Behind the scenes
Digitisation
New acquisitions

In 2017–18 Wendy Sharpe, one of Australia’s leading contemporary artists, completed her residency at the Library as part of the Drawing in the Library program. The 13 unique artists’ books she produced as a result of this residency were recently acquired by the Library and are now fully digitised and available to view online, allowing you to explore her vivid illustrations online in detail.

Wendy’s 12-month residency coincided with the landmark transformation of the Library’s historic Mitchell Building, which saw the opening of beautiful new galleries and a state-of-the-art learning centre in October 2018. She produced a series of drawings and photographs documenting behind-the-scenes activity around both the public and rarely seen areas of the Library including: interiors and exteriors of the historic building, activities of readers, visitors and staff, as well as the changes taking shape.

Wendy further developed this work in her studio, using highly expressive charcoal and gouache drawings, and created a variety of artists’ books in formats ranging from miniatures to Chinese scrolls, concertina books and handmade books. These intricate and highly crafted pieces were featured in the opening exhibitions to launch the newly transformed spaces.

The Drawing in the Library program has been running for several years as a collaboration between the Library and artists. Previous participants include John Bokor, Joe Frost and Hadyn Wilson. Artists are invited to spend time in the Library and are given access to public and non-public areas in order to create art inspired by their observations.

Wendy Sharpe has won numerous awards for her work, including the Sulman Prize, the Portia Geach Memorial Award (twice), the Archibald Prize and many others. She has held over 59 solo exhibitions around Australia and internationally. Her work often focuses on people and the spaces they inhabit.

Maria Savvidis
Curator, Research and Discovery

Wendy Sharpe artists’ books 2017-2018

About this item:
1 drawing (in 1 concertina book) - 30 x 171 cm - pencil, pen, ink, charcoal, gouache on paper.
Comprises a custom made archival folding book containing 1 drawing depicting a panoramic view of Sydney Harbour and the Domain from the Library rooftop, 13 April 2017.

FL16149449

Item 10: Library Roof (with Harbour), artist book cover 

Wendy Sharpe  
Call # PXE 1738/no. 10 [2]  
Digital ID: FL16149449  
View collection item detail [3]

About this item:
1 drawing (in 1 concertina book) - 30 x 171 cm - pencil, pen, ink, charcoal, gouache on paper.
Comprises a custom made archival folding book containing 1 drawing depicting a panoramic view of Sydney Harbour and the Domain from the Library rooftop, 13 April 2017.

FL16149450 [4]

Item 10: Library Roof (with Harbour), artist book  
Call # PXE 1738/no. 10 [2]  
Digital ID: FL16149450  
View collection item detail [5]
About this item:
12 drawings (in 1 concertina book) - 5 x 56 cm - gouache on paper.
Comprises a miniature folding book containing 12 drawings depicting various items in the Library’s collection.

FL16149749 [6]

Item 09: A Few Things from the Collection, artist book cover

Wendy Sharpe
Call # PXE 1738/no. 9 [7]

Digital ID: FL16149749
View collection item detail [8]

About this item:
12 drawings (in 1 concertina book) - 5 x 56 cm - gouache on paper.
Comprises a miniature folding book containing 12 drawings depicting various items in the Library’s collection including a notice for Women’s suffrage meeting, a convict jacket, Matthew Flinders’ hat, Miles Franklin cup, poster for the 1967 Aboriginal vote, Jorn Utzon’s Sydney Opera House, portrait of Auntie May, Louis Vasco WWI, Captain Cook mourning jewellery (Elizabeth Cook), portrait of Miles Franklin, and a painting of Port Jackson 1788 by W. Bradley, November 2017.
**FL16149750 [9]**

**Item 09: A Few Things from the Collection, artist book**

[9]

**Item 02: Gold Chinese Scroll (State Library), artist book**

**Digital ID:** FL16149750

**View collection item detail**

**About this item:**

5 drawings (on 1 scroll) - 12 x 155 cm - pencil, ink, watercolour, charcoal and gouache on paper.

Comprises a traditional Chinese scroll in fabric covered box with magnetic closure containing 5 drawings of spaces within the State Library of New South Wales including a panorama of the Mitchell Library Reading Room on a gold background, 2017-2018.

**FL16150118 [11]**

**Item 02: Gold Chinese Scroll (State Library), artist book**

[11]

**Digital ID:** FL16150118

**View collection item detail**

**About this item:**

5 drawings (on 1 scroll) - 12 x 155 cm - pencil, ink, watercolour, charcoal and gouache on paper.

Comprises a traditional Chinese scroll in fabric covered box with magnetic closure containing 5 drawings of spaces within the State Library of New South Wales including a panorama of the Mitchell Library Reading Room on a gold background, 2017-2018.
Item 05: Framed Picture Store, artist book cover

4 drawings (in 1 concertina book) - 7 x 50 cm - pencil, ink, charcoal, gouache and watercolour on paper.
Comprises a handmade folding book in a small red fabric-covered box containing 4 drawings of the framed pictures storage at the State Library of New South Wales, 8 June 2018. Depicts the central corridor, paintings hung on racks, and two Library curators looking at a painting.

Wendy Sharpe
Call # PXE 1738/no. 5 [15]
Digital ID: FL16150109
View collection item detail [16]
About this item:
1 drawing (in 1 concertina book) - gouache on paper.
Comprises a black archival folding book containing 1 drawing of the entrance to the Mitchell Library, 2017-2018.
Includes people walking down the stairs, outside the building and a person with a camera.

FL16149925 [17]


View collection item detail [19]

About this item:
Comprises an archival Chinese scroll with wooden batons at each end (one thin and angular, the other larger and cylindrical) and patterned backing with 1 drawing depicting a lift shaft during the redevelopment of the Mitchell building, 20 December 2017.

FL16149372 [20]
Item 13: Lift Shaft, artist book

Digital ID: FL16149372


Links