

Holtermann Collection Digitisation Project

Lang Ngo and Lauren O'Brien

ABSTRACT

The internationally significant Holtermann collection contains 3500 glass plate negatives documenting an exploration of gold towns in New South Wales and Victoria from 1872 to 1875. The collection also includes images of streets and buildings in Sydney and Melbourne between 1871 and 1876. The rich detail captured by the wet-plate negatives record every shop, house and mine in the surveyed areas.

While there are images from the Holtermann Collection currently available on the Library's website they do not do justice to the original glass plates. They were batched scanned from 2nd generation 35mm film copies several years ago, losing much of the fine detail in the process.

The State Library of New South Wales is now embarking on a rehousing and digitisation project to preserve this collection. The Holtermann Collection Digitisation Project will enable each glass-plate negative to be cleaned and rehousing, and then re-scanned to produce high resolution digital images. The collection will be captured using a Creo iQsmart 3 high end scanner and a large format Hasselblad digital camera for the larger plates. The public will then be able to enjoy enhanced and improved access to the images through the Library's website, through the catalogue and via Discover Collections.

BIOGRAPHY

Lang Ngo graduated from the University of Canberra in 1999 with a Bachelor of Applied Science in the Conservation of Cultural Materials specialising in paper conservation. Lang has previously worked at the State Library of Victoria and the Adelaide City Archives before taking up a position in 2001 at the State Library of New South Wales. She is currently a Senior Conservator in the Collection Preservation and Storage branch.

Lauren O'Brien's experience working with historical glass plate negatives comes from her work over the last 24 months as a digitiser with the Justice and Police Museum on their Forensic Photography Collections. She has also worked in photographic production for seven years previous to beginning her work with the museum in all facets ranging from film development and photographic printing to scanning, digital retouching and copy work.

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