

MEDIA RELEASE



Louis XVI Portico Mantel Clock, France, ca. 1787-1793. The David Roche Collection

## An obsession with time has led to a new exhibition at The David Roche Collection

**Adelaide.** The David Roche Collection will stage a new exhibition of 34 exquisite French and English clocks, dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which David Roche collected because of his obsession with time.

The new exhibition, *Royal & Imperial Clocks: Romantic & Scientific*, is the first time these rare and opulent clocks have been on public display together.

David Roche, who left his entire collection of more than 3,500 decorative arts to the people of Adelaide had, during his long life, been immersed in the intricacies of clocks for their decorative appeal.

*No matter the horological significance of the movement within the clocks, David was only interested in the clock's decorative façade. He was obsessed with time though struggled to be on time* said Martyn Cook, Director of The David Roche Collection and Curator of the exhibition.

David Roche focused his collection on the French Empire and the Regency period in England. When David acquired an item for his collection, he had in mind exactly where it should be placed in his home – it was no different with his clocks. Clocks that attained precision time were greatly admired by the elite who wanted order and governance. The Courts of Europe had their own clockmakers and aristocracy emulated their demands for fine craftsmanship, beauty, creativity and mechanical innovation.

David called Fermoy House – the house in which he spent most of his life - Australia's 'Bermuda Triangle' for clocks because very few worked for more than two weeks, largely through movement in the ground which made it unstable for the clocks. *Though it annoyed David intensely, he learnt to live with it* said Martyn Cook.

***Royal & Imperial Clocks: Romantic & Scientific*** showcases some of the world's most opulent clocks. Included in this exhibition is the rare Automata Smoking African Clock from The Johnston Collection, plus loans of a Henry Hindley Table clock c.1760-65, made for the 8th Duke of Norfolk; and a very rare John Shelton Floor-standing Regulator c.1760. Shelton made this type of astronomical clock for the Royal Society of London and Captain James Cook used Shelton's regulators to observe the 1769 transit of Venus in Tahiti.

Provenance was always of interest to David. He acquired a Laurent Ridel Trophies of War mantel clock c.1780, from the sale of Mrs Robert Lehman in 2010, following the collapse of the Lehman Bank. His Robert Adam style Long case clock c.1780, belonged to Mildred Hilson, a New York grande dame, while his Balthazar Martinot Boulle mantle clock c.1690, came from Kym Bonython, Adelaide identity and motor racing driver.

Although David loved all his clocks, two favourite clocks were the jewel-like Joseph Coteau Mantel clock 1796 and the Louis Moinet Prince of Hanover urn clock c.1810, from the Hanover estate at Schloss Marienburg, in Germany. A total of seven rare clocks from private collections form part of this exhibition. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

The museum houses the exceptional personal collection of David Roche, who spent his life acquiring more than 3,500 fine European paintings and decorative arts, as well as an eclectic range of other objects. It comprises David's home of 60 years and a new, state-of-the-art gallery. **Since opening in June 2016, more than 10,000 people have visited The David Roche Collection.**

**DETAILS:**

***Royal & Imperial Clocks: Romantic & Scientific***

**On until 18 August, 2018**

**The David Roche Collection**

**241 Melbourne Street**

**North Adelaide**

**Free with guided tours. Tours are Tuesday to Saturday at 10am, 12noon and 2pm.**

**Cost is \$20 or \$17 concession. Bookings essential.**

**For further information please contact Susanne Briggs [susanneb1@ozemail.com.au](mailto:susanneb1@ozemail.com.au) or  
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