

Vault
2005

Included in 'The Butterfly Effect', a curated project at the Australian Museum, Sydney

Founded in 1827, the Australian Museum is the country's oldest museum. Researchers have compiled an extensive and unique collection of specimens from the natural and geo sciences as well as cultural artefacts from the Pacific region. It is now reputed to be the largest collection in the southern hemisphere with the museum boasting a well-respected international research reputation in natural history and indigenous studies.

Like most major museums of its kind, the majority of specimens and artefacts are stored in several locations on and off site in secluded regiments of compactus storage vaults, industrial pallet racks, ancient cupboards and solander drawers.

The digital video projection Vault was a contribution to The Butterfly Effect, which I also curated (see accompanying web-page). Vault was located on the top landing of an ornate seldom-used staircase in the north wing of the original building. The space was silent save for the audible drone of the museum's air-conditioning.

I was granted access to the ethnographic collection storage areas beneath the museum, and it was as though I was moving through an ancient sepulchre with artefacts carefully prepared and laid out for their sleep through eternity. As I walked slowly amongst the darkened storage racks, the video was shot using the camera's low-light function. I wanted viewers to experience Vault as if they were discovering the collection through the eyes of a 'tomb-raider'.