

Matthew Potter

(Re)collecting 'home': acquisitions and

imperial identities in Australian art galleries.



At the beginning of the twentieth century the worlds of art and empire appeared to be experiencing simultaneous and comparable change, achieving new levels of self-determination. In art the innovations of modernism promised a new age of autonomy; in politics the colonial system of empire was replaced by the more independent structure of Federation. How accurate is this model though: does this perspective perpetuate the 'modernist myth' regardless of the facts? This paper explores an alternative reading of the sophisticated exchanges and negotiations that continued to take place between Australian art galleries and their London agents at this time and how in turn these impacted on patterns of art collecting. British painting played an important role in the activities of a nation seeking to negotiate its own version of a British identity.

Monday 17th August 2009, 6:30pm

Rm 148 Elisabeth Murdoch Building

All Welcome

If you would like to join us for dinner afterwards in Lygon St please RSVP to Mark Shephard

shepm@unimelb.edu.au