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## Eclectic program ranges from Goggomobils to Islamic art

By Linda Morris, February 8, 2021 — 11.59pm

The first annual exhibition program curated under the direction of the Powerhouse Museum's chief executive Lisa Havilah will dive deeply into its collection around Persian arts, microcars, and ceramics.

"This is all about our collection, engaging with the collection, presenting our collection in new ways and there is a whole range of material that has never been seen before," Havilah said.

Post-COVID-19, the program of 12 exhibitions steps back from the *Star Wars*-type international blockbuster and shows designed specifically for young families, to feature largely homegrown exhibitions, embedded with social and oral history.



Professor Pedram Khosronejad inspects classical Islamic artefacts with Lisa Havilah in the basement of the Powerhouse Museum. JAMES ALCOCK

They draw on diverse topics such as the eucalypt, Australia's iconic gum tree, and the Powerhouse's role in the commercial production of oils; Australian pottery makers; and the history of graphic design.

The first exhibition of the year will present archival photographs by amateur photographer Bayram Ali who documented the building of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme from the mid-1950s to 1970s. A Turkish-Cypriot immigrant who served in World War II, Ali's photographs capture this engineering and construction accomplishment built mainly by immigrant labour.

In March, *Iranzamin*, the Powerhouse's first exhibition exploring the arts and crafts of Persia, will open, coinciding with the Persian New Year. Drawn from the museum's 1700 objects and artefacts from Persia, the more than 100 exhibits include carpets and rugs, armour, glazed tiles, textiles, and embroidery dating back to the 1880s.

The year-long exhibition program is the first since the government's decision last July to keep the Ultimo Powerhouse open alongside a new Parramatta Powerhouse.

A masterplan is being prepared for the inner-city site, along with a conservation management plan that engages with Lionel Glendenning, the government architect who adapted the Powerhouse.

The multi-million dollar pre-budget pitch to the Berejiklian government for renewal of the Ultimo site is expected to be made by the newly appointed Powerhouse chairman Peter Collins.

Activation of the forecourt and a reorientation of the museum's entrance to neighbouring goods line with improved connections to the city emerged as priorities out of recent public consultation.

*Robert Rosen: Glitterati: 20 years of Social Photography*, opening in August, documents celebrity culture from Sydney's Rat Parties in the 1980s to the exclusive Cointreau Ball and the Bicentennial Mercedes Australian Fashion Week VIP events.

Car enthusiasts will be drawn to *Microcars* an exhibition of 17 tiny two-seat sedans produced after World War II, of which the Gogomobil is one version, and their resurgence in an era of climate change.

*Electric Keys* explores the role of electric keyboards and the influence the instruments had on soul jazz, blues, rock, progressive rock, and pop.

The Powerhouse closes the year with the Australian premiere of *Five Hundred Arbats of Changnyeongsa Temple site: Reflections of our Hearts*. These human-shaped stone forms were discovered in 2001 among the ruins of Changnyeongsa Temple in Yeongwol, Gangwon-do Province in Korea, and are believed to be 500

years old. Some of these will be integrated into an immersive installation of sound speakers by contemporary artist Seungyoung Kim.



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