DISCOVER

MUSEUM MEMBERS AUTUMN 24

MUSEUMS VICTORIA

Museum Experts

Above: Jo Pritchard, visual design manager
Photographer: Benjamin Healley

Right: Pattern wall in the Play exhibition at Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery, Melbourne Museum
Photographer: Benjamin Healley

Cover: *Joy Generator* by Nixi Killick in *Joy* at the Immigration Museum
Source: Eugene Hyland

Welcome to DISCOVER magazine.

I'm Jo Pritchard and I'm the visual design manager.

As visual design manager, I lead the team of talented communication designers responsible for creating the plethora of designed elements that visitors interact with across all of Museums Victoria's venues. Exhibitions and installations are at the core of our practice, but we also design books, merchandise, signage, public program activities, education materials, brochures and even this publication. Recently, we have focused our expertise on the Immigration Museum's newest exhibition, *Joy*—you can dive further into the colourful world of *Joy* later in this edition.

Communication designers create, employ and manipulate multiple elements to produce our work. The tools of our trade include typography, photography, illustration, iconography, scale, light, shadow, pattern, projection and of course—my favourite—colour.

Colour is a fun and powerful design tool and in a museum context, it is used to help express and support the themes and narratives of an exhibition or display. Colour selection is not random nor is it driven by the designer's personal taste. Decisions about colour consider spatial form, content, lighting, audience, context and narrative.

When selecting colours we consider the whole palette and how the colours work together. Are we wanting muted tones or vibrant hues? Is colour to be expressed via pigment (paint), print, materials, or through projection and light? Often, it's a combination of all these elements, and we work with lighting designers to enhance, mute or morph the colours in situ.

Exhibitions are like theatre sets. On these sets, colour is an integral element in the creation of 'worlds' into which our visitors step. Colours by their association can help transport a visitor to a place or to a different era or realm. In some instances, the colour may not be clearly discernible or overt, but it is still working on a more subliminal level to augment the experience.

Sometimes colour is subtle. And sometimes colour is a leading character and can be incredibly potent when used as a predominant feature. It can be employed to define spaces or themes within an exhibition, or as a hero moment by itself. Colour can be an effective tool to guide people through a space, or it may be used to evoke an emotional response from the audience. Colours can help to engage, challenge, shock, soothe, excite, delight, orientate or even disorientate a visitor. As a designer it's also important to recognise when restraint is required—a judicious lack of colour can be just as powerful as a raucous kaleidoscopic explosion. ■

Eager for more colour? Visit *Just for Members* for exclusive bonus stories and activities

An ode to *Joy*

‘Joy comes up on you unexpectedly. And it’s very intense. It’s this moment where your emotions rush up.’

Rebecca Lal, experience and interpretation manager, is part of the team that developed the Immigration Museum’s newest exhibition: *Joy*. *Joy* is immersive and multi-sensory, an explosion of emotion and a reflection on quiet bliss.

The exhibition has come to life through the work of Spencer Harrison, Nadia Hernández, Nixi Killick, Jazz Money, Beci Orpin, Callum Preston, and Elyas Alavi with Sher Ali. These astounding artists have designed, built and created their works, selecting paint and colours from Taubmans—Museums Victoria and *Joy*’s Colour Partner—to bring their stories and installations to reality.

Sparking Joy

Workshops catalysed the beginning of *Joy* in 2022. Creatives and a colour specialist from Taubmans were brought together to explore what might be a shared language of joy and its relationship to colour.

‘We were really interested in not only personal stories of joy, but the diversity of expressions of joy as well. At the Immigration Museum, we want to tell stories from as many different perspectives as we can,’ says Lal.

The idea for *Joy* was born: An immersive exhibition across seven spaces of the Immigration Museum. The next step was to find artists based in Victoria who had a unique take on joy, used colour in their practice and came from all kinds of creative disciplines.

‘I’m really blown away by the responses we had from the artists and their enthusiasm. They totally embraced the concept.’

Step into *Joy*, and you’ll find Nadia Hernández commemorating ‘cotidianidad’—meaning ‘everydayness’ in her bold cut-out vignettes. Strut down Spencer Harrison’s drag runway, and watch as colour and technology fuse together in Nixi Killick’s *Joy Generator*. *Simurgh*, the Persian mythical bird comes to life at the hands of Elyas Alavi and Sher Ali, and Callum Preston takes visitors back in time to his 1990s video store in *Video Land*. Meet Beci Orpin’s giant soft-toy rabbit named *Bunny Dearest* and let Jazz Money’s installation show you how joy is both a tender, domestic space and a radical act.

‘The process has been very artist led. The museum has stood back and let *Joy* be shaped by the creatives themselves,’ says Lal.

The colour of joy

When you imagine joyful colours, what do you picture? Are you dazzled by glowing yellows and rich oranges? Are you soothed by creamy blues and delicate pinks?

As the artists take over, colour is everywhere. ‘The power of colour is that it can transform a space so easily,’ expresses Lal.

‘Colour means something to everybody and everybody relates to colour in a different way,’ adds Fiona Dawson, colour specialist at Taubmans. Dawson is an expert in all things colour—from choosing the perfect crisp white for a living room, to knowing the next trends in this season’s hues, to understanding how colour can transform a space.

‘The first thing to consider is the environment, mood and feel you wish to create. The main difference when working with colours in commercial spaces (compared to your own home) is that it seems to have no limits. For an exhibition you can really let loose with colour and allow the colour to ignite and play with your audience’s senses, you can certainly create fun and excitement on a large scale,’ says Dawson.

‘A world without colour would be a place that just exists. Whether we are conscious of this or not I think we all need colour to survive, whether it be purchasing a new pair of coloured shoes or perhaps new accessories for your home, I can guarantee there would most definitely be a splash of colour because it makes you feel good and ultimately brings you joy!’

Taking a moment

From workshops to shortlisting artists to realising the final exhibition, *Joy* has been an exciting process. The decision to create the exhibition was more than just a desire to bring bursts of colour to the museum.

‘We’re hoping visitors will take the opportunity to reflect on their own stories of joy, because I feel like we don’t do that enough. We get caught up in the everyday and it’s nice to stop and have a moment,’ says Lal.

‘When we were developing this, we’d just come out of a pandemic and many of us felt isolated and disconnected. Now we are dealing with increased division and difficulties from all corners of life—*Joy* with its invitation to connect and celebrate our humanity seems even more relevant.’

When you visit, you’ll find that *Joy* is more than just rooms of colour. It explores resilience and strength and celebrates joy in the face of personal adversity. It explores how joy is not just inherently necessary and powerfully human, but how it can be revolutionary. ■

Previous: *Video Land* by Callum Preston
Below: *Bunny Dearest* by Beci Orphin
Photographer: Eugene Hyland

As a museum member, enjoy free entry to the Immigration Museum and experience *Joy* for yourself

Artist feature:

Jazz Money

‘One of the truest forms of resistance and survival is to be joyful.’

Jazz Money is one of seven powerhouse artists taking over the East Wing of the Immigration Museum for *Joy*. Of Wiradjuri descent, Money is a poet, a filmmaker and an artist. Leading institutions including ACMI, TEDx Sydney, and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris have presented their dynamic and introspective work, while their award-winning books inspire readers to reflect and understand. Now, Money has focused the lens of her multidisciplinary skills towards the Immigration Museum as an artist of *Joy*.

‘When the Immigration Museum got in touch about this exhibition, they asked … what is joy to you?’ reflects Money. ‘And I immediately was thinking about joy as a domestic thing and a daily thing… a practice and an act that we cultivate in simplicity, that we cultivate in unobserved ways.

‘Particularly thinking about those ideas as a queer First Nations person, joy, love, laughter and sexiness… these are all things that the colony has really actively tried to take away from First Nations People. And ultimately it’s impossible to take those things away, because we are joyous, loving, beautiful, sexy people. To me, one of the truest forms of resistance and survival is to be joyful.

‘In that way, joy then becomes an act of protest because in those moments of laughter and dance, communion and community, the colony becomes absent. There’s no way for the colony to control us in moments of joy.’

Money sees joy as a three-dimensional force with depth and power. Far from just a wash of bliss, Money claims joy as resistant, revolutionary and an act of sheer beauty. In her reflection on personal joy, Money’s concept for the installation blossomed effortlessly into existence.

‘The installation is called “*Our laughter will become the waterfall*,” and the initial thinking of the idea was really quite organic,’ explains Money.

The waterfall referenced in Money’s installation is a waterfall that once stood close to where the Immigration Museum stands today along Birrarung Marr in Melbourne—now known more commonly as the Yarra River. In 1883, the waterfall was forever destroyed with dynamite. Only fragmented echoes remain, visible under Queen’s Bridge.

‘Along Birrarung Marr, this beautiful ancient space that was destroyed in the colonial period to make the river navigable,’ describes Money. ‘And yet, in the way that Country is eternal through deep time, the waterfall is still here. To me, that seems like a really interesting way to talk about resilience and resistance.’

‘Country is powerful and eternal and sovereign and ancient and of the future as well—as are the custodians of Country. And in the absence of that falling water, it’s our laughter that we hold on to. And it’s our laughter that we continue to practice that honours Country in those moments.’

Money has used the opportunity of the exhibition to explore the power of joy in the face of colonisation. In her installation, a bright yellow house sits in the middle of the room. Across the walls, the message is printed boldly, brightly, and unapologetically: *Our laughter will become the waterfall.*

‘I typically work with the ephemeral and the digital a lot in my practice, so making something that is quite solid is new,’ muses Money, ‘I’ve never done a mural before.’

‘[*Joy*] was a really lovely invitation to think colourfully. With the Taubman’s partnership I loved getting to think about using paint and colour to evoke joy, which was what led me to thinking about a mural. My favourite colour is yellow, so I immediately wanted to have a little yellow home, a place to house sunshine and joy. Everything good to me is in yellow.’

Money’s work is evocative, powerful, and pensive. They invite us to think about the joy of the everyday, of community, and of culture and Country. At the same time, she reflects on the revolutionary act of laughter and joy.

‘That’s the thing that I hope that audiences take away… the invisible yet ever-present sovereignty of Country and of First Nations people that exists despite any disruption the colony can put on the surface,’ says Money.

‘It always was, and always will be.’ ■

Previous: Jazz Money
Photographer: Courtesy of artist

Right: *Our Laughter will become the waterfall* by Jazz Money
Photographer: Eugene Hyland

Curating a cosmic journey

There is a computer that holds the entire universe.

Behind the domed screen of Melbourne Planetarium, hiding at the end of dim corridors and closed doors, it hums to life. Inside, each star begins to twinkle, filling the sky with pinpoints of comforting light. The Milky Way stretches lazily across the sky, the tell-tale sign that we live in a galaxy of magnificent spiral arms fashioned from billions of stars. Millions of suns are born and die, entire galaxies collide and fling streams of shimmering gas looping out into the cosmos. Inside the computer, an entire universe explodes into dazzling existence.

Behind the computer screen sits talented Scienceworks presenters skillfully guiding audiences to the far reaches of the cosmos. The newest planetarium show, *Solar System Adventures: Where's the water?* brings us closer to home, as presenters take us on a search for water in our solar system.

But as with any show, it started as just an idea.

'So it's a relatively new style of show for us, which is very exciting,' says Dr Tanya Hill, senior curator of astronomy at Scienceworks, who led the production of *Solar System Adventures.* The concept was simple: explore the planets. But as any good science communicator would know, the show had to be more than just an extraterrestrial road trip. 'We like to have an overarching story that's going to give us a little bit more than just tripping from one planet to the next.'

Dr Hill joined Museums Victoria in 1999 and was part of the team that opened the Melbourne Planetarium at Scienceworks. Prior to that, she carried out research in the field of extra-galactic astronomy, where she hunted for supermassive black holes using a variety of Australian telescopes.

She is an Honorary Fellow in Physics at the University of Melbourne and an Honorary Fellow of the Astronomical Society of Australia, as well as the Australian representative for the European Southern Observatory's Science Outreach Network.

Dr Hill is an expert at weaving together a good astronomy story, and in this case, it's a search for that vital blue: water. A good cosmic story also needs good visuals. While Dr Hill's skills and knowledge extend into the distant cosmos, she is also an expert at curating a story using the Planetarium's software, Digistar.

Dr Hill and the Planetarium presenters use this software to immerse audiences in an accurate three-dimensional atlas of the known universe in search of water – from peeking at the south pole of Mercury to revealing the hidden oceans of Neptune.

Dr Hill also shares information and inspiration with planetariums around the world: 'For instance, with Neptune —how we peel away the atmosphere to see the oceans underneath—that was actually inspired by something I saw that was programmed in Michigan, USA and put online. I've been inspired by planetariums in Switzerland and Germany.' 'It's a real collaborative international effort.' With scientific accuracy, Dr Hill flies us across the solar system—even recreating the precise trajectories of spacecrafts, like Cassini-Huygens' mission to Saturn.

When shows call for immersive fulldome animations, the person with the know-how is the Melbourne Planetarium's lead animator: Len Doublet. 'My area of expertise is in 3D animation and whatever that covers, from making characters like Tycho (our animated dog who journeys to Mars) to scientific visualisation, which is where you try and recreate realistic nebulae and solar effects and more.'

'It's taking the science and trying to get something beautiful and yet something that's accurate as well.'

Doublet has animated a range of Melbourne Planetarium films, including sections of *Solar System Adventures.* While not being an astronomer himself, he works closely with Dr Hill to bring new ideas to life. The key to visual science communication, he says, is listening.

'Listening is number one because even though I have an interest in science, I still need the data, and what's important to say. Tanya might have a great idea and a picture in her head, and as the visual communicator for animation, you're trying to translate that visually.'

'You've got to find ways of bridging that gap.'

When it comes to the planetarium, animation is more than just colour and shape. While Doublet creates colourful nebulae and beautiful sequences, he is also an expert at following the science. Visual science communication is a collaboration between data and art, between facts and colours. Collaboration, creativity, and expertise are key to creating this new adventure around the solar system.

And who knows, there may just be more water in our little corner of the universe than you think. ■

Enjoy members prices and explore the solar system at Melbourne Planetarium, Scienceworks

Image: Planetarium lead animator Len Doublet's impression of the Cassini spacecraft passing Saturn's moon Enceladus, as experienced in *Solar System Adventures: Where's the water?*
Source: NASA/Museums Victoria

Birds of a coloured feather

Blue feathers are a trick of the light. From the Satin Bowerbird to the blue head of a Rainbow Lorikeet, birds are putting on the world's greatest illusion.

To understand what makes feathers blue, we need to understand colour. And when it comes to colour, our feathered friends take the prize for the most dazzling, spectacular and chromatic costumes of the animal kingdom. Creating these colours takes some fascinating feathery mechanisms and stunning displays of evolution.

Let's start simple

'The colour we see on an object—like a bird's feather—is created when light of different wavelengths is either absorbed or reflected on an object,' says Dr Karen Rowe, curator of birds at the Museums Victoria Research Institute. 'So, when all wavelengths of light are absorbed, an object appears black and when all wavelengths are reflected, it appears white.'

Now take a look at your own skin. Your hair. Your eyes. The pigment responsible for these colours (except in instances of albinism) is melanin. Now see if you can spot a bird. If it has brown or black feathers (like a Magpie), it's using the same pigment. Dense black melanin pigments absorb all the colours of light, reflecting very little back. And so, the Mapgie appears black, and the Galah's wings look grey.

To make things more complicated, melanin has two types. Those black and grey feathers are the responsibility of eumelanins. Meanwhile, pheomelanins create brownish, yellowish and reddish colours.

But you're probably well aware that most birds aren't just brown and black.

A splash of colour

Can you spot any autumn leaves? Do they look yellow? Orange? The pigments that make these colours are called carotenoids.

Birds are a lot like leaves. No, not because they spend a lot of time in trees, but because they use the same pigments. Bright yellows, oranges and reds are all the responsibility of carotenoids in their feathers. The challenge? Birds can't make these pigments themselves.

Carotenoids in plants don't just make leaves orange, but also things we (and birds) eat, like carrots and pumpkins. Birds can get their daily dose of colour from their diet—eating orange foods literally makes some birds orange. 'In some bird species, females prefer more brightly coloured males—that's one reason why they want to eat carotenoid-rich foods,' says Dr Rowe.

As always, nature has exceptions. A special award for colours goes to the parrots and cockatoos (of which Australia has in abundance). Rather than consuming colours, parrots make their own special red and yellow pigments: psittacofulvins. Not much is known about psittacofulvins compared to melanins and carotenoids, but we do know they give us our famously colourful birds (think Rainbow Lorikeets).

So what's all this fuss about blue?

Blue pigments are rare. So rare that we still don't have a true blue natural food dye. So if birds aren't using blue pigments in their feathers, how do we get Peacocks? And Blue Budgies?

It's all down to the structure of the feathers. Tiny, microscopic structures in birds' feathers are small enough to mess with light itself. These 'nanostructures' don't absorb light, but rather reflect and scatter it just right, so that only the blue light bounces back to our eyes. It's called structural colour.

Structural colour is also responsible for the beautifully iridescent colours that seem to change with the light, like the shifting sheen of a Hummingbird. Dr Rowe explains: 'In this case, the distance between the nanostructures determines the colour we see, and that changes if we look at the same animal from a different angle.' Structural colour is not limited to birds. Visit *Bugs Alive!* at Melbourne Museum and you can marvel at the iridescent blues of butterflies and beetles—this is all structural colour.

So to say 'blue feathers are an illusion' depends on your definition of colour. While coloured pigments are responsible for colours like yellow and red, combining with structural colour gives us greens, purples, and the entire rainbow.

And when watching our wonderfully colourful feathered friends, it's hard not to appreciate the chromatic marvels of nature. ■

A collection of colourful birds
Photographers: Heath Warwick, Rodney Start

SECRETS from the COLLECTION

Tints of autumn

'Do not fail to capture the charming tints of autumn in movies with full natural color [*sic*].'

These words from a 1937 advertisement implored Australian photographers to use the newly available Kodachrome colour movie film. This revolutionary product had been launched in Australia just a few months earlier, two years after it was originally released for sale by Eastman Kodak in the USA. Originally designed for motion film cameras, Kodachrome was then available for still photography as a slide film, and a print film and paper were later sold.

Kodachrome used a chromogenic process. This innovative process involves coloured dyes produced by chemical reactions during the development of the film. Chromogenic processes transformed photography after decades of experimentation to find a viable method to make and print colour film. By the 1960s, colour film was outselling black and white film. Australia was one of the first countries outside of the USA to process Kodachrome movie film.

By 1955 Kodak Australasia was making Kodachrome film, and by 1960 was making and processing Kodacolor print film.

Ed Woods, a young Kodak Australasia chemist in the 1950s (later the managing director) remembered that, 'walking into the coating building I always knew when we were coating Kodacolor, you could smell the solvents out of the sensitising dyes … you could pick what product was actually being made … depending on the smell.'

Over subsequent decades Kodak Australasia continued to make and process numerous colour products—right up until 2004 when the digital imaging revolution forced its Coburg factory to close.

Museums Victoria's Kodak Heritage Collection consists of more than 40,000 items: 3000 objects, 6500 documents, 800 films and videos, 30,000 images in varying formats, and over fifty oral history interviews.
The Collection has been generously supported by Kodak Australasia and The Baker Foundation.

Museums Victoria Collections

Above: Film Cartridge – Kodak Australasia Pty Ltd, Kodacolor Gold 200, 1992
Source: Museums Victoria

Discover Autumn '24

Words: Ingrid Crossing, members content editor; Jo Pritchard, visual communication manager; Fiona Kinsey, senior curator of images and image making
Design: Chelsea Dillon, design intern

Thank you for your support

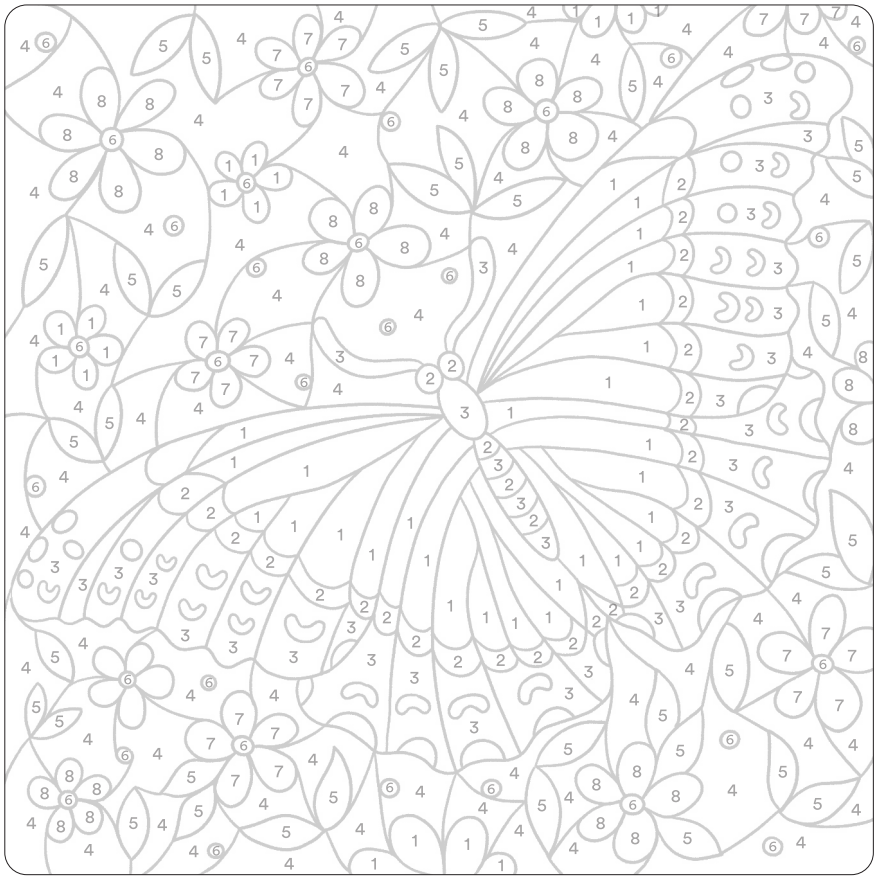
As a member, you contribute to the conservation of Victoria's State collection, ensuring that over 15 million objects continue to be a source of enjoyment for generations to come.

MUSEUMS VICTORIA

CREATIVE VICTORIA

Colour by numbers

Our museums are full of all sorts of colourful things! One of them is hiding on this page, can you help us find it? Match the numbers with colours at home and colour in the picture.

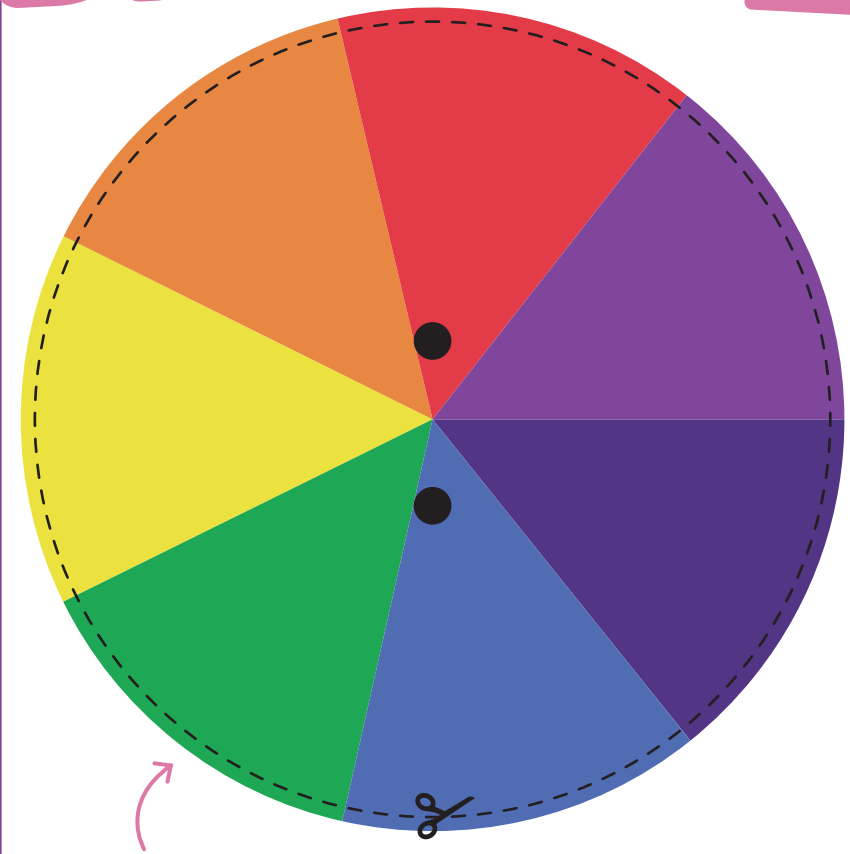


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Share your finished colour by numbers on Facebook: Museum Members page and go in the draw to win one of three prizes!

Terms and conditions apply

DISCOVER kids



CUT OUT TO MAKE A NEWTON'S DISC

In this issue

- Newton's disc
- Colour by numbers

MUSEUMS VICTORIA

Let's get crafty!

Newton's disc

PASTE GLUE
ON THIS SIDE

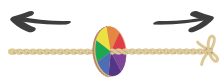
1. Cut out the colour wheel on this cover of *Discover kids*.

2. Trace the shape of the colour wheel onto a piece of cardboard.
3. Cut out this cardboard circle.
4. Use a glue stick to glue the colour wheel to the cardboard circle, coloured side up. You now have your disc.

5. With adult help, make two holes in the disc where marked.

6. Thread one piece of string through both holes. Tie the ends of the string together to make one big loop of string.

7. Hold the loop of string at both ends with the disc in the middle. Slowly spin the disc so that the string gets twisted.



8. Pull your hands apart to make the disc spin quickly. What do you see?

Did you know?

'Newton's disc' is named after Sir Isaac Newton. Newton was a famous scientist who discovered that white light contained the 'visible spectrum'—that's all the colours of light that your eyes can see!

Spin fast and the colours disappear! White light is made of all the colours of the rainbow. That's why white sunlight can split and form a rainbow in the sky! Instead of splitting the colours in the rainbow, we're joining them together to make white.

Autumn
at Museums Victoria

Air Playground
Scienceworks
Until 6 October
Member discounts

Members go free!

Joy
Immigration Museum
Now open

$10 Member tickets

Jane Goodall – Reasons for Hope
IMAX Melbourne
Now showing

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Top Designs
Melbourne Museum
Now open

Member discounts

Victoria the T. rex
Melbourne Museum
Opens June 2024

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