

Gariwerd/Grampians

Miegunyah Student Project Awards 2025

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This project understands the health and vitality of the native landscapes depicted and researched here as dependant on the perseverance of the Djab Wurrung and Jardwadjali peoples-the first sustainable land managers of the Gariwerd region, prior to colonisation.

This research was undertaken through the generous support of The Russell and Mab Grimwade Miegunyah Fund.

To Cath and Mel, we love you.

Gariwerd/Grampians

The Grimwade collection possesses an overwhelming focus on native plants and landscapes. Sustainable land management, plant diversity and the Australian environment were integral interests of Russell Grimwade, evident through the environmental photography, paintings and prints he collected.¹ Consequently, his interest permeates the collection, which holds Victorian landscapes, cataloguing efforts of Eucalyptus varieties and botanical drawings of native plants.

This project initially set out to explore the geographical significance of Dunkeld and the wider Gariwerd region in the collection, due to our familial connection to place.² Both researchers have family histories within this project. Both of our mothers grew up approximately twenty kilometres away from each other, in Dunkeld and Glenthompson, though didn't formally meet until we became friends in a North Carlton creche at six months old. As such, this project was a result of our parallel family histories, enduring friendship and connection to the Gariwerd region.

This project dives deeper into the collection itself as a physical assemblage, reflective of its creator. While the collection is a subset of the University of Melbourne Art Collection, it remains inherently tied to its creator's interest, passions and personal life. As an avid botanist, author, chemist and photographer, (amongst other pursuits), Russell remains ever-present in the objects and art he created and collected.

We endeavour to connect Russell, and history of the Grimwade family with our own familial connection to the Western districts of Victoria. The final outcome of this project aims to bring the collection into the contemporary. Items from the collection, being Russell Grimwade's *Untitled [Timber eucalypt specimen cabinet]*, Duncan Cooper's *Untitled [Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt, Grampians: taken from near Dunkeld]* and Eugene von Guérard's *Mt Abrupt, near Dunkeld, Western District*, are displayed alongside contemporary photographic interventions.³

¹ Alisa Bunbury, *Pride of Place - Exploring the Grimwade Collection* (The Miegunyah Press, 2020), 240.

² Gariwerd is the Djab Wurrung and Jardwadjali name for the Grampians region. Both Gariwerd and Grampians are used interchangeably here to reference the geographical region. It also must be noted here that Djab Wurrung and Jardwadjali may be spelt differently elsewhere, and the utilisation of this spelling is not to necessarily pronounce it as the exact spelling.

³ Eugene von Guérard, *Mt Abrupt, near Dunkeld, Western District*, c. -57 1856, watercolour lithograph, 11.5x18.8cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.12568>; Duncan Cooper, *Untitled [Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt, Grampians: Taken from near Dunkeld]*, 1850, sepia ink on paper, 16.3x25.8cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.17604>; Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *Untitled [Timber Eucalypt Specimen Cabinet]*, c 1919, eucalyptus, brass

Richard Aitken understands the Grimwade's position in Australian history as pivotal, "straddling" both the colonial and modern era.⁴ This project aims to extend this positioning into the twenty-first century. Dialogue is fostered between items from the collection, Russell Grimwade and our own artistic practise.

Western District Landscape Painting



Figure 1. Eugene von Guérard, *Mt Abrupt, near Dunkeld, Western District*, [c.1856-57].

The Grimwade collection hosts few pieces that verifiably reference or depict the Western Districts of Victoria. This allowed for concentrated focus on specific works. Eugene von Guérard's *Mt Abrupt, near Dunkeld, Western District* is a colonial imagining of the Dunkeld landscape.⁵ Literature conceptualises von Guérard's symbolism and wider artistic manipulation of the Australian Landscape canon as inherently colonial, imposing European style onto native scenery, in attempts to render the land desirable, or even perhaps, more 'palatable' for a Western audience.

handles, 85x72.3x53cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.9044>.

⁴ Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 250.

⁵ von Guérard, *Mt Abrupt*. See figure 1.

von Guérard catered to settler audiences, in producing scenes of “natural grandeur”, regarded as “new discoveries”.⁶

Mt Abrupt focalises a mountain in its background, depicted through a clearing of trees. The mountain itself is grandiose, carefully delineated as the tallest focal structure in the composition. In the foreground, von Guérard staffs the scene with three figures: a man on horseback, in a discussion with two (presumably Indigenous) figures. The standing figure points, a physical directive for the audience to recenter on the mountain. von Guérard’s palette is smooth and subtle, inherently picturesque. The pale blue sky and mossy green of the trees and ground are understood as conventional, and contextualise the grey rockface as an ancient, sublime volcanic creation. By engaging with both picturesque and sublime genres of landscape paintings, von Guérard’s landscapes are romanticised imaginings. Of course, this is understood as a tool of the [ongoing] colonial project. von Guérard’s work possessed immense commercial value to landowners of mid to late nineteenth century– his work “render[ed] tangible the material status and proprietorial pride of the Victorian squatter.”⁷ This site, and perspective of Mount Abrupt is still accessible in Dunkeld, though differs from the romanticised lithograph, particularly after this year’s devastating bushfires.⁸



Figure 2. Duncan Cooper, *Untitled [Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt, Grampians: taken from near Dunkeld]*, 1850.

⁶ Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 197.

⁷ Michael Varcoe-Cocks, “A Brush with Fidelity: Three Works by Eugène von Guérard,” National Gallery of Victoria, 2014, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/a-brush-with-fidelity-three-works-by-eugene-von-guerard/>.

⁸ “2024-2025 Summer Grampians Bushfires – Friends of Grampians Gariwerd,” Friends of Grampians Gariwerd, 2025, <https://friendsofgrampiansgariwerd.org.au/category/2024-2025-summer-grampians-bushfires/>.

As an amateur artist, Duncan Cooper's *Untitled [Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt, Grampians: taken from near Dunkeld]* is potentially more representative of the 'true' landscape, in comparison to von Guérard's vista.⁹ Cooper, arriving to Australia in 1841, depicted what "professional artists" of the mid nineteenth century would reject – being more sparse, park like-land.¹⁰ While von Guérard employs the picturesque, there is an "evident naivety" in Cooper's work, depicting the Gariwerd across his landscape series.¹¹ While Cooper also focalises the same mountain ranges as von Guérard, *Untitled* is a more open composition than *Mt Abrupt*, with a greater perceived scale. Cooper's work also features a figure on horseback, potentially indicating the perceived productivity of the land depicted, and importance of pastoral life in regional Victoria. As a farmer himself, Cooper holds a potentially more realised understanding of the land than von Guérard, capturing a sepia view of scale, seasonal adjustments and pastoral work. Despite this, Duncan Cooper only stays in Australia for approximately thirteen years, returning to England in 1854, twenty-five years before Russell Grimwade is born.¹²

The Creative Endeavours of Russell Grimwade

Russell's interest in eucalypts and native ecosystems is indeed demonstrated by various artworks depicting the landscape that he collected, but more importantly, by the photography and items he created himself. The Grimwade collection understands Russell as an enthusiastic carpenter and photographer, in addition to his academic and business pursuits. His hobbies, and extracurricular interests are understood here as his own interdisciplinary creative practise.

Russell's own *Eucalypt specimen cabinet* is a physical manifestation of how he translated his interest in the native environment into his physical home.¹³ The cabinet embodies two of Russell's passions – wood working and Australian flora. The cabinet holds over 190 samples, including seeds, fruit and leaves from a selection of eucalyptus varieties.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the provenance and history are not clear, and thus, the cabinet is of little biological value to contemporary science. Russell's passion for native plant diversity and sustainability, and how he translated this into his personal life (and subsequent collection) is of more value to this project than any scientific potential. The cabinet itself is an entertaining piece – used like a treasure chest to show his house callers the variety and breadth of biodiversity in Australia. Native plants are physically brought into domestic conversation.

⁹ Cooper, *Untitled*. See figure 2

¹⁰ Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 193.

¹¹ Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 193.

¹² Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 193.

¹³ Grimwade, *Untitled*, c 1919. See figures 3 & 4.

¹⁴ Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 243.



Figure 3+4. Sir Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *Untitled [Timber eucalypt specimen cabinet]*, c.1919-1920.

In conceptualising Russell's personal life, the Grimwade's personal photo albums provide a deeper contextualisation of the family. Discovering the camera through his older brother, Edward Norton Grimwade, Russell mastered both technical and artistic "potential" of the camera.¹⁵ Russell filled over 35 personal photo albums from 1896 onwards, featuring travel, family photography and other interests.¹⁶ While there is little photography of the Western Districts, there is substantive environmental photography taken by Russell at his home 'Miegunyah' (in Toorak), and across North-Eastern Victoria.

There are two key threads across Russell's personal photography – being scientific observation, and artistic experimentation. His scientific approach ensured a mastering of photographic skill and resulted in his *Untitled [Eucalypt Specimen*

¹⁵ Jason Benjamin, "Amateur Perfection: The Photograph Albums of Sir Russell Grimwade," *University of Melbourne Library Journal*, 2005, https://library.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1625618/benjamin.pdf; Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 26.

¹⁶ Benjamin, "Amateur Perfection," 15.

Photography Studies], now housed in the collection.¹⁷ These carbon prints, produced for his own published book, *An Anthology of the Eucalypts*, understands his practise as immensely refined, and revolutionary, at a time when similar research material contained mere line drawings or chromolithographs, if any.¹⁸



Figure 5. Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *Untitled [Eucalypt specimen photographic studies]*, c. 1920.

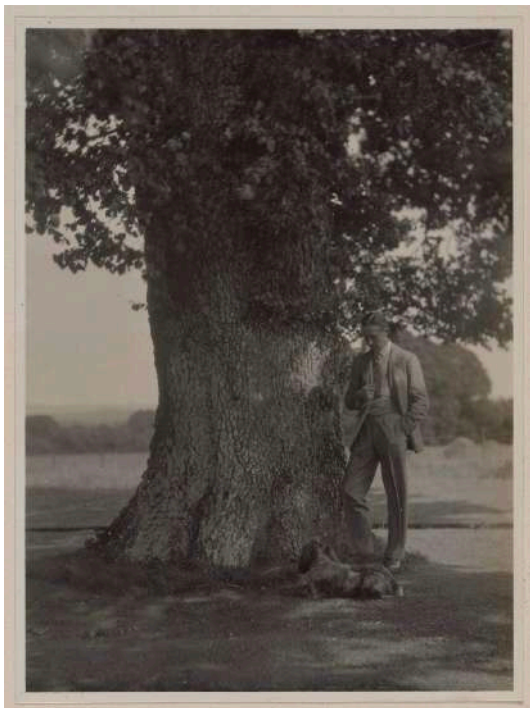


Figure 6. Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *[Man and dog beside large tree]*, c. June 1927.

¹⁷ Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *Untitled [Eucalypt Specimen Photography Studies]*, c 1920, carbon prints, 43.3x112.7x3.7 (in frame), The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973,

<https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.104932>. See figure 5.

¹⁸ Bunbury, *Pride of Place*, 241.



Figure 7. Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *The Window Tree*, 1924.

There is substantial evidence of Russell's artistic desire within photography -there is compositional experimentation, and utilisation of zoom, blur and manipulation of lighting across the archived albums.¹⁹ Native flora was often the backdrop for family documentation, as family members and friends almost often posed next to trees.²⁰ In the aesthetic realm, Russell's nature photography possessed innovative compositions. His photography focused on micro elements of the environment, such as tree roots, or branches, as he utilised natural light and cropping.²¹

¹⁹ Benjamin, "Amateur Perfection," 19.

²⁰ Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *The Window Tree*, 1924, University of Melbourne Archives, [UMA-IT-000064141], <https://archives.library.unimelb.edu.au/nodes/view/538966>; Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *[Man and Dog beside Large Tree]*, 1927, University of Melbourne Archives, [UMA-SRE-20020003], <https://archives.library.unimelb.edu.au/nodes/view/539632>. See figures 6 & 7

²¹ Grimwade, Wilfrid Russell, *Photograph Album - Personal Family Photographs and Subjects of Interest to WRG*, August 1933; Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *[Tree Trunks in Dense Woodland]*, c 1934, University of Melbourne Archives, [UMA-SRE-20020003], <https://archives.library.unimelb.edu.au/nodes/view/582674>. See figures 8 & 9.

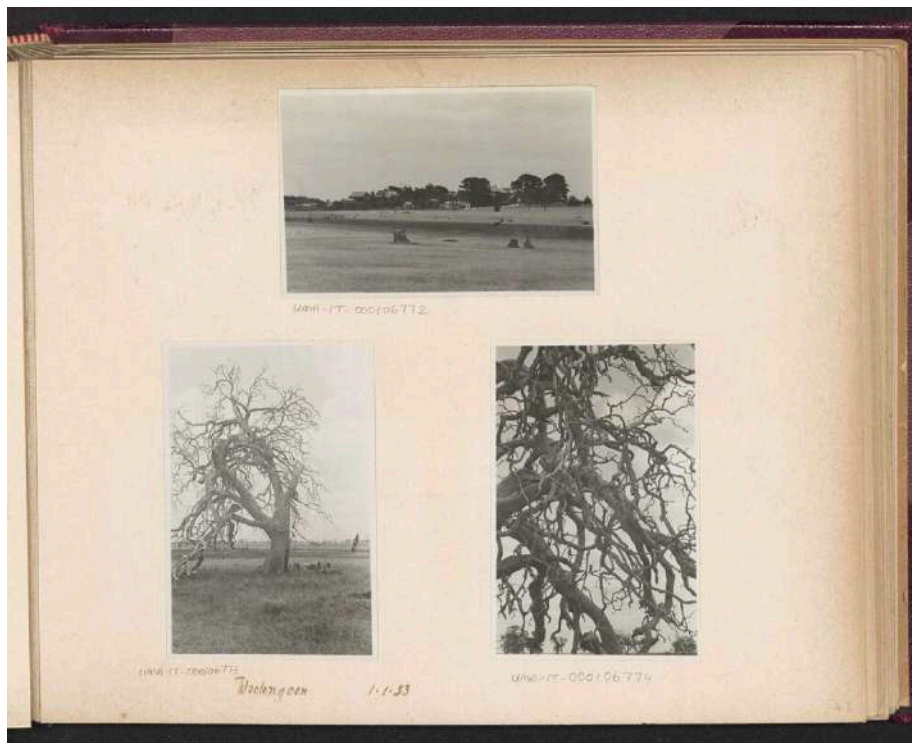


Figure 8. Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *Photograph Album - personal family photographs and subjects of interest to WRG (August 1933-May 1934)*.



Figure 9. Wilfrid Russell Grimwade, *[Tree trunks in dense woodland]* [c.1934]

Creative Response



Figure 10. Photography Process, Mount Sturgeon, Dunkeld, 2025. Photographer: Juliet Day.

In creating an artistic response to the selected objects from the collection, the initial plan was to focalise von Guérard and Cooper, creating contemporary appropriations of their landscape practise. After looking into the archives, our main research thread became clear - our interest in Russell himself, his photography, and championing of the real, authentic, native environment. Our photography attempts to emulate the essence of the Grimwade photo albums, as a way to connect the collection, the creator, and the researchers together, while displaying the Gariwerd landscape through its authentic form.

In choosing a method for photography, selecting a Single Lens Reflex Camera (SLR), ensured consistency to Russell's photographic process. Choosing a film camera for our photography allowed the images to possess a distinct aesthetic, and a greater tangibility, rather than snapping images on a mobile phone. It assured a well-intentioned approach to the photography process. Conceptually, film captured the ever-changing, dynamic nature of the Gariwerd landscape, and encouraged dynamic, unmeditated photographic experience.

In utilising black and white film, there is an implicit aesthetic connection to Russell's own photography. Similarly, colour photography emulates the colouring of von Guérard's lithograph and contextualises Cooper's sepia landscape. Utilising both black and white, and colour film allowed for a physical capturing of different aspects

of the landscape. The black and white film captured the sun, shadows, and intricate details of flora and fauna in close-up shots, whereas the coloured photographs captured the dryness of the landscape and true greenery of the dense bush. While taking the photographs, a group of emus approached us and came within a metre of the camera. It felt imperative to document the encounter. This also inspired us to photograph other elements of the environment up-close, such as wattle, banksias and bark, engaging in magnified encounters with the Gariwerd environment.



Figure 11. Photography Process, Dunkeld. Photographer: Juliet Day

Once the film was developed, we were left with over 90 photographs from our field trip to Dunkeld. In selecting our final works, we wanted to ensure the photos selected conceptualised the natural ecosystem. There were many shots that contained industrial elements. These were aesthetically interesting, and perhaps reminiscent of Russell's photography style, but we wanted to ensure the photos provided a strong thread between his style, the von Guérard and Cooper works *and* our family histories in the Western districts, so ensured all our photos contained purely natural elements.

Selected Photos







In establishing the layout of our photography, hanging the images in a mosaic-style hang ensured a visual display that emphasised the intricacies and interconnectedness of the natural environment, with native flora and fauna. The mosaic hang understands the photography as symbolic of the mutually dependant nature of the land. Placing the cabinet centrally below the photographs emphasises the relationship between our fascination of the Australian land, flora and fauna, with Russell's enthusiasm towards collecting and documenting native Australian plants. Both the von Guérard and Cooper artworks were direct inspiration for our photographs, so positioning them next to the photography logically reinforces the overly stylised and romanticised nature of their works, promoting the spontaneity and frankness of the contemporary interventions.

Gariwerd/Grampians juxtaposes the macro images of Cooper and von Guérard's *imagined* landscapes with our *own* magnified encounters, showing snapshots and glimpses into Dunkeld's environment.²² In understanding both *Mt Abrupt* and *Untitled* as pieces that foreground the Gariwerd region in nineteenth century contexts of colonial settler desires, we promote an authentic perspective of the Dunkeld landscape today. In diving into the history of the Grimwade collection, and Russell himself, we gain a greater appreciation for the objects in the collection. These pieces aren't just relics of Grimwade's position in Australian history, but instead, form points of discussion around perspective, positionality, authorship, history and sustainability.

²² See figures 12 & 13.



Figure 12. Installation Shot of *Gariwerd/Grampians*, 2025. Photographer: Juliet Day



Figure 13. Installation Shot of *Gariwerd/Grampians*, 2025. Photographer: Juliet Day

Figure list

Figure 1. von Guérard, Eugene. *Mt Abrupt, near Dunkeld, Western District*, c.1856-57, lithograph and watercolour, 11.5 x 18.8 cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.12568>

Figure 2. Cooper, Duncan, *Untitled [Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt, Grampians: taken from near Dunkeld]*, 1850, Sepia ink on paper, 16.3 x 25.8 cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.17604>

Figure 3+4. Grimwade, Sir Wilfrid Russell, *Untitled [Timber eucalypt specimen cabinet]*, [c.1919-1920], Chest of drawers (eucalyptus, brass handles), 85 x 72.3 x 53 cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.9044>

Figure 5. Grimwade, Sir Wilfrid Russell, *Untitled [Eucalypt specimen photographic studies]*, c. 1920 carbon prints, frame 43.3 x 112.7 x 3.7cm, The University of Melbourne Art Collection, The Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequests, 1973, <https://storeroom.its.unimelb.edu.au/umc/art?record=ecatalogue.104932>

Figure 6. Grimwade, Wilfrid Russell. *[Man and Dog beside Large Tree]*. 1927. University of Melbourne Archives, [UMA-SRE-20020003]. <https://archives.library.unimelb.edu.au/nodes/view/539632>.

Figure 7. Grimwade, Wilfrid Russell. *The Window Tree*. 1924. University of Melbourne Archives, [UMA-IT-000064141]. <https://archives.library.unimelb.edu.au/nodes/view/538966>.

Figure 8. Grimwade, Sir Wilfrid Russell. *Photograph Album - Personal Family Photographs and Subjects of Interest to WRG*. August 1933. University of Melbourne Archives, [UMA-ITE-2002000300717]. <https://archives.library.unimelb.edu.au/nodes/view/281094>.

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