John Truscott Design Foundation and University of Melbourne  
Fellowship to prepare a manuscript biography of John Truscott

This proposal results from the partnership of the Trustees of the John Truscott Design Foundation (JTDF) and the University of Melbourne to commission a manuscript celebrating John Truscott (1936–1993).

Fellowship sum: $25,000

Payment:

Tranche 1
$10,000 upon appointment

Tranche 2
$10,000 upon submission of chapter outlines and example chapter/s, and pending the Fellowship Committee’s satisfaction with progress

Tranche 3
$5,000 upon submission of the final version of the manuscript, and pending the Fellowship Committee’s satisfaction

Applications close: Sunday 19 May 2019

Send applications to: sshears@unimelb.edu.au

Background

John Truscott

Theatre designer, Academy Award-winning film designer and festival director, John Truscott changed the way Melbourne saw itself and the way the rest of the world viewed Melbourne. As Artistic Director of the Melbourne International Festival he took the festival out into the streets, parks and laneways of the city transforming them into splendid, celebratory spaces that had all of Melbourne seeing them in an entirely new light. Previously John had spent four years designing the spectacular interior finishes of the Arts Centre and in the process drawing together a remarkable collection of celebrated artists and fine artisans from around the country to realise his ambitious plans.

John honed his skills as a theatre designer, first in Melbourne and then in London winning numerous awards, after which, at the invitation of film director, Joshua Logan, he left for Hollywood. He spent the next fourteen years in America where he won two Academy Awards for art direction and costume design for Camelot starring Vanessa Redgrave, Richard Harris and Franco Nero and was nominated, two years later, for art direction on Paint Your Wagon starring Clint Eastwood and Lee Marvin.
The John Truscott Design Foundation

The John Truscott Design Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation established in honour of the late John Truscott AO and his extraordinary creative vision. In addition to promoting the legacy of Truscott’s creative contributions the Foundation involves itself in initiatives for raising the influence of creative pursuits for the enrichment of life in Melbourne, primarily memorable public spaces, public events and the performing arts.

The Project

The John Truscott Design Foundation and the University of Melbourne wish to celebrate the life and contribution of John Truscott in a biography that brings to life his energy and skill. The manuscript should inspire others with creative talent to pursue careers that can make a difference. It needs to capture the skilful way that Truscott managed his many projects, and the political interests that surrounded them, most of which would have proved too daunting for other designers and directors.

While JTDF wishes the project to celebrate the life and contribution of John Truscott, by looking back, it is essential that the project is not simply a retrospective ‘remember when’ manuscript. It is important to place Truscott’s contributions in an historical context, a contemporary context and demonstrate how they continue to resonate and influence the cultural life of Melbourne.

Key themes include:

- the historical context in which Truscott was living and working and how this has evolved to the present day, e.g. community, government/institutional attitudes, appetite, support for arts and design;
- a multi-faceted career covering numerous creative disciplines;
- a multi-disciplinary approach;
- creative entrepreneurship and the ability to realise ambitious and complex goals;
- acting as a creative catalyst, identifying and developing creative talent;
- making arts accessible to broader public;
- creating social environments celebrating arts/creativity; and
- an enduring legacy of creative and cultural influence and inspiration, e.g. descendant activities including M Pavilion, White Night, etc.

The Fellowship

To prepare a manuscript the Fellow will be based at the University of Melbourne. A selection panel including two members of the Board of Trustees of the John Truscott Design Foundation would choose the Fellow from the field of applicants. The period of the Fellowship would be approximately six months from the date of appointment.

The University of Melbourne will provide the Fellow with full borrowing rights, access to online resources and facilitate access to records and archives held by other institutions, in particular the Victorian Arts Centre Performing Arts Collection, and the State Library of Victoria.
Mentoring and guidance

It is expected that the successful applicant will have the necessary skills to undertake the project, however given the fact that many of John Truscott’s friends and business associates are still alive, assistance in identifying these potential sources for oral history and introductions to meet with them will likely be invaluable. The Trustees may establish a mentoring group for the Fellow to provide this assistance.

Intellectual property

The author will retain Intellectual Property in the manuscript subject to an exclusive worldwide sublicensable licence to the John Truscott Design Foundation to publish the manuscript, and to amend or modify the manuscript for that purpose.

Publication

The proposed grant will only cover the Fellowship. The University of Melbourne is prepared help facilitate discussions with potential publishers, although it should be noted that most publishers seek a subvention for turning a manuscript into a book where they have not commissioned the manuscript themselves. Funding such a subvention would be the responsibility of the John Truscott Design Foundation.

Other details

Length of manuscript

Approximately 20–30,000 words but not prescribed. JTDF is not looking for an exhaustive chronology of events, rather an insightful manuscript that explores Truscott’s contributions in both an historical and a contemporary context.

Publication and/or presentation format

Format is not prescribed. JTDF expects a simple manuscript but applicants can suggest alternative outcomes, e.g. a digital outcome.

Access to University of Melbourne research resources and/or a workspace

Access to collections at the University, assistance via the University Library and a desk at the University will be provided. Assistance will be provided for access to the Performing Arts Collection. Additionally, there is an excellent opportunity to gather a rich oral history via former colleagues and friends of Truscott.

Planned public outcomes

Public outcomes are not prescribed. Applicants can suggest an outcome. JTDF had envisioned the finalisation of the manuscript may culminate in a series of presentations/lectures, e.g. University of Melbourne, Arts Centre Melbourne, M Pavillon, ACMI, Wheeler Centre, etc. The JTDF and University of Melbourne can assist with connections to various institutions and organisations.
### Progress and timing

Project milestones (candidates to provide more detailed progress timelines in application)

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<tr>
<td>1 July 2019</td>
<td>Appointment of Fellow</td>
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<td>Submission of chapter outlines and example chapter/s to Fellowship Committee</td>
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### Further information

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