

museumsaustralia

MAGAZINE

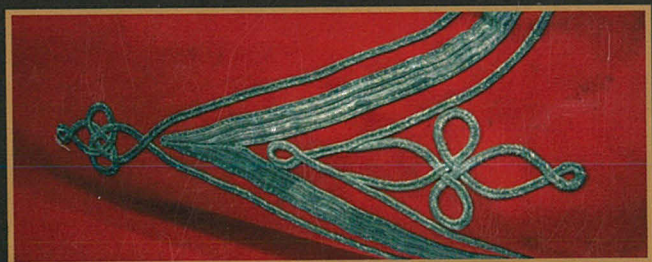
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES ISSUES • NEWS • VIEWS

AUGUST 2008

Valuing Museums III MARVELLOUS MUSEUMS



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Museums Australia Magazine is a forum for news, opinion and debate on museum issues.

Contributions from those involved or interested in museums and galleries are welcome.

Museums Australia Magazine reserves the right to edit, abridge, alter or reject any material.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS:

(Large image) Vicki Couzens' painting, *tuuram maree*, is part of an exhibition at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Melbourne Museum. *Ngathook mangnoorroo watanoo* ('I come from . . .'), featuring works by renowned Victorian Indigenous artist Vicki Couzens and four generations of her family.

(Small images, left to right) Ancient theatre at Epidaurus, Greece. Photo: Roslyn Russell; Percy Faithfull uniform sleeve detail, *Springfield* collection, National Museum of Australia. Photo: George Serras, National Museum of Australia

Museums Australia is proud to acknowledge the following supporters of the national organisation:

Australian Government Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; National Museum of Australia; Australian War Memorial; and Museum Victoria

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The ABC Radio National 'Marvellous Regional Museums' awards for 2008 were announced by Geraldine Doogue on the RN 'Breakfast' program, 28 July. Museums Australia is delighted by the results, with four category winners and one overall national winner, The Kodja Place, Kojonup, Western Australia.

This small (pop. 2045) community's Centenary of Federation initiative, is a remarkable and visionary project - a joint enterprise and 'shared storytelling' of local history.

In the words of the Kodja Place entry ". . . in Kojonup we cannot overstate the fact that the major change in direction for us . . . was the decision taken by the Noongar Community to tell their history alongside the history of the Europeans. This has meant that we will tell our history as it was, with equal input. This new direction will ensure that the Noongars can live their lives in the modern community with the confidence that their position as original inhabitants is acknowledged and their heritage retained . . . the whole community is strengthened by the inclusion. We will, in the future, be in a far better position to deal with whatever challenges that we may encounter'.

The Kodja Place provides a benchmarking answer to the challenge presented by Jacqui Huggins to Museums Australia: of interconnecting Indigenous and settler histories in affirmative museum projects that can reshape how Australia tells its 'local' stories inclusively as part of our regional and national stories.

The ABC-honoured museums deserve our greatest praise for what they have accomplished in their communities - with energy and passion but often limited means. You are a source of pride for us all.

I'm delighted to inform you that the ABC Regional Awards partnership is confirmed for 2009. The nominations process will open earlier with the objective of having the 'Marvellous Museums' award winners ready to be announced on 18 May 2009 at the 'Work in Progress' National Conference in Newcastle. You can learn more about the 2008/09 ABC's Marvellous Regional Museums project at www.museumsaustralia.org.

Patricia Sabine



The Fire Sculpture 'Noongar Storytelling Circle' Noongar Guide Jack Cox explains the mural on the floor of how the Noongar people use fire to care for country and the karda going to lay its eggs in the termite nest.

Photo: Courtesy of Kodja Place Visitor Centre

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The last few months have seen significant anniversaries for an art gallery and a museum.

Sydney Observatory, which is part of the Powerhouse Museum, celebrated its 150th anniversary over the June long weekend, with open days of activities and events, including the reinstatement of the flagstaff, and a play based on an assassination attempt on the life of the Government Astronomer, Henry Chamberlain Russell, in 1877.



Newly reinstated flagstaff at Sydney Observatory, 7 June 2008.

Photo: Roslyn Russell

Curator Djon Mundine came to the National Gallery of Australia during NAIDOC Week to lecture on the conceptualisation 21-years ago of the **Aboriginal Memorial** to mark the Bicentenary year of 1988. He cut a birthday cake and led a walk through the 200 bark coffins created by Ramingining artists to symbolise the Indigenous lives lost as a result of 200 years of European settlement in Australia. Gallery visitors celebrated the occasion with slices of cake and cordial.



Djon Mundine cuts the 21st birthday cake for the Aboriginal Memorial on 12 July at the National Gallery of Australia.

Photo: Steve Nebauer, National Gallery of Australia

Museums Australia National Conference 2009

NEWCASTLE

Our sector often falls into the trap of only presenting the finished product, the flawless fait accompli. The 2009 Museums Australia conference wants to turn "How on earth did you get there?" into "That's how we can do it." With the three sub themes Working Together, Working Differently and Working New focussing on innovation and collaboration, this conference will showcase inspirational projects from around Australia and the world.

The first MA National conference to be held outside a state capital since 1999, Newcastle offers all the ease and services of a thriving city but still brings a Regional and Remote perspective to delegates. An exciting program featuring international and Australian speakers as diverse as Philippe Mora, renowned director of historical and art documentary feature films, Victoria Liu, Director of the Moon River Art Gallery Beijing and Dirk Stardt, Director Netherlands Military Museums.

Workshops, specialist network sessions and major plenary presentations will cover the full gamut of our industry. The conference theme, Work in Progress, will be expanded through the strands:

- * Working Differently, addressing challenges of audience access and sustainability;
- * Working Together, considering service delivery in a climate of consolidation and convergence being expected of cultural institutions; and
- * Working New, addressing alternate strategies for interpreting collections and current developments.

International keynote speakers, accessible location, numerous local redevelopment projects, an innovative social program including MAPDA awards and the inaugural MA Olympics, makes this the conference not to miss.

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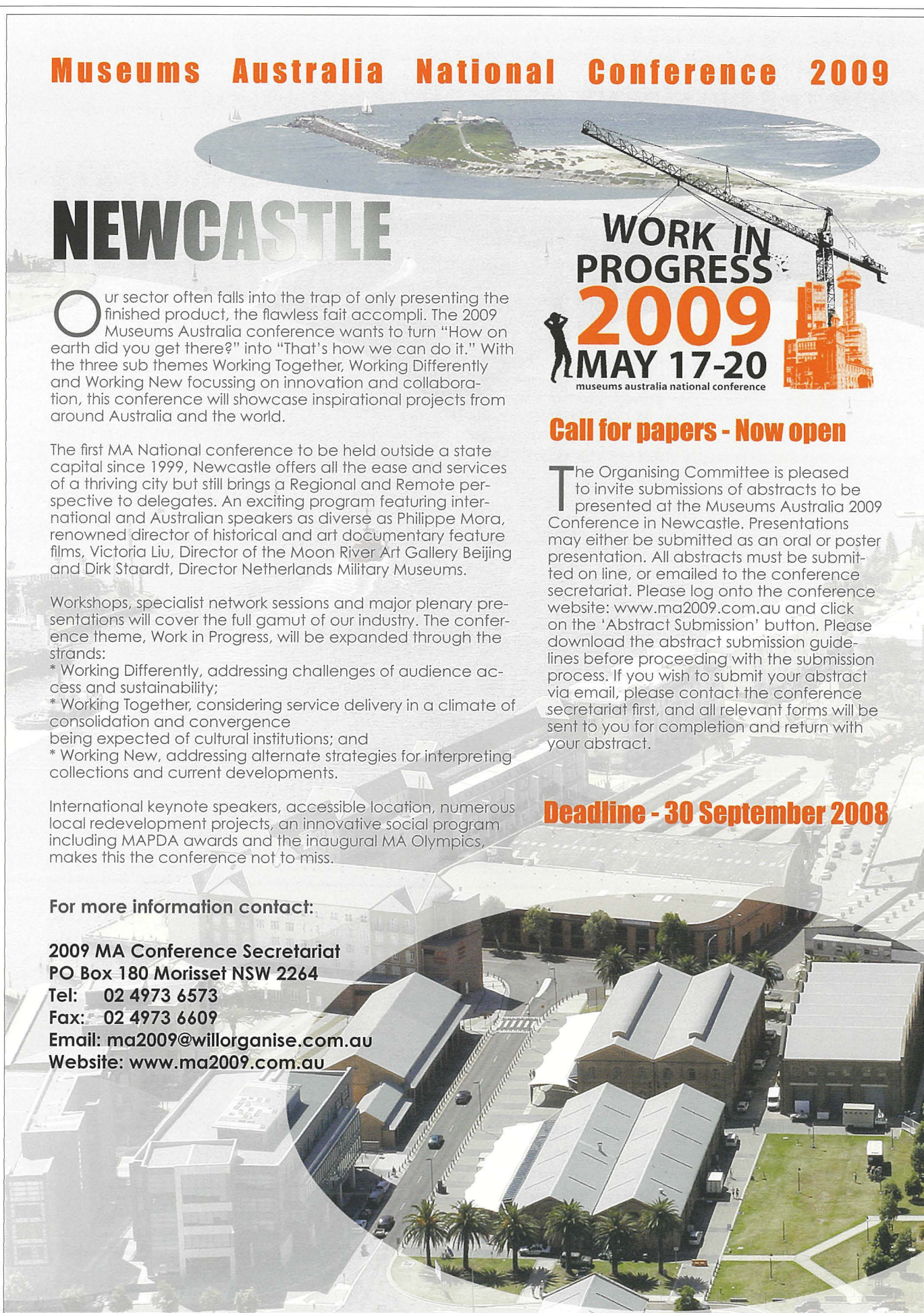
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Call for papers - Now open

The Organising Committee is pleased to invite submissions of abstracts to be presented at the Museums Australia 2009 Conference in Newcastle. Presentations may either be submitted as an oral or poster presentation. All abstracts must be submitted on line, or emailed to the conference secretariat. Please log onto the conference website: www.ma2009.com.au and click on the 'Abstract Submission' button. Please download the abstract submission guidelines before proceeding with the submission process. If you wish to submit your abstract via email, please contact the conference secretariat first, and all relevant forms will be sent to you for completion and return with your abstract.

Deadline - 30 September 2008



International Museum Day

MUSEUM TREASURES COME TO LIGHT IN INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY CELEBRATIONS

Fifty-five museums and galleries across Queensland took part in *Museums Alight!* from 17-25 May, presented by Museum and Gallery Services Queensland to celebrate International Museum Day.

This year's event aimed to 'shine a light' on the capacity of participating Queensland museums and galleries to contribute to positive change in their communities by focusing on the theme, *Illuminating Communities and Change*, a broad interpretation of the International Council of Museums 2008 theme of *Museums as agents of social change and development*.

Events across the state included special exhibitions, tours, artists' talks and workshops as well as performances and culinary experiences.

The events included:

- The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, hosted an opening and artist's talk by Shaun Gladwell, 2007 Venice Biennale artist;
- Bundaberg Arts Centre hosted *Shared Sounds (art at a car meet)*, a specially commissioned public art performance;
- The Museum of Brisbane held guided tours of exhibitions *Destination Australia: Ports of Immigration* and *Ship t'Shore: Destination Brisbane*;
- Discover Eumundi Heritage and Visitor Centre held the first-ever guided tours of the Eumundi Heritage Trail;
- Gold Coast Hinterland Heritage Museum held an Open Day and exhibition of hand-made quilts by local craftspeople; and
- Miegunyah House Museum, Brisbane hosted a high tea and period costume fashion parade in their newly restored Dining Room.

Museum and Gallery Services Queensland promoted the program through a targeted media campaign, which was particularly successful in regional areas with print, radio and television coverage resulting in a number of sold-out events and new visitors and audiences attending.

Rebekah Butler, Executive Director of Museum and Gallery Services Queensland, said, "This year's theme provided an excellent opportunity



Miegunyah House Museum, at Jordan Terrace, Bowen Hills, Brisbane hosted period-themed high tea and fashion parade in its newly restored Dining Room.

Photo: Courtesy of Museum and Gallery Services Queensland

for museums and galleries to explore social issues and change within our communities, to reflect on our past and work together to shape the future."

This was the largest number of museums and galleries to participate in the four years the event has been running.

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Futures Forum

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA FUTURES FORUM

2008 is shaping as a seminal year for assuring the future of Australia's cultural heritage through the development of new national policy settings to shape and better secure Australia's cultural heritage in all its diversity.

Commonwealth Government

The close alignment of the new federal government's priorities with many principles and approaches advocated by MA on behalf of the sector, together with the new government's open approach to receiving input this year towards the shaping of its future policy agenda, gave real urgency to the MA Futures Forum held in May. This continues to drive the intended outcome of the Futures Forum process: the development and delivery to Minister Garrett of a clear, focused and comprehensive *Museums Sector Framework Report* and associated program proposals.

Peter Garrett - Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

The placement of 'arts' (the collections and arts responsibilities from the former Department of Communications and the Arts - DCITA) and national heritage responsibilities within the Minister's single portfolio is welcome. It provides a new opportunity for convergence of policy frameworks and programs across formerly separate administrative and sectoral divisions.

It is significant that Minister Garrett, through his membership of two ministerial councils - Cultural Ministers Council and the Environment Heritage & Protection Council - has committed himself to the development of two national policy frameworks related to cultural heritage, each of relevance to the museums sector.

They are:

- A *National Cultural Strategy* - intended to support the Framework for National Cooperation in the Arts and Culture, and
- *The Cooperative National Heritage Agenda* - a national project to coordinate and improve the collection of data on the state of the nation's heritage.

MA contribution to national cultural policy development

MA contributes to this broader cultural heritage policy development through its representation and direct participation in the National Cultural Heritage Forum, the Minister's advisory forum.

MA National Advocacy Strategy in 2008

MA has sought to ensure the Association is positioned to take best possible advantage of the opportunities available in order to achieve the outcomes for the sector to which it is committed.

Key elements in the MA Strategy include:

- The Converging Currents Symposium held at Old Parliament House, 18 February (reported in MAM May 2008)
- the MA Futures Forum, held at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 19-20 May 2008, and
- the follow-up Spring Futures Forum to be held at the National Museum of Australia, 1 September 2008, to assist realisation of
- the final Museums Sector Framework Report for presentation to the Minister, Peter Garrett, in time for consideration this year in the 2009 budget preparation.

Supporting elements of this strategy, focused on the theme for the year, 'Valuing Museums' (the value of museums to our communities) include the *ABC Radio National Marvellous Museums* week-long celebration of

the value of museums to communities in May, and the national award program for regional and remote museums announced on 28 July.

Museums Australia Futures Strategy

The May Futures Forum, and the follow-up Spring Futures Forum scheduled for 1 September, are the key means by which MA is drawing on the wealth of professional expertise and experience across the museums sector to ensure that the *Museums Sector Framework Report* is an expertly informed analysis, targeting the sector's direct interface with public policy.

The May Futures Forum

The Futures Forum (held 19-20 May at the National Museum of Australia) was designed to capture museums-sector experience and thought around six key themes. These themes respond, from a museums sector perspective, to relevant 2020 Summit themes:

1. 'Equity and Amenity': cultural facilities supporting the social and economic well-being of Australian communities.
2. 'Learning for Life': Australia's museums and galleries as sites of encounter and challenge, of learning and leisure.
3. 'Closing The Gap': remaking opportunities for Indigenous cultural development & reshaping Indigenous Australians' stake in the mainstream.
4. 'Museums in a Changing Climate': the environment, science and Australia's evolving natural heritage.
5. 'Charting Digital Futures': accessing and preserving Australia's cultural heritage in the evolving digital interface.
6. 'Boosting Creativity': promoting innovation, collections, interpretation and research through Australia's museums and galleries.

The Futures Forum - Work in Progress

One hundred delegates met over two days (19-20 May) at the National Museum of Australia, to consider possible museum futures and the forces shaping those futures.

Delegates were asked to discuss ways whereby opportunities arising from the identified alignment with current government priorities could be better utilised, and means whereby impediments could be overcome, in order to achieve the most positive future for the museum sector as a whole.

Discussion was shaped by a series of Provocative Position Papers intended to stimulate delegates to consider the broader social, political, cultural and economic framework within which the museums sector sits.

Delegates worked collaboratively in one of the six thematic groups for an afternoon, documenting museums sector achievements, identifying issues, and charting aspirations before reporting back to the plenary session on Tuesday morning.

MA Museums Sector Framework Report

The *opportunities, obstacles, options, outcomes* identified by the Working Groups will be further workshoped at the Spring Futures Forum (1 September); and these more developed ideas will then be incorporated into the drafting of the *Museums Sector Framework Report* to be presented to the Minister later in September.

The Report will map achievements and aspirations, highlight existing delivery and programs, identify value-adding developmental paths, and set out practical recommendations concerning national policy-setting, coordination, structures, programs and resource provision for culture and heritage nationwide.

Marie Wood

Manager National Networks

www.museumsaustralia.org.au

Conservation

CLASHING CULTURES

Rock concerts and cultural sites don't necessarily mix. That's the message coming from some archaeologists and museum directors in Europe.

While the wonderful acoustics of the ancient tiered-stone theatre of Epidauros in Greece make it perfect for musical performances, heavy sound equipment and speakers, not to mention stylish stiletto-heeled shoes, are damaging the fabric of this much-loved site. Archaeologists are calling for a ban on stiletto heels, and also on chewing gum, which is found in wads on ancient marble at Epidauros and also at the theatre of Herodes Atticus in Athens.

Director of St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum, Mikhail Pietrovksy, referring to the results of a survey by the Grabar Art Restoration Institute in Moscow, said that concerts held in the Winter Square adjacent to the Hermitage by rock luminaries such as Sir Paul McCartney and the Rolling Stones, can cause damage to works of art housed in the building. The survey showed that every ten concerts where sound levels exceeded 82 decibels added an extra year to the age of a work. Pietrovsky said that 'One or two concerts a year in the square is possible, not more'.

Historic houses in Britain that host rock concerts are taking note of the Russian findings, and monitoring the proximity of concerts and concertgoers to stately houses such as Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath, and Somerset House, home of the Courtauld Gallery, which recently saw concerts by Amy Winehouse and the Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. At Knebworth, another stately house that has been



The ancient Greek theatre at Epidauros, now under threat from high heels, chewing gum and heavy sound equipment.

Photo: Roslyn Russell

a concert venue since the 1970s, hosting such legendary acts as Led Zeppelin and Queen, and more recently Oasis and Robbie Williams, there are concerns about loose stucco features, an important part of the building's fabric.

Information sourced from the *Independent* newspaper, reprinted in the *Canberra Sunday Times*, 6 July 2008 as 'Rock and Ruin'; and 'High heels hammering Greek heritage, from the *Australian*, 8 July 2008.

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MA AND ABC RADIO NATIONAL REWARD MARVELLOUS REGIONAL MUSEUMS

ABC Radio National has celebrated museums of every shape and size through a museum-themed week of programming, from 18 May 2008, and the launch of the first Marvellous Regional Museums Awards.

According to Museums Australia National Director Bernice Murphy, discussions about the Marvellous Museums award go back to late 2007.

'I was first in discussion with ABC Radio National Marketing about the possibility of ABC RN developing some concentration on museums-related program theming in an 'Australian Museums Week'. In the course of discussions, a 'National Award' idea was developed - I personally suggested that this would be better concentrated on regional museums, which had the greatest need of encouragement and community development across the country - in comparison to the capital city museums that had huge resources and capacity to promote themselves, and are better served already in public recognition and awareness.'

Through partnering with the ABC to develop the project, Museums Australia took up the cause of drawing public attention to the value and work of regional museums around Australia.

Entry was open to all regional museums, which were invited to upload their entries to the Marvellous Museums website, with the winning museum, as decided by the judging panel, to be the location for a Radio National broadcast. 52 regional museums entered the awards.

Alongside the awards, Radio National ran a competition for listeners called 'Museum Memories', where they could share their memories of museums and the impact they had on their lives. ABC presenters also shared some of their museum memories (see box).

'Unlike the museum awards that proceed from a professional, peer group assessment process, the great difference and distinctiveness of the ABC RN Awards are that they seek to stimulate communities themselves to think about museums and what makes them valuable in

a social and cultural capital sense, and to get behind their development and potential. They aim to tap a community vantage point of value and service in the nominations process,' says Bernice Murphy.

One of the entrants was the Yugambeh Museum in Beenleigh, Queensland, which is the research centre and keeping place for the Yugambeh Aboriginal language, with a collection of more than 15,000 artefacts gathered from throughout the area. As well as creating major exhibitions to be displayed at larger museums such as the Queensland Museum, there are minor exhibitions for use by local community groups.

Yugambeh was told about the awards by members of the community, and very encouraged when its annual event, The Drumley Walk, was nominated by a number of listeners as their 'Museum Memories'.

The Drumley Walk is a three-day walking pilgrimage through the traditional lands of the Yugambeh people, following in the footsteps of Bill Drumley (1853-1951) who regularly made this journey during the early 1900s to keep his family safe during times of removal policies.

Yugambeh Museum vice-president Rory O'Connor says they entered the award to raise the profile of their work, and to recognise the volunteers and other members of the community who work on the Drumley Walk event and at the museum. And as they are looking to grow the Drumley Walk to a national event, this type of recognition is quite important, particularly for sponsors.

The ABC's online guestbook for the initiative was inundated with recommendations for another Queensland entrant, the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum.

Entirely staffed by volunteers, the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum has 3000 items available for display, as well as over 2000 books in its library, with the section on military history regarded as the most significant outside Canberra.

While the museum has experienced an enormous increase in annual visitation, from 1976 in 2005 to an estimated 7000 in 2008, museum director/trustee Noel Gorrie says they entered the awards to attract more visitors and make people more aware of the museum's collections.

'We believe we have a very good museum and we are encouraging as many people as possible to come and see what we've been able to collect and preserve for generations,' Gorrie says.

Certainly the focus on regional museums created by the awards is also welcomed by entrants.

'Regional museums are generally under-resourced and usually rely on the passion of a few individuals, so anything that brings recognition to them has to be a good thing,' O'Connor says.

Bernice Murphy says, 'We would love to consolidate this new venture with the ABC - and build on its own aspirations for effective reach and recognition in regional and local Australian networks.'

She says while there were some excellent entries to the competition, many more museums could be captured when awareness of the competition reaches a broader range of regional communities across the country.

'The ABC is an excellent partner and vehicle to reach communities across the country because of its Local Radio stations as well as Radio National networks.'

Freya Purnell
Regional Editor

Marvellous Museum Winners

OVERALL WINNER:

The Kodja Place Visitor and Interpretive Centre (WA)

Volunteer category: Winner:

Beachport Old Wool and Grain Store Museum (SA)

Working in most adverse conditions: Winner:

Radium Hill Heritage Museum (SA)

Small Museum category: Winner:

Kodja Place (WA)

Medium to Large Museum category: Winner:

Museum of the Riverina (NSW)

ABC Radio National also sought to honour an outstanding Indigenous Cultural Centre/Keeping Place - which will be the subject of an Away! program.

Indigenous category: Winner: Yugambeh Museum (Qld)

Marvellous Museums

ABC Radio National Presenters' Museum Memories

Natasha Mitchell, Presenter, *All in the Mind*, ABC Radio National

Every self-respecting science journalist does their time amongst the dusty delights of the world's museums – love 'em. But it was at the fabulous Harvard Natural History Museum, among the collection of butterfly genitalia (I'm not kidding) and specimens from Darwin's travels on *The Beagle*, that I found one of my favourites – *The Glass Flowers*. Painstakingly created by the German father-and-son team Leopold and Rudolph Blaschka between 1887 and 1936, this huge display of hand-crafted glass flowers is scientifically accurate down to every last stamen and spore. Glass forms come alive – it is sublime.

Andrew Ford, Presenter, *The Music Show*, ABC Radio National

My favourite museums are the ones where the bricks and mortar match the items on display. Sir John Soane's Museum in London is the perfect small-scale example; rather grander are the Frick in New York and the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in Rome. In each case, they are private collections made public, most of the paintings and other objects having been in place since long before the buildings were turned into museums.

Derek Guille, Presenter, *Evenings*, 774 ABC Melbourne

I have long felt that we should all be very proud of our (Melbourne) Immigration Museum. Its permanent exhibitions tell so many stories about who we are and how we came to be here, and the special exhibitions are always a treat. I particularly remember some brilliant lines written by Arnold Zable that adorned the walls in one of the spaces, and the display of Korean textiles and traditional clothing was remarkable. When seen in conjunction with Bunjilaka at Melbourne Museum, you build a clear and concise view of the way we were and the way we are.

Source: www.abc.net.au/rn/museums/presenters

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Interpreting Uniforms

INTERPRETING AUSTRALIAN UNIFORMS

'All my life I have had a thing about uniforms.' The confession is Paul Fussell's, the American cultural and literary historian.¹ Having been a soldier as a young man, Fussell's thing about uniforms grew so strong that finally, in his seventies, he wrote a book about them.

I haven't worn a uniform myself since school, and may never write a book on the subject. But I became interested in uniforms, or in some of them, as a teenager. Not in what I wore to school, of course, or in the blue shirt and shorts and walk socks of the postman, or in the jungle green of our soldiers in Vietnam. No, only the bright military ones of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe would do. I enjoyed looking at illustrations of them in the same way I enjoyed looking at postage stamps – for their colour, for their authority, for their sameness and their differences, for the visual rules they borrowed or invented and then followed or changed. Later on, I started to think about these and all other uniforms as an index of who we are and who we'd like to be, and about the meanings behind the sameness, the differences, and the rules.

Uniforms have never had the powerful and intimidating presence in Australia they've exerted in authoritarian and militaristic societies like Russia or China. Still, they've been the public costume of a large minority of Australians since 1788. Much of Australian history has happened in uniform, or partly in it. Gallipoli and Kokoda, of course, Vietnam and now Iraq. The Aborigines were once hounded, and sometimes protected, by soldiers in red coats and police in blue ones as well civilians in ordinary clothes. The opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in between the world wars was disrupted by a man who wore a uniform precisely so he *wouldn't* stand out on the day. And for a century, each new generation has been squeezed into uniform at school.

Uniforms have charted some of modern Australia's social and political changes. Those worn by women are an index of a long march, not always straight ahead, toward gender equality. Police uniforms record a three-way tussle between authority, accountability and informality. The slouch hat and surf lifesaver's cap have become visual shorthand for a country keen to find popular symbols, and the red ceremonial loincloth or *naga* seems set to become a visual shorthand for Aboriginal Australians. Then there are all those uniforms, like Angus Young's or Christina Amphlett's stage dress, worn unofficially and within quotation marks, usually by young people.

The Australian War Memorial and the Powerhouse Museum have astonishing uniform collections. Hordes more uniforms are hidden away in army and local museums (a few are doubly hidden in the form of 'Crimean quilts' made up from old British army costume). When displayed, uniforms can compel public attention like aeroplanes and art installations do, and no wonder. After all, one function of a uniform is to be stared at.

But with some notable exceptions, museums are usually content to leave it at that. Any larger meaning behind colour and design (what models inspired them, and what messages do they send?), or badge of rank (how loudly or quietly is a superior distinguished from a junior?), is rarely suggested. Where a uniform was made, how much it cost,

Uniform worn by Percy Faithfull, in the Springfield collection, National Museum of Australia.

Photos: George Serras, National Museum of Australia



what it replaced or was replaced by, what it was like to wear and how its wearer modified it, the places it was worn including off-duty, are almost never evoked even when known. Labels present visitors with traces of raw data needed to interpret a uniform – bare names and dates, usually – but not an interpretation itself.

One of the notable exceptions was the recent display by the National Museum of Australia of a red military tunic worn in Sydney around 1870 by a young man called Percy Faithfull, a barrister and bon-vivant most of the time but, for a few hours each week, a dutiful citizen soldier. As part of an exhibition module called *Settlers and Settling In*, the tunic helped suggest the full range of activities, interests and responsibilities of an upper-crust colonial family. Though it wasn't the module's intention, its juxtaposition of tunic, teapot, top hat and what-not perfectly evoked the kind of person who wore that kind of tunic and why he did so.

How else could the tunic have been shown? The message behind its colour could be drawn out, for a start. Men like Percy Faithfull wanted to look like British soldiers, and dressed in homage to an army they ardently admired (while at the same time carefully remaining outside its control). A group of Australian red coats (several museums have one or more), supported by sheet music of popular songs hailing the

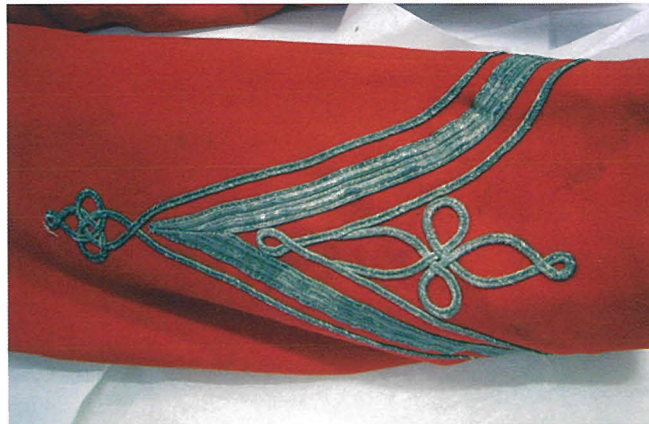
¹ Paul Fussell, *Uniforms*, Boston and New York 2002, p. 1.

Interpreting Uniforms

British army and some of the prints of that army in battle which once decorated Australian parlours, would remind visitors that our brush with the British army has been much bigger and generally much happier than a flash of open hostility at Eureka and sullen cooperation at Gallipoli and after.

Then there's the tunic's off-duty history. Percy Faithfull seems to have attended almost every ball held in Sydney in his day. The tiny coloured cards (the National Museum now holds them) on which he recorded his dancing partners are likely to have been among the few items he stored in his tunic pocket. Displaying the tunic amid a brace of these cards, and some ball gowns from the period, would show the feminine field in which the bright male poppy was supposed to shine. In other words, it would suggest the romantic appeal a bright uniform once had, as opposed to the respect it was also supposed to inspire.

To evoke the tunic as a commodity would be unusual but also rewarding. Once its purchase price is ascertained, the tunic can be displayed beside items of the same value to suggest how expensive such uniforms once were, what Percy Faithfull had to forego as a citizen soldier (being an officer, he largely paid his own way), and what he could afford and many others could not. Photographs of workers like those who made his tunic — the weavers and dyers, the lace makers and seamstresses, the cutters and tailors — would further evoke the tunic's value, and the social distance in this case between wearer and maker. It would also be nice to map where the



tunic's cloth came from. If my guess is right and source was England, the map would point out that Australia has always imported wool as well as exported it.

Not that these suggestions suit all the uniforms a museum might display. But they help make my plea for museums to think again about the uniforms in their collections, and to say something about their makers and wearers, their culture and their country.

This is a brief version of a seminar paper presented on 6 March 2008 at the National Museum of Australia by Craig Wilcox, then a Visiting Fellow at the Museum.

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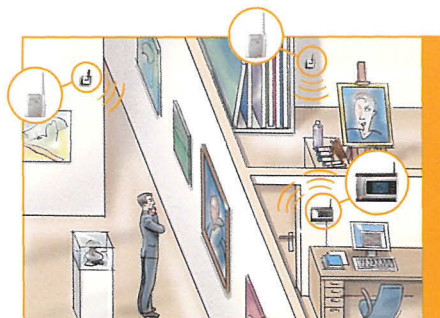
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Art Fraud

ART FRAUD: DOES IT MATTER?

1999 saw a flurry of press relating to art fraud in Australia fuelled predominantly by growth in the auction market, developments in the Aboriginal art market, and several high profile art fraud cases. This was the year that the claim by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, 'They're not mine', led to the conviction of John O'Loughlin for obtaining benefit by deceit. In April that year ABC TV screened the documentary *Art from the Heart* on problems in the Aboriginal art market (13 April 1999). Articles about the art market appeared regularly such as 'Call for crackdown after crisis of confidence in Aboriginal art' (*The Age*, 22 April 1999), 'Artist denounces state gallery fakes' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 March 1999), and 'Dealers trade on grey areas in red centre art' (*The Australian*, 17 April 1999). Allegations of fraud focussed the Institute of Criminology's national conference on *Art Crime* (2 and 3 December 1999).

This press interest reflected the activity in the market. By 1988 the Australian art market had reached its highest point, with *The Australian Art Sales Digest* recording sales of \$38,474,000. In 1995 the value of the art auction market had dropped to a low of \$6,760,000, but by 1998 auction prices had risen to a new level of \$50,120,000.

Growth in the Aboriginal art market was particularly noteworthy. The Senate Inquiry *Indigenous Art Securing the Future* noted that sales of \$2.5 million in 1981 had risen to 18.5 million in 1989 and to \$100-\$300 million by 2002.

So what was happening in 1999 to attract this press interest? The answer lies in the market frenzy in 1988, which had enabled the insertion of a number of problematic paintings into sales at this time. A decade later, when the market was heating up, these works resurfaced. In addition there was a new phenomenon — the surging Aboriginal art market.

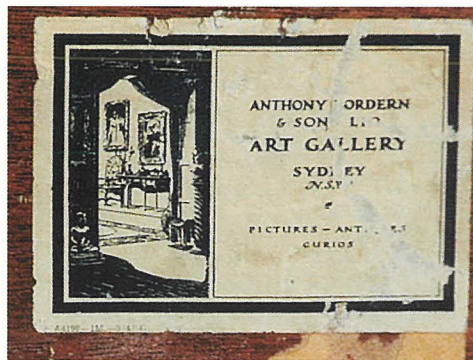
The bad press of 1999 did little to curb market activity. Between 1998 and 2003 auction prices virtually doubled. Then in one year between 2006 and 2007 *The Australian Art Sales Digest* identified an exponential increase from \$104,850,000 to \$175,630,000. In 2007, with the market at its hottest point ever, the federal government published its review of the Indigenous art market, *Securing the Future*, and the first custodial sentence for Aboriginal art fraud was handed down with the successful prosecution of Pamela and Ivan Liberto.

With between 10 and 40 per cent of the market purported to consist of problematic artwork (10 per cent according to *The 7.30 Report* 5 May 2005, up to 40 per cent according to Britain's *Guardian* (24 May 2005)), conviction rates for art fraud (with fewer than half a dozen cases in the period 1988 to 2008) are statistically barely significant.

Statistics are unreliable; yet as *Securing the Future* indicated, the market is very concerned about art fraud. Is this a concern about quantity? Is it the natural jitters of an unregulated market? Is it an assessment of potential impact?

It is probably all three, but fraudulent works in the art market, regardless of statistics, are an indicator of a broader debate that needs to take place.

First, it is often not clear what we mean when we talk about the art market. The primary market includes dealers (galleries) and artists. It may also include works sold from the artist's dealer or the artist on-line, such as through eBay, or works that have been 'back-doored'



Provenance is the linking of a history to an object. Authentic Anthony Horden & Sons labels appear on works that are patently problematic.



Cross sections reveal the way an artist has built up an image. Analysis of the constituent layers may also provide information that will either fit with what is known about a particular artist, or refute the proposition that the work is by a particular artist.



Artists have very particular working methods. This detail of Arthur Streeton's 'The domes of St Mark's' photographed in raking light shows Streeton's facility with manipulating paint to indicate the play of light over the masonry of the domes. (Detail Arthur Streeton *The domes of St Mark's* 1908 oil on canvas 62.4cm x 75.0cm The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing 1938. 1938.0023)

by the artist, and which the artist may even deny having done. The secondary market includes dealers that may or may not specialise in art, internet sales, auction houses, clearing agents and even local street markets. This diversity means that there are various levels of expertise, various standards of documentation, and various degrees of strength in evidence of links to the artist. With such diversity, standards and regulation are difficult to develop.

Second, words like 'authentic', 'correct', 'original' which have very particular cultural and disciplinary overtones are used indiscriminately; an agreed nomenclature will tighten up what is, and is not accepted as 'real'.

Third, fraud law is difficult. Art fraud is often not portrayed as a 'serious' crime; and the need to prove intention, benefit, and deception, makes

Art Fraud



There are a number of versions of this work including a pencil sketch and a preparatory oil painting (in the Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery). (Arthur Streeton *The Domes of St Mark's* 1908 oil on canvas 62.4cm x 75.0cm The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing 1938. 1938.0023). Would the market notice if another version was inserted into Streeton's oeuvre?



Letters exist from Dr. Samuel Ewing to Arthur Streeton and from Dr. Samuel Ewing to the University of Melbourne indicating his intention to gift 'The Domes of St. Mark's to the University. Few works have such impeccable provenance. (John Longstaff 'Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing' oil on canvas 108 x 88 cm. c. 1922 The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing 1938. 1938.0012.000.000)

it very difficult to get a conviction, or even agreement that there is a case to answer. As the art market operates internationally, working across jurisdictions makes collection of evidence and prosecution complicated. Even when cases get to court the legal fraternity has little understanding of the issues, and sentences handed down are not particularly punitive.

Finally, for those concerned about the artist, the adversarial nature

of Australia's legal system involves pain and suffering that may have substantial adverse outcomes for the victim.

For all of these reasons few cases proceed to court.

But does art fraud matter?

In Victoria a painting is legally defined as a document. False documents create false history and false culture. Consider that the Papunya and Warmun art schools began as a means of teaching children about culture. As a compilation of culture there is considerable knowledge inscribed in an artist's oeuvre; this is the place where stories, histories and thoughts are made tangible. The combined oeuvres of artists speak across divides of language, time and place to provide coherent and verifiable stories about who we are and what we value. This is particularly true for Aboriginal artists. Insert false documents into these compilations and we dilute and undermine this extraordinary knowledge base: a knowledge base which we do not yet properly understand.

In 1970 UNESCO affirmed the role of art in personal and national identity in the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*. This position has been confirmed and strengthened in subsequent UNESCO statements and programs on cultural heritage.

In the 2007 Mayne Lecture, Marcia Langton notes culture, while both resilient and fragile, is the gift from one generation to the next.

Culture, as a complex of things groups of people believe in, dispute with, but nevertheless live in as if they were invisible clothes, is at once threatened and strengthened in each instance of its expression. Perhaps the more important question is: will future generations inherit the important attributes of their cultural patrimony in such a way that they will continue to provide that invisible clothing that tells them and those they encounter that they are Merovingians or Celts or Jagara.

In the 1988 case against R & T Textiles Pty Ltd ([1988] 1082 FCA) John Bulan Bulan claimed that the unauthorised reproduction of his painting 'Magpie Geese and Water Lilies at the Waterhole' threatened the continuity of Yolngu culture.

The vagaries of the market are often considered by museum workers and academics to be little more than an interesting aside. What happens in the market, however, dictates whether future generations will inherit the knowledge that was protected and collected for them; or whether they will be presented with an appropriated false document on which to build and nurture the identity of future generations.

Robyn Sloggett is Director of the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (CCMC) at the University of Melbourne.



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ART CONNECTIONS: EXTRAORDINARY ART ALL OVER

Touring exhibitions provide lifeblood to regional gallery circuits all over the nation. Cross-overs of high quality art, sharing of collections and knowledge and the interaction between organisations are just some of the benefits of touring visual arts.

However galleries must book exhibitions years in advance, pay expensive exhibition fees, maintain venue standards and compete with demand from surrounding regions to secure the exhibitions they most desire. So how do we provide access for communities without the resources and infrastructure to compete for their bite of the visual arts pie?

For 33 years, Queensland Arts Council's touring exhibitions program *Ontour onexhibition* has striven to address these issues, taking small art exhibitions of various media to regional and remote Queensland communities who, despite not having a dedicated gallery space, are still eager for their share of visual arts.

Recent changes to this program have encouraged more bookings from regional galleries and museums. As part of an organisational restructure implemented this year, Queensland Arts Council established *Ontour onexhibition* as one of its core touring programs. This move allowed greater prominence for a unique targeted program which has continued to serve remote and regional Queensland with a view to touring nationally.

In 2007 more than 58 venues around the state, including offices, foyers, visitor centres, libraries, cafés and other everyday spaces, provided access to top level visual arts exhibitions by some of the state's most promising emerging and established artists. The exhibitions were on display for a total of 1300 days with a wide reach across the state, from Cairns to Quilpie, Mungindi to Mission Beach.

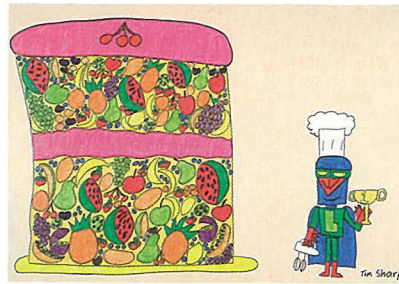
Exhibitions touring with this program take up between 10–25 running metres and do not require strict gallery-standard environmental controls, making them more widely available to both small communities without cultural infrastructure, and smaller galleries and museums seeking to round out their annual programs.

Through the work of local volunteers, culturally minded community members and staff of the Regional Galleries network, *Ontour onexhibition* is proving to be a wonderful catalyst for enhancing and activating the cultural life of regional communities.

In many cases these exhibitions have a ripple effect, where regional venues use them to leverage community-wide cultural activities and events. Gladstone Arts Council and Gladstone Regional Art Gallery



Teapot Boot
Pendragon Boot
Company from
Queensland Arts
Council's *Ontour*
***onexhibition* 2008**
season tour of Art
Shoes



Laser Beak Man
and the Fruit Cake
Tim Sharp from
Queensland Arts
Council's *Ontour*
***onexhibition* 2008**
season tour of Laser
Beak Man

and Museum recently hosted *Art Shoes*, an exhibition of hand-crafted footwear by the Pendragon Boot Company. Inspired by the haute couture and quirky nature of the exhibition, the community went so far as to stage a shoe-fetish float in the 2007 Rio Tinto Aluminium Street Parade, featuring a giant brown boot with blue polka dots!

Capella Local Arts Council hosted *A Child's Life on the Station*, an exhibition of photographs that portray the joys and hardships experienced by kids living on remote Outback stations. On opening night the community joined local identities for a few glasses of wine while sharing their own memories of growing up in the Outback.

Year Four students of Bundaberg's St Luke's Anglican School studied *Laser Beak Man*, a collection of richly coloured character drawings by Tim Sharp. Excited by the exhibition, the students used it as inspiration for the term's major art theme. Each student created an illustrated character of their own, culminating in an exhibition of their work at Bundaberg Art Gallery.

The 2008 season includes four new exhibitions including a selection of 40 award-winning photographs from the *Heritage Building Society Acquisitive Photographic Awards*, featuring an arresting display of works celebrating 20 years of this prestigious award.

The new additions also include *There's Something About Our Landscape*, an emotive and spiritual selection of paintings that evoke the harshness and haunting beauty of Australian Outback; *My Home, My History*, a multimedia photographic depiction of a generation of Italo-Australians and the fusion of two cultures; and *EXTRAordinary*, a series of photographs that capture the reality and beauty of everyday life.

The new exhibitions join seven highly popular collections that include an assortment of quirky tea cosies from across the globe; heartwarming imagery of children in the Outback; an art fusion of hotrod cars; and stunning images of Australia's Indigenous artists in *Indigenous Artists of Australia* which will also be on display at the Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide, from Friday 12 December 2008 to Sunday 1 February 2009.

Jenni Regnart, Manager of *Ontour onexhibition* said, 'The program is designed with the aim of providing communities in regional Queensland and around the nation with access to excellent and engaging visual arts experiences'.

'It is exciting that we can now offer galleries and museums a more flexible suite of smaller exhibitions for inclusion in their annual programs.'

Galleries, museums and venues wishing to book exhibitions for July–December 2009 are invited to fill in the *Request Form* by following the links to *Ontour onexhibition* at www.qac.org.au or phone 07 3846 7500. Full program and exhibition information at www.qac.org.au

Hot Topic

MUSEUMS, CONTROVERSY AND PUBLIC TRUST

The outbreak on 28 May of public controversy over photographs by Bill Henson was disturbing. The spectre of censorship menacing a respected Sydney gallery – entailing police seizure of photographs and further scrutiny of museum holdings by one of the most respected Australian artists – raised understandable alarm.

However issues surrounding this case have been volatile and constantly evolving. Any expectations of an early statement by Museums Australia were not well founded. Indeed the progress of the controversy demonstrated how thoughtfully the museums sector should explore the issues raised.

At a broader level, there is a need to consider the public contract with which museums are inescapably involved. What is the nature of public rights and responsibilities versus museum rights and responsibilities in this often unspoken contract? The issue of artists' rights merits separate address.

Meanwhile some mundane but inescapable matters need to be cleared first, before turning to the harder questions. Museums and galleries need to perceive their relationship to the law clearly: to understand the nature of police powers in case of public complaints involving objects in a public exhibition; to assess options with good judgment; and to understand the importance of not commenting hastily or without adequate information when controversy erupts. The history of prosecuted artists (Dobell onwards) shows that artists always suffer

worst of all parties involved, and the effects can be devastating to health and future work.

The least helpful action on Bill Henson's (or any gallery's) behalf would have been uninformed position-taking, possibly prejudicing a later need to provide 'independent expert' defence in the event of prosecution proceeding. Indeed Bill Henson's agent requested no public comment in the days after the police seizure at the Roslyn Oxley gallery.

One of the sad aspects of this case – in addition to broadside judgments flying and vilification of an important artist – has been the damage many in the art community have also caused through ill-considered assertion, intolerance of divergent opinion, and a fair measure of stridency while accusing others of the same faults.

I make these comments while placing myself among those who care seriously about the esteem in which contemporary art and the rights of artists to independent expression are held in our community. Also as a curator who has exhibited and purchased major work by Bill Henson for the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1981, which I fear could be stalked retrospectively by the salacious public gaze now aroused. My views are also influenced by the experience of fronting the presentation of the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition in 1995 at the MCA Sydney – where careful briefing of police and censorship authorities beforehand brought those bodies into an informed and supportive relationship long before the exhibition opened. (Some of Mapplethorpe's contents are far more confronting to public standards than Henson's works.)

Continued over page



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The decision by *Art Monthly* to launch its July 2008 cover featuring the Polixeni Papapetrou posed photograph of daughter Olympia – while asserting an intent to ‘restore dignity’ to the censorship debate – was ill-judged. It seemed heedless of the further public *melée* bound to ensue when offered to a waiting media’s open jaw and hot breath.

However the cover also surprisingly undoes the ‘art world’ position that such a magazine would have been expected to uphold: namely, care for the contrasting character, histories, context and meaning carried in the work of very different artists. Two bodies of work are conjured around a debate with little in common – except the presence of a young girl and nakedness.

In a single stroke an inflamed public had *decontextualisation* and a few raw signals handed back ready-wrapped. The *Art Monthly* cover unfortunately played to the crowd and neglected the subtlety of *works of art*. Public esteem of ‘the art world’ was further savaged.

There is more discussion to be had about these issues. And better that it be pursued in reflective spaces that enable measured exploration, without the presence of a university security officer on stand-by – as was deemed necessary at a Saturday forum in the ANU School of Art, Canberra (on 13 July). As head of the art school, Gordon Bull, asked by way of introduction: How could things have come to such a pass?

The ANU art school forum was very interesting, by the way. It yielded more varied opinion and experience – by then long overdue. Papers and discussion canvassed the complexity of the issues aroused: about the use of ‘minors’ or even one’s own children in art works; about the continuing desire to protect the subtlety of artistic expression without being hijacked into spaces charged by community accusation and outrage; and (through some surprising personal testimonies offered) about the need for many in ‘the art world’ not to mirror their public antagonists in monolithic, polarised position-taking, in ways that may undermine the very subtlety that merits collective defence.

Important questions for the museums sector deserve searching appraisal. Some new issues are still uncalibrated. Not least of these are the implications of Internet-released art images in a borderless cyberspace: a disembodied zone roamed by image-piracy and the predatory gaze, stripping human subjects of their autonomy while seizing their nakedness. In such new circumstances, the special space of a sensitised and historically inflected image, the conditioned space in which art and museum work advance, may lose its precious hold in public trust. Were that to occur, the loss to our imaginative life, involving exploration of the complex interplay of the sanctioned and the forbidden in cultural forms, would be severe. For these are essential conditions for all societies to flourish.

Museums need to appraise carefully how they secure public trust, diversity of opinion, and anticipated exploration of ideas, through which important (and often highly controversial) material may continue to merit unprejudiced presentation. These conditions are fundamentally intertwined with the public cultural mission of museums, and their responsibilities to address the most challenging issues of our society and our times, which deserve attention and respect in their programs.

Bernice Murphy
National Director, Museums Australia

A FEAST OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Museums Australia members have an unrivalled opportunity to see the works of Australian and overseas photographers, past and present, on display in both the ACT and Sydney from now until late October.

Over 100 exhibitions of photographs – displayed in venues ranging from major collecting institutions to local galleries and art spaces, and cafés, shops and markets in the ACT – are included under the banner of *Vivid: National Photography Festival*, representing over 400 Australian and international photographers. These historic, commercial, community and student photographs are on display from 11 July to 12 October, and celebrate the vital part that photography has played in Australian life and history.

As well as exhibitions, there are master classes and seminars, tours, talks, projections of giant photographs onto landmark buildings, and a trade show. A full list of *Vivid* exhibitions and events can be found at www.nla.gov.au/vivid

The Art Gallery of NSW also has an exhibition of the work of early twentieth century photographer Francis J Mortimer.



Aboriginal children resting on a mangrove stump while bathing, Sunday Island, Western Australia, 9 May 1916.

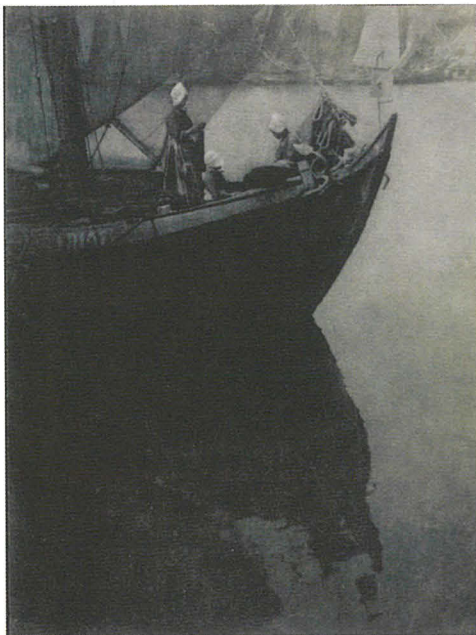
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National Museum of Australia

From A Different Time: The Expedition Photos of Herbert Basedow 1903-1928, at the National Museum of Australia to 12 October as part of the *Vivid National Photography Festival*.

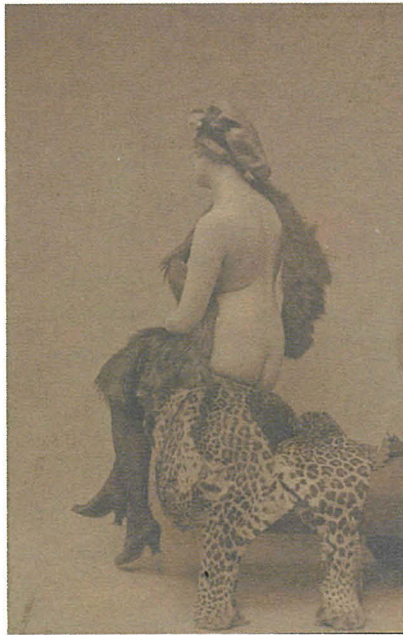
We want our ‘Hot Topics’ articles to stimulate debate among readers of *Museums Australia Magazine*. If you wish to respond to this article, please email editor@museumsaustralia.org.au, marking your email ‘Hot Topic Response’. Responses will be uploaded to MAM On-line on the Museums Australia website.

Photography



Francis Mortimer
Art Gallery of New South Wales
26 July - 26 October 2008

Untitled (three Dutch women in boat) c1912
bromoil photograph, green tone, 34.2 x 25.4 cm
Gift of Molly Roberson (née Mortimer) 1996



Francis Mortimer
Art Gallery of New South Wales
26 July - 26 October 2008

Francis J Mortimer
Untitled (nude woman on leopard skin) c1917
gelatin silver photograph, 7 x 4.5 cm
Gift of Molly Roberson (née Mortimer) 1996

PICTORIALIST PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE ART GALLERY OF NSW

The Art Gallery of NSW has had two exhibitions this year centred on the work of Pictorialist photographers from the early twentieth century - one British and one Australian. Both made a significant contribution to international photographic circles.

Harold Cazneaux: Artist in photography was exhibited from 5 June to 10 August 2008, and *Francis J Mortimer* is on display from 26 July to 26 October 2008, at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney. For more information call (02) 9225 1744 and visit www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au.

For full coverage of these exhibitions go to **MAM Online**.



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Review

Lawrence of Arabia and the Light Horse: the road to Damascus. An Australian War Memorial temporary exhibition

By telling the story of Lawrence of Arabia and the Light Horse, the Australian War Memorial departed from its usual central story-telling focus of the Australian experience of war. This exhibition ran two parallel narratives and probably the most well known one of them is not an Australian-centric point of view. That presented a challenge – how to get past the fame and powerful persona of Lawrence himself to make the Australian connection. Reviews of the exhibition tended to focus almost exclusively on Lawrence rather than the Light Horse. However, creating a parallel and balanced narrative of the two is exactly what Mal Booth, Manager of the Research Centre and curator of the exhibition, attempted to do.

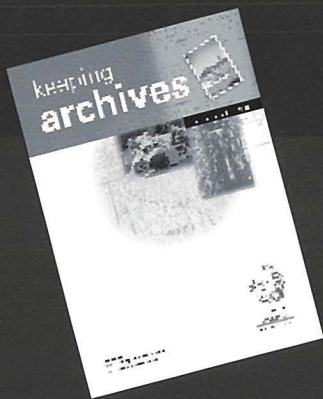
The dichotomy between the Australian perspective and the very British Lawrence is also reflected in the objects selected for the exhibition. Most of those relating to Lawrence were on loan from a number of overseas institutions, including Tate Britain, All Souls College, and the Imperial War Museum. The Light Horse narrative relied almost entirely on objects and documents taken from the Memorial's own comprehensive First World War collection.

Exhibitions at the AWM tend to be heavily oriented towards historical artefacts, and this one was no exception. It did, however, feature some pop culture material in the form of extracts from two well-known films, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *40,000 Horsemen*. Shown on screens near the

entrance, these provided a bridge for the casual visitor. Most of the visitors viewed Lawrence through this cinematic filter and the lanky, blonde-haired Peter O'Toole is the most well-known version of the short, bookish Lawrence. Not that this view is entirely romanticised. In a displayed letter written to his family in 1918 an Australian soldier observed, after meeting Lawrence, that he was 'a real live superhero of the kind that novelists like to invent'.

The historical artefacts that flesh out the legends consisted of a wonderfully broad mix of material culture. Medals, photographs, uniforms, sculpture, rare books and handwritten letters sit side by side, and each played an important part in the exploration of the people and events behind the popular myths. Each narrative thread was told clearly and supported by concise and well presented text panels and captions, as well as by an easy visual flow through the room, highlighted at the end of the first corridor by the magnificent George Lambert painting, *The charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba 1917*.

The Light Horsemen were well represented in the displayed art. The huge painting by H. Septimus Power captured the visitor's attention, in part because of its sheer size (1.5 by 2.5 metres) but also because it depicted a great story, reflecting the work of the ANZAC Mounted Division in late September 1918. There was a lovely and intimate pencil sketch of Henry Chauvel by George Lambert and a portrait in oils done at the end of the war by James McBey. It is a very candid image of him in Homs at the end of the campaign in mid-October 1918. He is shown proudly wearing his slouch hat with emu plumes. He looks older



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Review

than his 53 years, but appears very much to be a man in the moment. Chauvel was shocked by this portrait: he wrote to his wife in London that the painting was drying in his hotel room and he expected that it would give him nightmares.

The printed word played a prominent role as well, including a display of the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, the book in which Lawrence recounted his own version of the Arab revolt. The first version appeared in 1922, but the item on display was a beautiful example of the revised and lavishly illustrated 1926 edition, reflecting Lawrence's love of exquisitely produced books. The Memorial's copy is only one of 170 full copies ever published.

Lawrence's book and the volume of the First World War Official History volume relating to Sinai and Palestine sat side by side in a showcase next to the plasma screen running the films. This was quite deliberate, demonstrating how the power of print, as well as the moving image, has played a part in developing the reputation of Lawrence and the Light Horse. It also contrasted the popular culture images of the films with the first person accounts. The showcase was also intended to visually demonstrate the link between Lawrence and the Australian experience of war that is the core business of the Memorial.

The exhibition's strengths lay in the personal stories and sense of intimacy established with the main players. As well as seeing the portrait of Lawrence, we also were able to view the silk robes that he wore and the gold dagger he carried. There were not only photographs of the Light Horse, but their uniforms, the letters they wrote and their

standards. There was also an array of objects that conveyed the Turkish involvement, the most eye-catching of which was a beautiful crimson silk regimental standard of a Turkish infantry regiment captured near Damascus in 1918. It also succeeded, in the way a good exhibition should, in not being the last word on its subjects. And it succeeded in giving them a more complete and complex identity than their 'legends'.

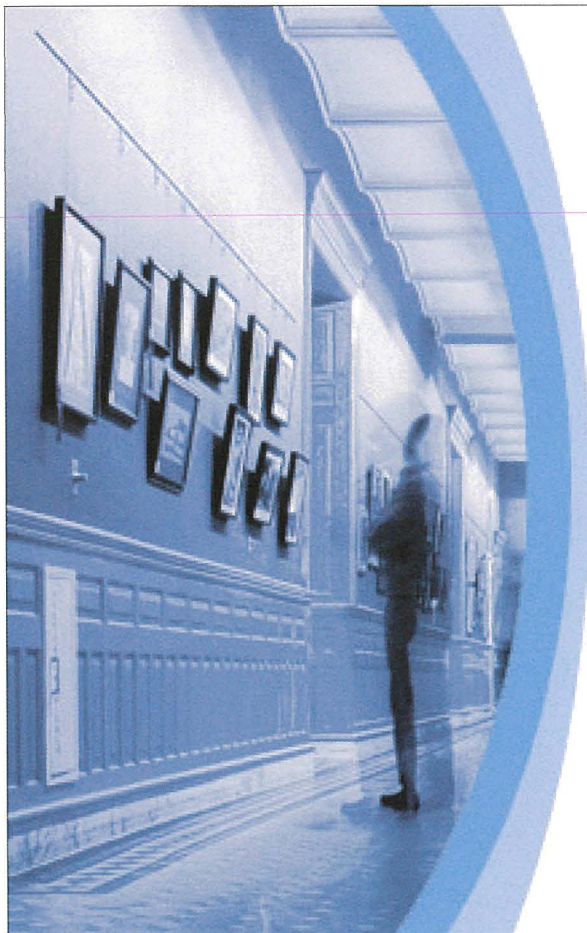
Jennifer Coombes is the Special Collections Archivist with the Research Library at the National Gallery of Australia.

This exhibition has closed, but many of the images and items discussed above can be viewed in a PDF version of the catalogue. This can be obtained on line at <http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/lawrence/LoAcatalogue.pdf>

All the articles and reviews in this issue can also be viewed on MAM On-line on the Museums Australia website -

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On-line articles often have additional features such as illustrations and full references. For an even fuller story, check out MAM On-line.



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