

HEAR. US. NOW.

14-17 JUNE 2022, PERTH

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

ABSTRACT TITLE:

Collecting the Sea: Making and exhibiting maritime collections from the Indian Ocean, WA Museum

PRESENTATION TAKEAWAY:

'Collecting the Sea' is a PhD research and curatorial contribution to redefining museology's interpretation of the maritime space as part of Boola Bardip, the new museum for Western Australia. The physical and digital Indian Ocean World exhibition explores how museums can tell a story of an ocean.

ABSTRACT CONTENT:

This practice-led research, as part of the Collecting the West ARC project, seeks to develop critical frameworks for interpreting both natural and cultural GLAM collections at 'sea-level' exploring how and why objects from and related to the Indian Ocean have been collected in Western Australia. The resulting exhibition aims to place visitors in an Indian Ocean world to appreciate the long and complex history of the region they inhabit and encourage a deeper understanding of the relationship between place, objects and identity. Along with displayed objects, archaeological, ethnographic, historical and ficto-critical methods are used to create human and animal biographies as part of the digital label platform. The concept of an Indian Ocean 'world', defined by a body of water rather than the countries that lie at its periphery, provides a valuable start for moving away from methodological nationalism towards cosmopolitanism. With the representation of others, human and non-human, we begin to better understand ourselves and the turning of a nation around a world at risk.

HOW DELEGATES CAN CONTACT THE SPEAKER:

Corioli Souter, Curator (A/Head), Department of Maritime Heritage, WAM and PhD candidate, Deakin University. Corioli.souter@museum.wa.gov.au