, Notes and Reviews’ section we have a substantial piece by Jacqueline Macnaughtan, a Melbourne curator and conservator, on the story of her great-aunt Ada Hautrive-Leysalle. Ada, who moved back and forth between France and Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century, comes to life through her letters which describe her relationship with her parents, her siblings and other members of the family and her tormented marriage to French sculptor Émile Leysalle.

In two obituaries *Explorations* honours the life and work of Helen Rosenman and Ivan Page who both made substantial contributions to the understanding of French culture in Australia.

The issue concludes with Kerry Mullan’s reports on the ISFAR jazz evening and meetings of the ‘Melbourne French Salon’, followed by book reviews and Elaine Lewis’ French-Australian Bibliographical Notes.