

COLLECTOR'S COLLECTION

Art historian Erin Griffey turned an interest in collecting into a career



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When she was younger, Erin Griffey was an avid collector of trinkets — shark's teeth, shells, flowers, rocks, jewellery and fabrics — which made up a “little cornucopia of beautiful naturalia and objects”.

Her interest in collecting and displaying grew into a career, and after studying art history at Trinity College in Connecticut and earning her MA and PhD at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, Griffey now heads the art history department at the University of Auckland.

Her latest project was curating the *Rembrandt Remastered* exhibition, which involved working with Rembrandt scholar Professor Ernst van de Wetering on how to display and narrate the works. “Rembrandt’s talent as a painter is unrivalled. The sheer virtuosity and physicality of his application of paint, his bold compositions, his ability to conjure emotion are just awe-inspiring from a technical point of view but also hugely moving from a human perspective.”

— Jessica Beresford

• *Rembrandt Remastered* is on Level 6, Smith & Caughey’s, 253-261 Queen St, until September 20th.

MY FAVOURITE THINGS

1 Opal necklace

I have worn this every day for over 15 years, a gift from my mother for completing my PhD. It is very special to me. I love how it is so responsive to temperatures, and how the stone sparkles in different lights.

2 Three dried sprigs of lavender

These were given to me soon after I met my partner, Patrick. I adore flowers, especially wildflowers, and these were such a lovely surprise on a spring day a couple of years ago. I have kept them next to my bed ever since.

3 Little Catholic shrine

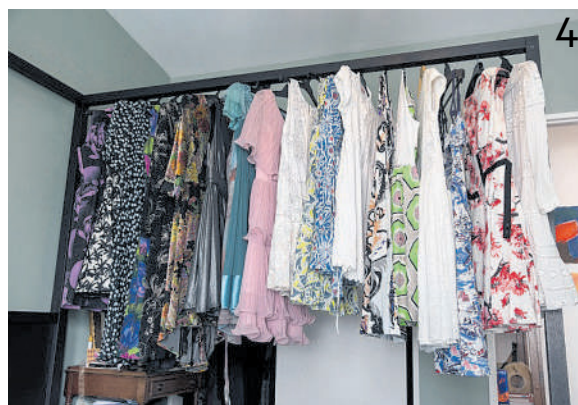
I think my interest in art was first awakened by going to church as a child and experiencing the way the artworks functioned within the rituals of mass. I have a few little devotional objects that I keep on a wooden shelf so it looks a bit like a shrine, such as a beautiful enamel painted by Mary Barker and some healing sand from El Santuario de Chimayo in New Mexico.

4 My collection of dresses

I have an obsession with dresses, especially white ones, black ones and boldly patterned ones, new and vintage. I must have about 50 of them, and the ones here include favourites from French designers like Carven, Isabel Marant, Vanessa Bruno and Paul & Joe as well as several vintage ones, like a hand painted dress from the 1940s and a billowy pale pink one from the 70s.

5 Cat drawing by my daughter

I treasure all the wonderful drawings and crafty things my daughter has made for me. I think this cat, which she drew when she was about 5, is marvellously well conceived — even with its six legs.



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