

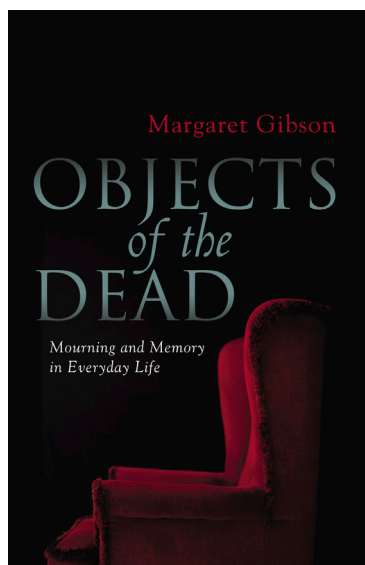
# MEDIA RELEASE

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING

187 Grattan Street Carlton 3053 Australia · Telephone +613 9342 0300 · mup-info@unimelb.edu.au · www.mup.com.au



*“Death reconstructs our experience of personal and household objects in particular ways; there is the strangeness of realising that things have outlived persons, and, in this regard, the materiality of the body.”*



## OBJECTS OF THE DEAD MOURNING AND MEMORY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

by Margaret Gibson

What is the fate of objects after a death - a daughter's hairbrush, a father's favourite chair, an aunt's earrings, a husband's clothes? Why do some things stay and some go from our lives and memories?

*The one thing I still can't bring myself to even touch is her small overnight case that she took to hospital with her the last time. ...the case still lives in my wardrobe, where I see it every day, and a piece of her nightdress still sticks out of the side, but each time I go to deal with it, or to open it, I just can't bring myself to do it. Paula's story*

*Objects of the Dead* is about a universal and often poignant experience – the death of a loved one and the process of sorting through, living with, and discarding, the objects that are left behind.

Through personal stories, literature, film and memoir it looks at the status of objects as property, metaphors, symbols of love and identity, and the power of things to bind and unbind family relationships.

*I thought everybody would be looking at this lounge suite that seven of us grew up on ... it just didn't come up in conversation and finally I very tentatively said, 'Well, I've always really liked that lounge suite', and they said, 'Okay'.*

This is a remarkable reflection on grieving-of both saying goodbye and living with death.

**Dr Margaret Gibson** has written widely in the areas of mourning and grief, identity and embodiment, and representations of death. She teaches sociology at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia.

MUP RRP \$27.95

PUBLICATION/EMBARGO DATE  
1 SEPTEMBER 2008

Margaret Gibson is available  
for interview.

For more information  
please contact  
Jude Bourguignon on  
0411 263 590, or email  
jude.bourguignon@gmail.com