

## REMIX : MUSEUM HACK 2016

### LIST OF MUSEUM OBJECTS

#### Cone shell beads

Mandu Mandu Creek rock shelter, Exmouth area, Western Australia

These beads are the oldest examples of human adornment in Australia, dating from around 32,000 years ago. The abrasion left by the shell rubbing against strings tells us someone once wore these twenty two small beads - around their neck, on their arms or maybe decorating their hair. But were they merely a form of personal body decoration? Or were they an indication of status, ritual of passage or geographic location? Is the fact that they are made from cone snails, a non-edible shell species, meaningful?



#### Mangrove Log Raft

Made by Tommy Thomas, One Arm Point, Kimberley, Western Australia 1974

For thousands of years, Aboriginal Kimberley people have been building rafts and using them as their main source of transport. These so-called 'double rafts' are deceptively simple looking - they are highly specialized water crafts. A vast body of knowledge was needed to select the right trees (mangroves) and assemble them using traditional techniques (overlapping fans of pegged logs).

When hunting large prey such as dugong or turtle, the raft is capable of separating. The rope that is attached to the prey is tied to one of the raft fans. The fan is then untied and acts as a drag, slowing and tiring the prey, as well as making them easier to spot.



**Marsupial lion** (*Thylacoleo carnifex*)

Flightstar Cave, Nullabor Plain, Western Australia

The marsupial lion was Australia's largest meat-eating mammal. It was an extremely robust animal with powerfully built jaws and very strong fore limbs. It possessed retractable claws, a unique trait among marsupials - animals which carry their young in a pouch. Despite its name, the marsupial lion was not related to big cats but a member of the order Diprodontia (which also includes kangaroos, koalas and wombats).

It was widespread across this country during the Pleistocene (1.6 million to 46,000 years ago), disappearing around the time humans first arrived in Australia. This skeleton, found in 2002, is the most complete Thylacoleo skeleton ever found.

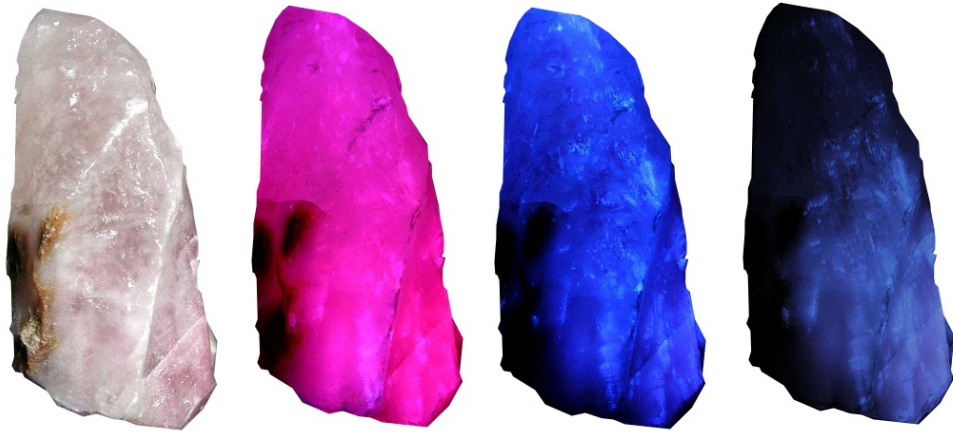


## Fluorescent Minerals

Australia

Fluorescent minerals emit visible light when activated by either invisible ultraviolet light, X-rays or electron beams. These minerals change such invisible radiation into visible rays, emitted as various colours that often bear no resemblance to the original mineral colour. This ability is called fluorescence, so named because it was first observed in the mineral fluorite.

Fluorescence also occurs frequently in nature - parrots have fluorescent plumage that may be used in mate signaling, while some spiders use fluorescence to camouflage with matching fluorescent flowers.



## **Stromatolites**

Australia

Stromatolites are sedimentary rocks formed by the deposition of materials in shallow water. Built by microorganisms, in particular blue-green algae, they date from more than 3.5 billion years ago, thus representing the earliest direct evidence for life on Earth. When they first appeared there was little or no oxygen in the atmosphere. It was through the oxygen-generating activity of stromatolites that other animal life on earth was able to develop.

Modern stromatolites are mostly found in lakes and lagoons where extreme saline levels exclude animal grazing. One such location is Hamelin Pool in Shark bay, Western Australia, where excellent specimens are observed today.



## Button bar shoes

Early 1930's, Australia

Women's shoes from this era came in a wide array of styles, but certain details made them specific to the 1930's: decorative perforations, thick straps and heels (usually made of wood).

Prior to WWII it was common to manufacture batches of shoes in one colour, dyeing them to order later. This cobalt blue pair was originally ivory coloured. The toes of women's shoes were rounded or square.

This example features the straight Spanish heel so characteristic of this decade.

This shoe was made for MYER, the famous Australian department store chain.

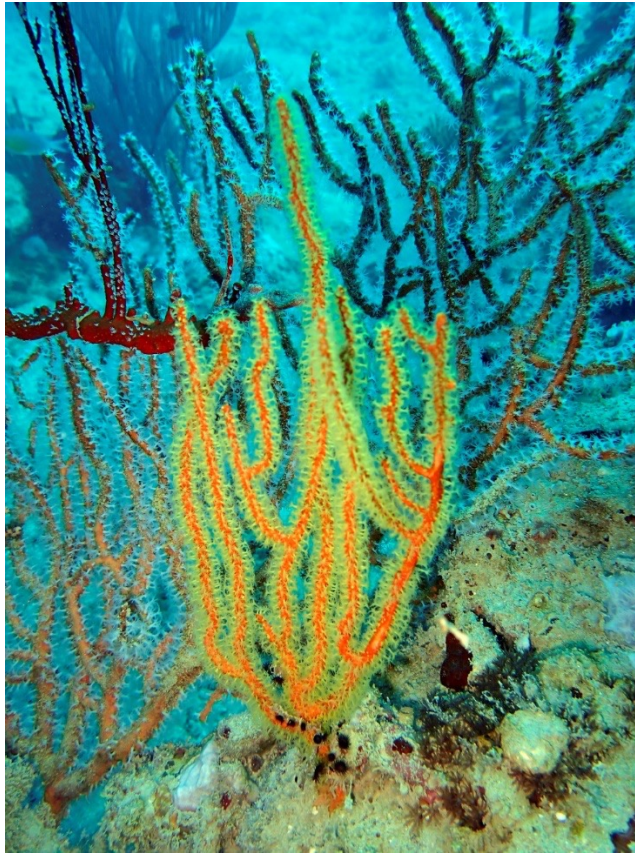


## Gorgonian fan coral (*Muricella* sp.)

Australia

Gorgonians are soft coral colonies. There are about 500 different species of gorgonians found in the oceans of the world, but those found in tropical and subtropical waters have the most diversified shapes. Their distinctive forms include sea fans, blades, feathers and rods. Most are very colorful, ranging from shades of yellow and orange to purple and red.

Large gorgonian fan corals usually grow on the walls of channels, taking advantage of the strong currents that bring plankton - the microscopic organisms made of tiny plants and animals on which they feed.



**Western Jewel Butterfly** (*Hypochrysops halyaetus*)

Western Australia

This butterfly species is only found only in Western Australia. Much of their original habitat has been destroyed by urban and rural development.

On the upperside the male is iridescent blue, while the female is brown and purple. The underside of both sexes is orange and green bands.

Females lay their eggs at the base of plants which grow next to a nest of a particular type of ant (*Crematogaster frivola*). The relationship is mutualistic: the butterfly larvae receive shelter and protection from predators; the ants get a sugary liquid secreted by glands on the backs of the butterfly larvae.



[female specimen]

### **Narrogin Doll**

Narrogin Doll Factory, World War I, Western Australia

During World War I, an enterprising woman called Grace Burkitt teamed up with her family in Narrogin, Western Australia. Together they started making papier-maché and compound dolls to replace foreign-made dolls which were hard to buy due to wartime import restrictions.

They became so popular that their home became known as the 'Narrogin Doll Factory' and up to forty dolls were produced weekly.

Nevertheless, once the war finished, competition from cheaper imports led to the eventual demise of this great venture.

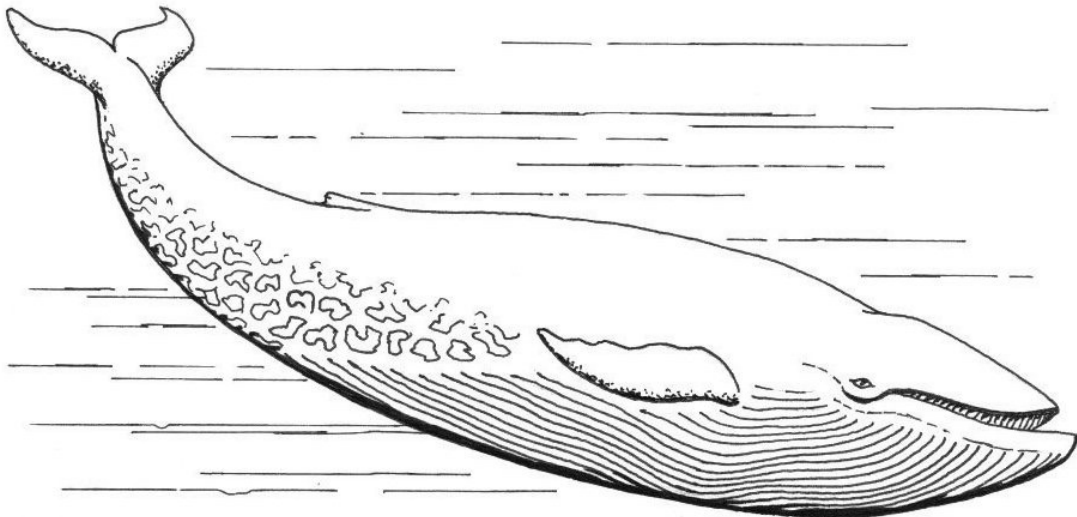
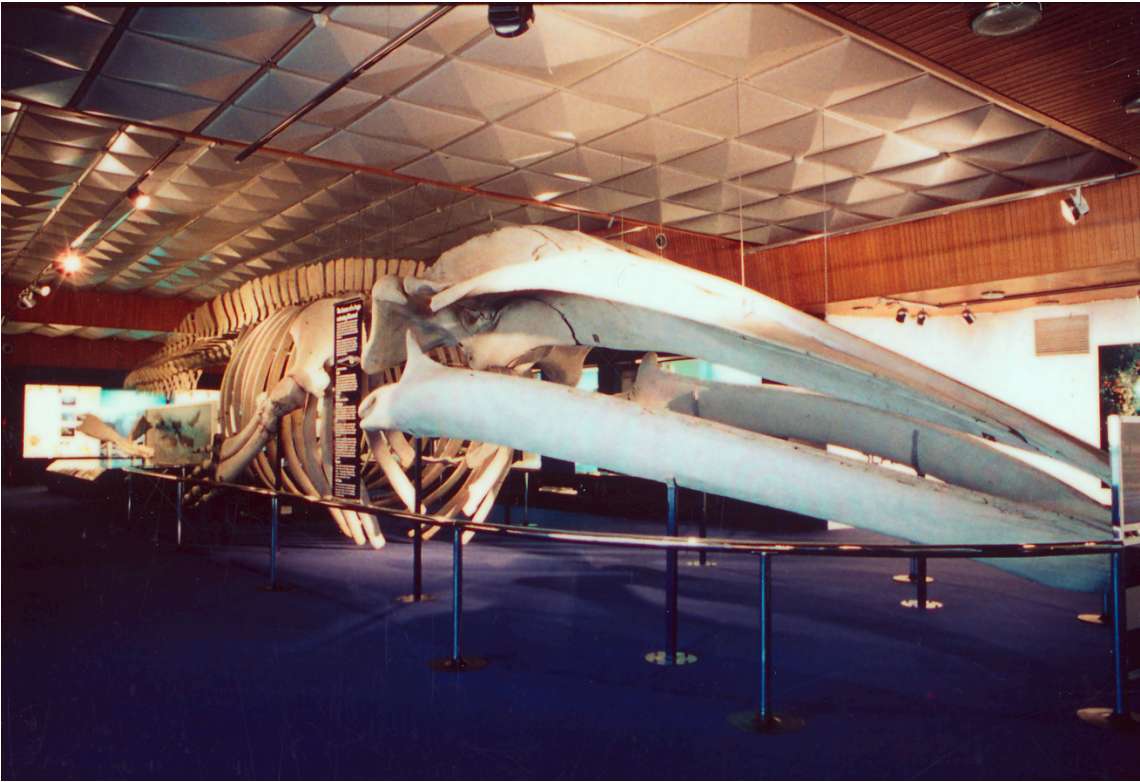


**Blue Whale** *Balaenoptera musculus intermedia*

Coming to the New Museum in 2020

Blue Whales are the largest animals ever known to have lived on Earth. These magnificent creatures can grow up to up to 30m long and weigh up to 180 tonnes. Their hearts weigh around the same amount as a small car, and their tongues as heavy as a whole elephant!

The WA Museum has a wonderful skeleton of an Antarctic Blue Whale which is 24m long. It was acquired in 1898 and is one of the oldest and largest specimens in the collection. It was on display in the Museum's Francis Street building for many years and is now being prepared for the New Museum for WA. The Blue Whale is an icon of the Museum and many West Australians have a great affection for this giant of the sea.



[Illustration of a blue whale]

Engagement Team, L&C, Western Australian Museum 2016