

*A la meilleur
Madame Mathie
Souvenir de sa
reconnaisante
Fille Me*



The magazine of Museums Australia Inc.

MUSEUM NATIONAL

VOL 3 • NO 2
SEPTEMBER 94

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Welcome to the final theme edition in our series 'Museums and Communities' which commenced in August 1993. This series has explored key issues in the relationship between museums and their various communities - issues of access, marginality, localism and now de-institutionalisation - taking it to the streets.

Over this period much has occurred to our professional association. We have amalgamated, bringing many elements of the profession together in a new co-ordinated structure. We have also moved to new offices which will provide a home for our expected expansion over the next few years.

Taking It To The Streets

In devising themes it is often surprising how writers respond to the concept. With the 'information super-highway' comes new and different streets to traverse, reality shifts occur both for objects and communities. Do collections of computer terminals constitute the new community? Will the 'streets' of tomorrow be miles of fibre optic cables buried under our communities across the world? Both Kylie Winkworth, in our lead article, and Matthew Kassay examine this interesting and complex question. Rebecca Duclos in 'Creating the Nation' examines how museums, in imaging our nation and its many communities, can have significant impact on the community's own sense of self. The street is inevitably a connection between the museum and the community.

We also introduce a new section focusing on contemporary visual arts and craft issues, edited by our Publications Officer (Arts), Marianne Wallace-Crabbe. 'Cultural Encounters and National Identity' by Alison Inglis, looks at the new galleries of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Australia.

Membership

The recent membership drive generated 300 new members. Lucky winner of the trip to the Western Museums Conference was Chris Tassell, Director of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Second prize winner was Rhonda Hamilton, History Curator also from Launceston.

Welcome to new Special Interest Groups

Museums Australia welcomes the following Special Interest Groups: Australian Maritime Museum Council, Conservation, Designers for Cultural Institutions, Health and Medical Museums, Historians, Museums Australia Education Group, Museums Australia Membership (Friends and Volunteers), Performing Arts Heritage, Registrars Committee of Museums Australia, Sports Heritage, Visual Arts, Women and Museums.

Elections

By now you will have received your ballot papers for this years National Council elections. If not contact our office to check your membership status. Return your ballot papers by 5pm 29th October 1994.

New Logo

Following a long search, with this issue we are launching our new logo designed by Maria Miranda of Maria Miranda Designs. New South Wales members will be familiar with Maria's design work on their state newsletter.

Job Sheet

This membership subscription service commences in October. Institutional members and individual subscribers (\$15 for 11 issues) will receive Job Sheet each month outlining current vacancies, professional development opportunities and services. To subscribe contact our office on (03) 486 3399.

KPMG Peat Marwick

Museums Australia welcomes KPMG Peat Marwick as our new national auditor. KPMG has joined forces with Museums Australia offering the skills and expertise of an international network at a greatly reduced rate.

Cultural Policy

Latest news at time of writing is that the Cultural Policy will be launched by the Prime Minister in Canberra on 18 October. Within the policy will be a number of new initiatives including cultural industries strategies and details concerning the Foundation for Australian Cultural Development. Inside this magazine is the latest news from the 1994 Conference in Fremantle WA 'Identity, Icons and

Artefacts'. I look forward to seeing members in Fremantle.

Greg Marginson
Executive Director

Museum National Survey

Thank you to those readers who participated in the recent survey of *Museum National*. The response was relatively small but has provided us with useful information in terms of direction and content.

The largest response came from former MAA members (53.4%), AMAA (21.9%), MEAA (9.6%), AICCM (5.5%), Registrars (1.4%), and those with no professional affiliation (6.8%). Responses came from NSW (35.6%), Victoria (31.5%), WA (13.7%), Qld (11%), and SA and Tas 4.1% each; 51% respondents had a history background, 32% an arts background, 12% natural science, 3% science and 3% no specific background; 54% worked in a paid capacity.

Responses to the magazine's function included unifying Museums Australia's membership, the museum profession and the many large and small institutions; raising awareness of the issues facing the industry at state, national and international levels; plus promotion of professional standards. There was a varied response to issues readers want to see covered. These focussed on professional development (such as volunteers, internships, career paths etc); museum practice (such as conservation, interpretation, registration, deaccessioning, technology, public programming, exhibition design etc); and more general issues (such as cultural diversity, international news, museum architecture, tourism, museum publishing, gender issues etc.). There is a clear need for better coverage of international news and natural science museums. Other issues which arose such as length, depth and relevance of articles, and the general layout of the magazine are issues the editorial committee will be addressing over the next few months.

Any readers who did not have an opportunity to fill in the survey sheet but who would like to give feedback, please send your comments to the Editor.

Linda Richardson
Editor



Front cover

Dame Nellie Melba (detail), c 1887, Baron Podbraggy Collection, National Library of Australia. Photographer unknown. From the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition 'About Face'. Courtesy National Library of Australia.

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VOL 3 • NO 2

SEPTEMBER 94

MUSEUM NATIONAL is the quarterly publication of Museums Australia Inc. This project has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the Federal Department for Arts and Administrative Services.



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Print Post Publication No:
332582/00001
ISSN 1038-1694

Contributions and correspondence

Museum National welcomes unsolicited letters, articles and photographs for consideration. Articles should include brief biographical information about the author and photographs should be clearly captioned and credited. Museum National reserves the right to edit, abridge, alter or reject any material.

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Copy deadlines for 1994
15 October — publication
mid-December

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Museums Australia Inc. is formed by the amalgamation of:

- Art Museums Association of Australia Inc. (AMAA)
- Museums Association of Australia Inc. (MAA)
- Council of Australian Museums Association (CAMA)
- Museum Education Association of Australia (MEAA)

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Subscriptions

Subscription to Museum National is a membership service of Museums Australia Inc. Single issues are also available.

Printed by:

Publications Department
WA Museum
1 Francis Street, Perth, 6000.
Tel: (09) 427 2779
Fax: (09) 427 8898

Original design concepts:
Tony Mammoliti

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Museums and Communities

by Kylie Winkworth

In a speech to mark International Museums Day this year, Phillip Adams admitted to liking 'the museums you aren't meant to like. The stuffy museums, where stuffed things are stuffed into glass cabinets along with inadequate descriptions on yellowing cards.'⁽¹⁾ It is curious the way this image of museums endures in the popular imagination when museums like this have been extinct in Australia for many years. Almost every article on museums in the general press pedals the old clichés of dusty showcases crammed with unrelated curiosities. But perhaps the enduring popularity of this image is more than just lazy journalism. Perhaps it signals a yearning among museum visitors for a return to the bad/good old days. This is a subject ripe for some focus group market research.

Phillip Adams is a man with fingers in many pies, one of them being the Commonwealth's committee to investigate how we should celebrate the centenary of Federation. He told his audience at the Australian Museum that the committee was inundated with proposals for new museums on every subject including fossils, women, immigration, the environment, mining and of course the National Museum. It was apparent from the tone of his anecdote that there was Buckley's chance of a museum-led celebration. He went on to argue that by the year 2001 we'd be 'citizens of cyberspace' with universal access to the great museums of the world on CD ROM or the information super-highway. In his vision of a brave new museum future, Adams sees museums being composed on CD ROM in a process he likened to making a film. And what happens with the existing museums? Returning to his opening theme, he argued that the new information technologies will allow museums to get rid of the clutter of interactives, jettison the entertainment imperative, and return to being places of contemplative quiet, where the cult of the object reigns supreme.

Not everyone will share these aspirations for the museum of the future. However the Adams' vision underlines the way that new information technologies are crystallising thinking about the future of museums, their role and the nature of the experience they offer to visitors. It is impossible to debate the potential of the new technologies without debating the fundamental values and purpose of museums.

Some months ago I experienced the virtual museum, now available on CD ROM at your nearest audio visual dealer. It was a disquieting experience for a museum lover. Slip the disk into the machine and through the window of the computer screen step like Alice into the world of the virtual museum: open the doors of the museum, select your gallery, Egyptology perhaps, and cruise the exhibits. Unlike the real museum the virtual visitor can 'pick up' the objects on display, turn them over and examine every minute detail. This is an experience that gives ironic meaning to the term 'hands on' access. In this museum the computer screen is the ultimate showcase, totally visitor proof. After the novelty value wears off, the virtual museum is as satisfying as a sophisticated mirage, tempting but not quenching.

One of the absences in the virtual museum is the experience of place, both as building and for its reflections of people, culture and environment. Also missing is the social experience of visiting the museum and sharing the activities which are an increasingly important element in their programs. In the rhetoric of the museum of the future there is a tension between the glittering possibilities offered by the new information technologies and the search for a 'kinder gentler' museum, more enmeshed in the community and responsive to new ideas, issues and social change. Surveying the trends in museum practice in Australia, the sharp edge of change is less about glamour technology and more focussed on questions of access, community and identity.

Although the information super-highway has the capacity to deliver facsimiles of the great museums of the world, whether this is what people want is an altogether different question. Theoretically the new information technologies will allow museum collections to be used like libraries, but museums have not encouraged this kind of use by their visitors. In the past only the most privileged and knowledgeable visitor had genuine access to the collections. Despite the widespread use of computer catalogues in large museums, it is still not possible for general visitors to access the registers as part of the visiting experience. Current museum visitors have been reared on a diet of blockbusters and trained to consume rather than question. Changing patterns of use among visitors is just one of the challenges posed by the new technologies.

However there are signs that this is already happening, with some museums encouraging greater interaction with their intellectual and collection base. The Australian Museum is planning a new investigation centre, (still searching for a name), which will enable users, in person or by phone, fax or electronic mail, to pursue a wide range of questions and interests. The principle is rather like a multimedia library with specimens, microscopes and lab areas, as well as books, journals, CD ROMS and trained staff. Lectures, classes and workshops will stimulate use of the facility. And in a return to the foundations of the museum, taxonomies will be an important part of the collection base in the centre. This leaves display areas to tackle ideas-centred exhibitions.

The concept of the Australian Museum's investigation centre blurs the lines between the museum and the library. Similar ideas are being explored by other institutions. At the WA Museum a new kind of gallery is being developed in collaboration with the Art Gallery and State Library. In form it approximates a cultural centre, focussed on encounters between objects, ideas and people. Director Andrew Reeves describes the concept as not just about access to information but raising questions about how that information is constructed and how it can be reshaped. He warns of the dangers of fixating on glamorous technology at the expense of bigger questions about how it is used and who shapes the ideas and content.

Other new projects on the drawing board are also searching for the right term to describe new forms of museum-based developments. Parramatta City Council in Sydney is developing a heritage resource centre which will incorporate a local history library, an archaeological study centre and displays that use both CD ROM technology and old style dioramas. Despite this battery of museum resources, its purpose is closest to a visitor centre in a national park, with the goal of interpreting Parramatta as an open air museum. In Canberra, a city of grand national monuments, a uniquely local facility is emerging, funded by the ACT Government and casino money. It will be a cultural centre of sorts, with spaces for a city gallery, heritage centre, community history, education and theatre.

These new hybrid museum forms pose many challenges for traditional museum practice. The barriers between different forms of institutions are dissolving, merging the work of gallery, cultural centre, museum and heritage interpretation. Their exhibitions may draw on pictures, specimens, archaeology, heritage sites, computers and audio visual technology. And they invite new forms of community interaction including community exhibitions, video and publications. Staffing these facilities calls for an adventurous mix of skills which must begin to redefine conventional museum training and career paths. It may be that community artists, with their training in working with communities, will

emerge with the best skills for making these new places work. Certainly initiating creative projects such as performances and artworks is emerging as a significant new element in the work of museums.

The creative skills of artists are now widely used in museums to tell stories and present ideas that are not so easily explained through collections. The Migration Museum's exhibition 'Work it Out', now on tour in Queensland, explores ideas about cultural diversity through the medium of a game for children. The exhibition takes the form of a luscious hand painted silk room by Lynn Elzinga-Henry. Creative projects also give form to areas of history that are not well preserved through the material records. In the Fremantle Asylum, soon to be a new history museum, a commissioned play speaks about the women who were incarcerated there. At Sydney's Hyde Park Barracks, soundscapes evoke the aural shadows of convicts. The South Australian Museum is using holograms to give new form, if not life, to their thylacine specimens. And the misnamed Museum of Sydney on the Site of First Government House is using art works to conjure the past and provoke debate about the meanings of the site. Today curators are not so much keepers as cultural brokers, commissioning creative work to bring ideas to life. Importantly though, none of this would be happening without the strategic support of the Australia Council.

Creative partnerships are just one element in the changing relationship between museums and communities. Multidisciplinary projects that combine exhibitions, publications, oral history and contemporary art are redefining the audience from passive consumers to the creators of the museum's product.⁽²⁾ This is a feature of the work of Melbourne's Living Museum of the West which constructs its community not just as subjects, but as the participants and makers of history, as the audience and as employees. Its work encompasses environmental projects, archaeological digs, and the employment and training of Aboriginal people.⁽³⁾ The result is an organisation which is deeply embedded in the community, where the process is as important as the product. Philosophically its work is closest to community art traditions of animating communities and enabling the expression of identities, social concerns and responses to place.

These principles are also being pursued by some regional galleries looking to break the old convention of their spaces as exclusion zones for art from their own communities. Ipswich Regional Gallery, in a recent project about drawing in Queensland, took a pluralist approach to the subject by integrating the exhibition with a series of artists-in-residences. Though the results challenge the values of some reviewers, it shows the Gallery building new audiences among often marginalised groups in the community.⁽⁴⁾ Museums are also engaged with their environment, both social and ecological. The Broken Hill City Art Gallery is developing an eco tourism

project exploring social and economic issues through a Living Desert Trail. Articulating a sense of place and local identity is emerging as a critical role for museums as other media become more homogenised. This is a niche market which is cementing the place of the museum in the fabric of the community and its tourism future.

In the changing relationship between the museum and the community the question of who owns the past and who writes the history is being renegotiated. Ownership and access to collections is at the frontier of change. During the 1980s Aboriginal communities forced museums to reconsider the whole question of ownership. Cultural material was returned and keeping places were established. In the 1990s the concept of ownership is being redefined.(5) Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art has not so much acquired a collection of weaving and fibre works from Maningrida, as pioneered a contract which gives the Maningrida people trusteeship of the material in association with the Museum. Likened to a cultural agreement, the contract recognises the primary rights of the creators to define the meanings and interpretation of the works.(6)

Aboriginal communities, in reclaiming their cultural patrimony, emphasise the relationship between access to cultural heritage and community cultural esteem. This is true for all communities whether they are defined by locality, ethnicity, class or gender. The museum is the site that articulates the bonds between people, that affirms or interrogates questions of identity and culture. The very notion of community is established by the presence of museums. This accounts in part for the continuing pressure for new museums. Those people who wrote to the committee running the Federation celebrations would have been disappointed to hear Phillip Adams dismiss their aspirations for new museums with the hollow promise of the information super-highway. Communities want museums for many reasons, most of which are less about information and more to do with celebrating place, identities and experiences which they wish to communicate and keep.

Museums and communities are forging new forms of practice and new kinds of museums which reflect their specific needs. But the policy settings to support innovation are slow to change. Perhaps the Prime Minister's long awaited cultural policy will provide this framework, although the evidence so far is not encouraging. The Heritage Collections Report recognised that the national collection is distributed across Australia. Yet the Visions of Australia touring exhibition program, which was one of its outcomes, perpetuates a model where exhibitions from the big institutions are trucked 'out' to communities who are constructed as the consumers of culture from somewhere else. Enabling communities to articulate issues of identity, place and culture should be one of the fundamentals of both this program and the Cultural Policy.

How Australia negotiates its museum future is a litmus test for the nation. In particular, the question of whether community is defined through grandiose state and national museums or is expressed by diversified museum forms underpinned by the principles of access and equity. At the moment the distribution of museum resources expresses powerful inequalities in Australian society. To use the health analogy: there are a cluster of museums that can do heart transplants while the vast majority of museums are struggling for basic facilities.(7) The whole museum profession is implicated in this situation. Just as the AMA has nominated Aboriginal health as the key issue for their organisation, so the museum profession must find policies and solutions for its third world museums. Libraries have shown it can be done.

Kylie Winkworth
Freelance consultant

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- (1) 4-5 June 1994, *The Weekend Australian*. (Parts of his speech were reproduced in his column)
- (2) In a project on the Woodside Migrant Hostel, the Migration Museum is working with the SA Trades and Labour Council on a multidisciplinary collaboration which includes oral history, photography, a publication and contemporary art exhibition for the community access space.
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- (6) Murphy, Bernice April 1994, 'New Partnerships: Aboriginal Art Within and Beyond the Museum', *Art Monthly*, No. 68
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CREATING THE NATION

Museums and the Display of Cultural Identity

by Rebecca Duclos

I recently came across the word 'nationing'.⁽¹⁾ Amazing, I thought, how we can turn a noun into a verb just by adding a few letters to the end. But what does it mean, in a museum context, to go about the task of 'nationing' - to transform the intangibles of a national consciousness into tangible, exhibitable forms? How do we move the abstract into the concrete, the idea into the image, the notion into the statement, the many voices into the one narrative? More importantly, how are museum attitudes toward 'nationing' changing as a result of community collaboration?

In working through such questions, some museums are beginning to assume what may seem to be a paradoxical position: their displays are describing national consciousness precisely through a refusal to define it.

The Bottomless Bottom-Line

'In the Australian context I'm working in, the bottom line is really a question mark.'

Meaghan Morris's 'bottom line' is indeed one which contemporary museums are struggling to understand. In responding as she did to queries concerning the analytical 'uncertainty' of Australian cultural theory, Morris's words may also reveal something about Australian cultural practice. In museum work, the inclusion of diverse communities in a range of institutional initiatives is creating a culture of inquiry rather than declaration. In Foucauldian terms the 'discursive formation' of the institution is: '...no longer an ideal, continuous, smooth text that runs beneath the multiplicity of contradictions and resolves them in the calm unity of coherent thought; nor is it the surface in which, in a thousand different aspects, a contradiction is reflected that is always in retreat but everywhere dominant. It is rather a space of multiple dissensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described.'⁽²⁾

Yet within these contradictions and multiple dissensions diversity must reach toward unity if, indeed, this is part of what we mean when we speak of 'a national consciousness'. In their section on 'Diversity In Unity' in *Museums: An Argument With Their Own Society*, Layland and Horne urge for recognition and acceptance '... as a great cultural and social resource, our diversity as a society - the diversity of region, generation, gender, ethnicity and religion - and the differences that can come from differing material circumstances and different ways of gaining a living... We must now learn techniques of looking for diversity

in whatever theme we are presenting.'⁽³⁾

They do stress, however, that expressions of social division must be presented as inherently complex issues. Their sentiments are echoed by Tony Bennett who warns that the very concept of national heritage is: '... of necessity, demotic: its *raison d'être* is to enfold diverse histories into one, often with the consequence that the histories of specific social groups are de-politicised as their relics come to serve as symbols of the essential unity of the nation, or to highlight its recently achieved unity, by standing for a divisiveness which is past.'⁽⁴⁾

So how is a museum exhibit to maintain the dynamics of such a discourse? How do we stress diversity without risking a fragmentation of our visiting publics? How might installations ('objectively') interpret the artefacts of nationhood while still allowing for individual readings and reactions? How can museum-produced histories of indigenous peoples reveal the inherent tensions involved in an interpretive act without slipping into apologetic hyperbole?

Multiple Heritages: A Canadian Example

The recent opening of five new galleries at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) may be of interest to Australian museums facing similar post-colonial challenges of interpreting a diverse national heritage. The Canadian Heritage Floor at the ROM is made up of The Ontario Archaeology Gallery, the Roloff Beny Gallery (of contemporary culture), the Heritage Gallery of Canada's Peoples, the Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Gallery and the Gallery of Indigenous Peoples.

Visitors are met with five discreet entities which, when brought together in such close proximity, represent a certain version of 'Canadian heritage'. The Museum says not that 'this is Canada', but that 'Canada' means many things to many people. The physical space speaks volumes about the Canadian mentality: as opposed to the 'melting pot' of its southern neighbour, Canada is here symbolically (and ideologically) representing the 'cultural mosaic' which distinguishes it as a multicultural nation.

The ROM's Canadian Heritage Floor provides visitors with the conceptual phrases of a nationalistic sentence but the narrative links, pauses and punctuation are left to visitors to insert individually. Much can be read 'between the lines' and in the interstices of the various installations. Instead of having one's national heritage presented like a continuous narrative or a 'never-ending story', this version has many separate but related volumes. There is free movement between the

different spaces; the past and the present are equally privileged; expressions of cultural identity come in a range of media; and the exhibitions are curated either by ROM staff or collaboratively with members of various outside communities. The 'grammatical rules' needed to translate one's personal notion of national identity into a meaningful statement are the visitor's own. They are given not just the noun 'nation', but the verbs of 'nationing' with which to construct their uniquely differing tales.

In the Time of Whose Kayak: Native Peoples and the Ethics of Nationing

Some might see this eclecticism as a design flaw or a museological escape-route allowing the institution to avoid engaging in sensitive political issues. However, I see the ROM's decision not to produce an all-encompassing, tightly-controlled linear narrative as a significant move. What allows the larger space of 'multiple dissension' to work as successfully as it does is the juxtaposition of smaller entities such as the Heritage Gallery of Canada's Peoples (featuring changing narratives about Canada's multicultural character) with other spaces such as the Roloff Beny Gallery (showing examples of contemporary Canadian culture) or the Gallery of Indigenous Peoples.

This latter Gallery's inaugural exhibition, 'In The Time of the Kayak: Hunting in the Eastern Canadian Arctic', is an example of how the museum can act as facilitator, rather than dictator, for the expression of cultural knowledge - a knowledge which may be presented as a living example of a dynamic national heritage. In allowing the installation to originate and continue as a collaborative effort with the people of Arctic Bay, curator Kenneth Lister made no effort to force Inuit heritage into a snug fit with that of the nation as a whole. Nor did his display present or lament the Inuit ways as 'tragically disappearing' or as something romantically 'Canadian' to which we must all return.

Lister's collaborative style has perhaps set a precedent for subsequent exhibitions in this space. Following a 1991 cooperative research project to record on videotape the construction of a kayak frame, Lister invited Andrew Oyukuluk and Simon Qamanirq, the two key participants in the project, to visit the ROM for further collaboration in 1993. Since kayak construction includes an essential female role, Tugaq Tunraluk, a respected and knowledgeable elder, was also invited. During their stay, they discussed and demonstrated many aspects of kayak construction and skin covering with Lister. Their conversations, translated by Qamanirq, were video and audio taped and subsequently transcribed by Lister, who used the exchange of information in preparing text and selecting objects for the show.

In 1992, Qamanirq and his wife, Iga, had visited the ROM to put together and narrate the video *Between Generations: The Transference of Kayak Knowledge*. The 1993 footage of Tunraluk demonstrating some of the techniques used by Inuit women in making kayak covers out of sealskin was made into a video titled *Sinew Thread; Waterproof Seam*. Both videos now play in the Gallery. More importantly, perhaps, copies of all visual and textual material are also held by the Arctic Bay Elders Council. There are plans to produce a video of the completed ROM exhibition which will be given to the people of Arctic Bay and other northern Inuit communities. It will also be available for general distribution to schools throughout Canada.

Lister's role was a catalyst for expressions of cultural identity, and the resulting exhibition was undeniably shaped by the dynamics of the cooperative interchange. In order to represent the more subtle nuances of cultural interchange, the exhibition was faced with new design challenges. The translation of a uniquely dynamic character became difficult within the rather static confines of the exhibition model. Certain questions became apparent: is it even possible to 'display' the vitality of collaborative communication within the museum frame? How does the curator resist homogenising the great range of viewpoints? How can the design avoid creating 'illusions of unanimity', as if the exhibition represents the unequivocal agreement of curatorial research and a community's lived experience?

In some ways, the variety of media and the means used to communicate the themes of the kayak exhibition worked symbolically to create an active and polyphonic space in which visitors could interact. The videos particularly allowed for different voices and alternative visions to emerge which both enhanced the audience's understanding of artefacts on display while also encouraging a knowledge of traditional tools, techniques, views and values, whose qualities are essentially un-objectifiable.

CHARLES PACHTER, *MOOSEPLUNGE II*, 1990, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS. ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM.



From Nation to Nationing - and Back Again

Curators such as Lister are subtly, but decisively, moving the institution away from tired practices of the past which often used the heritage of indigenous peoples only as a 'mediating term' to connect the history of European settlement 'with the deep history of the land. These acts of mediation, the urge to constantly link themes and events in a massive display of historical continuity is a museum practice whose philosophical underpinnings need to be re-examined in light of much recent post-colonial criticism.(5)

Although the kayak exhibition is not overtly political the very 'ethic' of display it promotes is, indeed, quite political. In itself, and when viewed in conjunction with the adjoining spaces, the Gallery of Indigenous Peoples allows for a vision of Canada to evolve over time. It is a vision that will find its ultimate interpretation with each visitor who enters the galleries.

In terms of what the exhibit *is not* (an attempt to romanticise the Inuit way of life and use it to perpetuate a Canadian myth of 'The Great White North'), the kayak show also makes a statement about heritage preservation in general. We can no longer 'insert' indigenous history into our own nation-making efforts nor can we present it as an object to be sentimentalised in any grand cabinet of our curiosities.

There is a crucial element of self-reflection involved when museums such as the ROM take their first timid steps toward collaboration. The participating parties play an important part in articulating a new role and function for the museum. In the words of Judith Ostrowitz, one of the few authors to tackle how we 'document' the inherently 'un-documentable' complexities of collaborative interchange, our museums must become 'a unique meeting place for collaboration' and 'the site of dynamic "conversations" among cooperating parties'.(6) And while museum-initiated encounters between different cultures will not always satisfy all participants, they help to formulate and identify important problems and issues that may be addressed through further collaboration.

With such shifts in thought and practice, a more vital role for the modern museum is being delineated. In moving away from archival paradigms and adopting a more conversational, multi-vocal approach the very 'language' and 'look' of museum design is undergoing important transformation.

What is more, these cultural 'conversations' are reaching out to a broad range of communities. For many of these groups, access to museum collections,



SKIN-WORKING TOOLS, EARLY 20TH CENTURY. L-R: IVORY NEEDLE CASE AND NEEDLES; ULU (INUIT WOMAN'S KNIFE); FLENSING KNIFE AND SKIN NEEDLE CASE AND BONE THIMBLE. FROM 'IN THE TIME OF THE KAYAK: HUNTING IN THE EASTERN CANADIAN ARCTIC,' ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM FEB 1994-SPRING 1995.

research, exhibitions and programming plays a crucial role in identifying and strengthening ethnic identity and cultural heritage. The representation of heritage is an interpretive and highly subjective exercise, and when of a nationalistic character, it is also extremely political. The sooner museums find creative ways to deal with these dynamics the sooner museums will talk not about 'nations' but about the even more patriotic act of 'nationing'.

Rebecca Duclos
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Rebecca Duclos will be speaking on this topic at Deakin University (Rusden Campus) on Monday 10 October, 12.30pm. Phone Margaret Birtley on (03) 244 7353 for details.

INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA: Computers, Public Access and Museums

by Matthew Kassay

In 1992, Matthew Kassay visited the United States to investigate interactive technology and imaging in museums and libraries. In 1993, he attended the Second International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums (ICHIM '93) in the UK, and looked at public access technology in London museums. Here he reports on his findings.

Long before 'interactive' and 'multimedia' became 1990s buzzwords, museums were presenting multimedia displays and exhibitions to their visitors and encouraging interaction (to varying degrees) between visitors and museum objects.⁽¹⁾ It is not surprising, therefore, that they were among the first organisations to realise the potential of interactive multimedia computer technology as a way of allowing even greater personal participation and involvement in the visitor's experience.

There are three main categories of public access computer technology currently in use in museums: catalogues of museum collections (often incorporating images); orientation guides to the layout and content of the museum; and interpretive guides to support specific exhibitions or parts of a museum's collection. They are not mutually exclusive, however.

Multimedia collection databases

These systems allow visitors to access information (and often digitised or videodisk images), about a museum's collection from a terminal. This means visitors have some level of access to every work in the collection, rather than just those on display at the time of their visit. However, the level of information and the amount of detail provided can vary widely.

There are important differences between a public access collection database and a collection management system. While a public access system is likely to use much of the collection management database's raw data, the user interface, the method of accessing the information, and the format in which that information is presented is usually quite different. The information requirements and expectations of the public are distinct from those of the museum's staff.

The success of a public access collection information system depends on the ease and flexibility of access to its information. Visitors require access by the artist/creator's name, by media category, and some form of subject description, but some of the more successful systems offer additional options. The touch-screen Micro Gallery system in the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery of London allows users to access information by the traditional methods mentioned above, but also through a series of

historical maps providing access by time and place.

The level of information in the Micro Gallery system goes well beyond the limitations of the typical collection catalogue. The detailed contextual and interpretive information, and the many different ways of gaining access to that information allow the system to be used as a multimedia encyclopedia on the history of Western painting. A 'hypertext' facility also allows users to explore particular topics in more detail or to look up definitions of key terms. Names of artists, places and technical terms are highlighted in the text and can be selected to access related or background information. Individual users can thereby customise information to their particular levels of knowledge and interest.

While principally a collection information system, the Micro Gallery also fulfils the role of an orientation guide by showing users the precise location of particular works in the Gallery. At the end of the session a map of the Gallery can be printed showing where the paintings selected by the visitor are hung.

Microsoft recently purchased the rights to market and distribute the Micro Gallery system and it is now available as a CD-ROM that can be used with a Macintosh or with Windows software. The *Microsoft Art Gallery CD-ROM*, retailing for around \$100, also includes recorded pronunciations of artists' names, plus four theme-based narrated tours of the National Gallery's collections.

Multimedia orientation guides

Rather than attempting to provide information about all the objects in a museum collection, these systems are designed to give a brief introduction to the museum's content and programs.

They usually combine permanent information, such as a general introduction to the museum, its history, purpose, layout, facilities etc., and temporary information about current exhibitions and forthcoming lectures, films and performances. These systems need to be flexible and easy to update, preferably by the museum's own staff.

The Natural History Museum in London last year unveiled an excellent example of a multimedia computerised orientation guide. The Museum is one of the largest in the world, and it is easy to feel overawed by the choice of exhibits and collections on display. The interactive orientation guide is the Museum's answer.

Its vast foyer contains eight touch-screen terminals, each positioned in an alcove surrounded by a representative sample of objects from the Museum's

collections. The sample objects (such as a sabre-toothed tiger), are intended to attract the attention of visitors who will then notice that information about sabre-toothed tigers is available on the nearby touch-screen monitor in a choice of six different languages. The system also informs visitors that the Museum contains examples of other mammals from the Pleistocene period in the palaeontology galleries, and a map of the Museum can then be displayed to show directions.

Multimedia exhibition support programs

The third type of public access museum information systems are those which provide contextual and interpretive information about works in an exhibition, or a particular part of a museum's permanent collection. Because interactive multimedia systems are expensive to develop, they are rarely produced to support short-term temporary exhibitions. They do sometimes accompany long-term touring exhibitions, however.

These systems are particularly useful in providing better access to information about collections which, by way of their physical nature, might be difficult to display. The J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, for example, has a wonderful collection of illuminated medieval manuscripts but only a few pages from each work can be displayed at any one time. Furthermore, it would create obvious nightmares for conservators and security staff if the public were allowed to handle them. The Getty Museum's answer has been to produce an interactive videodisk of its manuscript collection, allowing visitors to page through five examples of these delicate and beautiful works through a touch-screen computer terminal.

Not only does the system allow visitors to look through an entire manuscript they would otherwise be restricted to peering at through a glass wall, it also includes video sequences demonstrating medieval techniques of manuscript production.

Multimedia in exhibitions

The Powerhouse Museum and the National Maritime Museum in Sydney have made extensive use of multimedia computer technology in their exhibitions.

Visitors to last year's exhibition 'The Australian Dream' at the Powerhouse were able to use a touch-screen interactive system to design their own 1950s dream home. The current 'Real Wild Child' exhibition features a wide range of interactive technology, including a touch-screen rock trivia quiz, a 'Careers in Rock' game allowing visitors to see whether they would succeed or fail in the music business, and a range of interactive computer-based musical instruments. Another system, recently developed with sponsorship from Telecom, gives visitors a glimpse into the future of fibre-optic telecommunications. Interactive television, 'video on demand', and 'video telephones' are just a few services of the future that can be experienced through this system.

The design brief of the National Maritime Museum incorporated some form of audiovisual and/or interactive technology into every section of the museum. One of the Museum's most popular

attractions is a touch-screen interactive system allowing visitors to explore aspects of Australian surf culture. Other systems include a touch-screen timeline of American and Australian maritime history: 'The Trading Game' in which visitors navigate cargo vessels around the globe and attempt to make a profit; and 'The Alliance', a system whereby visitors interview WW2 naval commanders and view documentary footage of maritime battles. The Maritime Museum is also planning a public access multimedia catalogue of its collection.

Future directions

As computers become more powerful, sophisticated and easier to use, and digital storage becomes cheaper and more plentiful, museums will doubtless use the technology in new and innovative ways. The convergence of multimedia computing with high-speed digital communications will open up new possibilities. Physical distance and museum walls will cease to be barriers to information about museums and their collections.

Already there is talk of the international 'virtual museum', accessible by fibre-optic cable (the 'Information Super-highway') through a home computer. Users will be able to randomly select works from museums all over the world and display still and motion video images plus supporting documentation on their computer screen. It is already possible to access an online image database of stolen artworks established by the Canadian Heritage Information Network and Interpol.

Europe is leading the way in the development of museum information networks with enthusiastic funding support from the Commission of the European Communities. A number of prototype inter-institutional museum network projects have been developed including: VAN EYCK (Visual Arts Network for Exchange of Cultural Knowledge), NARCISSE (Network of Art Research Computer Image Systems in Europe) and RAMA (Remote Access to Museum Archives). They aim to test the viability of providing shared international networks access to information on museum collections and images.

The expanding use of the Internet by museum professionals throughout the world will help facilitate widespread institutional cooperation and information sharing on an international level, and will provide online public access to museum collections.

In the United States, an exhibition of treasures from the Vatican has already been mounted on the Internet by the Library of Congress, allowing international remote access to archival documentation and digitised photographs of the exhibits.⁽²⁾ Some museums in the United States – the University of California's Museum of Paleontology and the University of Illinois' Kranert Art Museum – have already provided online access to their collections and programs through a graphical hypermedia Internet interface called Mosaic.⁽³⁾

The increased institutional cooperation and information sharing made possible by these advances, means new standards are necessary to ensure that museums are positioned to take full advantage of new developments.

The Museum Computer Network (US), has formed a Consortium for Computer Interchange of Museum Information (CIMI) to develop and promote appropriate standards to allow international exchange of information and documentation (including visual images) about museum collections.(4)

In Australia, the Heritage Collections Committee is currently developing plans for a national museums information system which is likely to be based on AARnet (the Australian Academic Research Network), the Australian arm of the Internet.

Virtual Reality, though still in its infancy, has already begun to make an impact on museums. At the Carnegie Mellon University's Studio for Creative Inquiry in Pittsburgh, a networked virtual art museum has been developed, allowing access to a simulated version of the CMU College of Fine Arts Gallery. Visitors enter by donning a head-mounted display device and once 'inside' can explore the Gallery to find virtual artworks and even create their own three-dimensional virtual objects in the studio.

Limited by the processing power of today's computers, Virtual Reality systems presently only serve to demonstrate that the technology still has a long way to go. With increasing computer sophistication and a corresponding decrease in costs, however, it can only be a matter of time before we see the common availability of 'virtual exhibitions' – three-dimensional digital environments allowing visitors to 'travel', say, into ancient Egyptian tombs or the salons of 19th century Paris. The possibilities and

opportunities will only be constrained by our imagination.

Matthew Kassay
Documentation Librarian, Queensland Art Gallery

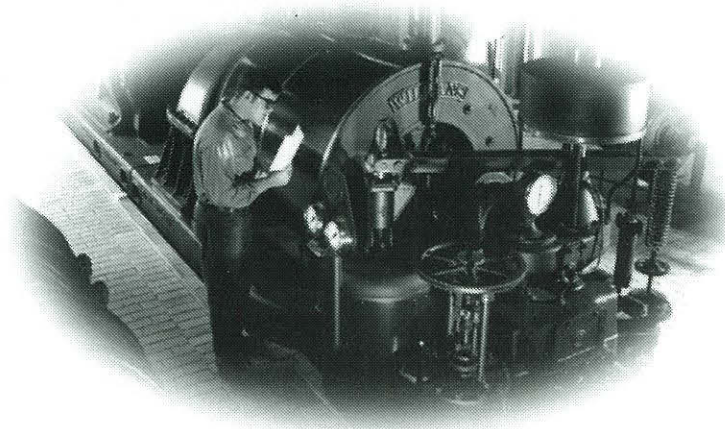
Matthew Kassay's attendance at ICHIM '93 and his study tour of London museums was assisted by the former AMAA's Professional Development program and the Australia Council, the Federal Government's funding and advisory body.

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Matthew Kassay has prepared a bibliography on the subject of museums and multimedia technology, plus a list of addresses for the overseas networks mentioned in this article. Please contact the editor for a copy.

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CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: The New Galleries of Australian Art at Canberra

by *Alison Inglis*

The new comprehensive re-hanging of the galleries of Australian art at Canberra's National Gallery of Australia has recently been unveiled with considerable fanfare. Indeed, a major conference was organised to coincide with the opening: entitled *On the 'Line: Re-hanging Australian Art'*,⁽¹⁾ it brought together curators, academics, artists and writers to address and debate current issues in Australian art and culture. A significant aspect of the new display itself, has been the strong and divided reaction it provoked from reviewers: variously described as more worthy of 'blockbuster treatment... than many an imported show', as 'an event of importance', and as a 'partial debacle', the very disparity of the response indicates that the re-hanging deserves serious attention.

Probably the first and most striking feature of the new hang is the greater coherence of the display space. The whole upper floor has recently undergone extensive renovation – the previous temporary partitions have been removed, and new windows and side rooms have been opened up – allowing a sense of both separate and cumulative space to develop as you move through the galleries. The chronological display of the art is thus enhanced by this more logical sequence of rooms, while at the same time, the larger size of the individual galleries provides a more sympathetic space for showing the works. The generous proportions of the rooms are complimented by the colour scheme – a rich dark green for the colonial section which is then dramatically replaced by the stark white walls of the modernist galleries. A new, sophisticated lighting system has been installed throughout, allowing a range of media to be shown side by side – such as vulnerable photographs and works on paper alongside major oil paintings – and also permitting a variety of viewing conditions, from dramatic spotlighting to the illusion of daylight.⁽²⁾

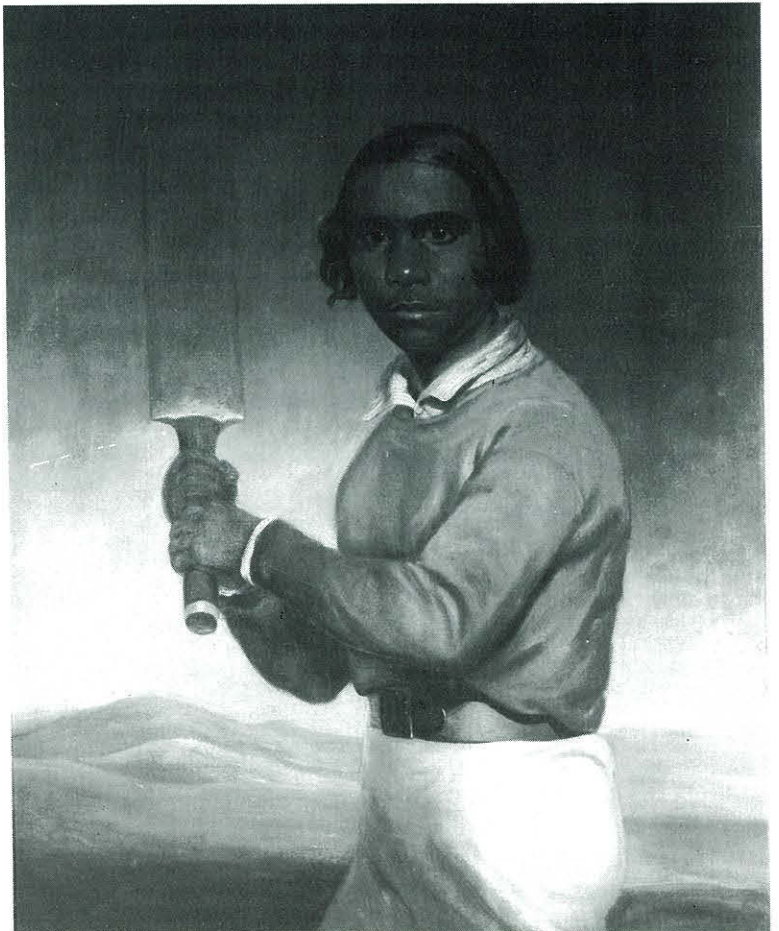
The chief catalyst for the new display has been the addition of 31 major colonial paintings from the Rex Nan Kivell Collection, on permanent loan from the National Library. As Mary Eagle, the Senior Curator of Australian Art, has explained: 'Once we were given the permanent loan of the Nan Kivell paintings, the responsibility of presenting them in a national context mean't that our holdings of colonial art were doubled, and we had to find some way of hanging them... The other thing is, because we had always thought that they would come into this collection, the policy for the acquisition of colonial art had been planned around them, so now... we could get to work.'⁽³⁾

This enhanced Australian collection also invited a reassessment of the way our artistic heritage addressed the 'very real questions about our place in the world'. One of the keynote sessions of the 'On the Line' conference was entitled 'Cultural

Encounters', as this was identified as one of the underlying themes informing the present display. But while a 'diverse cultural identity' was felt to have been achieved by 'the selection of works... by artists of various cultures',⁽⁴⁾ the curators also wished to open up the whole question of the relationship of cultural institutions to their audiences. In a recent interview, Mary Eagle observed that while museums were once 'established to uplift people, and also to give them a total picture of learning and of understanding... that traditional notion has been collapsing over the past twenty years'. In the new galleries, 'none of the curators took the idea that there was one story of Australian art... the messages that we give our audience – the visual messages primarily but also verbal messages – should be clarifying but not falling into the position of saying "this is it"'.⁽⁵⁾

Certainly the time-honoured 'history of Australian art' has been revised and re-interpreted in the present

J.M. CROSSLAND 1800–1858. *NUJNULTERA, A YOUNG CRICKETER OF THE NATIVES' TRAINING INSTITUTION POONINDIE* c. 1854. OIL ON CANVAS, 99 cm x 78.8 cm. THE REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA.



display, with its suggestively post-modernist perspective made up of unexpected inclusions and juxtapositions. Some of these are illuminating (the presence of William Strutt's history painting *Black Thursday* (1864) in the colonial gallery strikes an unexpected note of grandeur), or intriguing (19th century photographs of homesteads beside a Longstaff colonial interior; Max Dupain's sensual sunbaker near Tucker's sinister version of the same subject). Other combinations are less successful: the conjunction of a Hans Heysen pastoral with some Asian-inspired art seems simply arbitrary and puzzling. Several critics have found fault with the selection of the 20th century rooms, in particular the absence of 1960s abstraction. However, the rotational approach to display adopted by the NGA will mean that works will be changed on a regular basis – particularly in the galleries dedicated to more recent art. Thus, any doubts raised by the absence of certain favourites can be allayed by the realisation that this display is not set in concrete, and surely, one should welcome the new insights gained from the unconventional selection.

The belief that art can be interpreted in different ways is not simply encouraged by the grouping of the works. The display is the result of a collective curatorial effort and a range of alternative viewpoints were encouraged in the accompanying written information: 'the combination of the image, the extended label and leaflet – which, in some cases, say different things – we think that will be a very useful way of breaking down the idea of there being only one thing to say about this work of art'. However, Mary Eagle rejects the notion that this

multi-layered, anti-authoritarian account of Australian art requires a considerable amount of explanatory text: 'What I am unhappy about is the replacement of the work of art by the information... so that if you stand in this museum, or any museum, and look at people walking around, they read a lot more than they look; I'd like to reverse that and have them look rather than read so much... have leaflets accessible if they would like it... but not available in the gallery room... instead they are available in the reading room on the same floor.'

In keeping with this desire for more looking and less reading, some extended labels, as yet unrealized, 'will be simply blown-up portions of the work of art – so that they will be just visual; there won't be any words, you will simply see the brushstrokes, weave or tool marks'. Other visual devices, such as the lighting system, are used to emphasise and contrast, rather than merely provide neutral illumination. In the first colonial room, the objects are dramatically lit by spotlights, but in the adjacent gallery they are bathed in an ambient light, reminiscent of daylight. In some cases, these different modes of lighting can be particularly effective – for instance, the ambient light in the '9 x 5s' gallery complements the fact that these works were originally executed out-of-doors; however, for the most part, it is difficult to see how the varying illumination can do more than set a mood or possibly lure curious visitors from one room to the next.

The stress on looking and on the visual message, is also reflected in the spacious and mainly single-line hang (except in the dramatically multi-tiered '9 x 5s' room)

ONE OF THE NEW ROOMS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA, IN JUNE 1994 HUNG WITH WORKS BY BERTRAM MACKENNAI, RUPERT BUNNY, PAUL MONTFORD, L. B. HALL, AND E. P. FOX.





EUGENE VON GUERARD, *KOORT KOORT-NONG*, 1860 OIL ON TWO CANVASSES, 50.8 x 83.9 cm. REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA.

which encourages the lengthy viewing of individual works. Mary Eagle has stressed that she and her colleagues didn't want the display to resemble 'a stage setting or a Hollywood film set – I think museums, in their attempt to capture tableaux from the past... haven't realised that it operates as a distancing device'. This decision to avoid an overtly historicist display in the colonial rooms can be compared to other recent re-hangings at the National Gallery of London's Sainsbury Wing and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 19th century galleries. While the major trend over the past decade has been against the examination of works of art in isolation and in favour of contextual studies,⁽⁵⁾ the last few years has witnessed somewhat of a reaction against this new historicism. One commentator recently complained: 'The current vogue for authentic decor and historicising picture hanging is just one manifestation of the contemporary uncertainty about aesthetic values... If historicism prevails, the individual work of art is locked in its period, and cannot break out to meet the contemporary eye...'⁽⁶⁾

The new galleries at the National Gallery of Australia have resisted the temptation to create 'period rooms'. However, in other ways, a sense of the broader historical context is suggested by the incorporation of furniture, photographs and decorative arts. Particular attention has also been given to the framing of the works. The NGA has been a pioneer in the re-housing of its collection in historically authentic or sympathetic frames, and for the new display, a major project was initiated to re-frame the Nan Kivell works in line with this policy. Mary Eagle stressed that 'there are very few works that don't have their historical frames now... We don't do what some museums have done, which is to give a standard frame (like a Glover frame, a Conrad Martens frame, etc) – we have an array of frames'. The question remains as to whether this concern for the authentic framing of the paintings sits uneasily within the broader desire to avoid

a historicist presentation. Considering the strong traditional relationship between frames and interior decoration,⁽⁷⁾ can one meaningfully divorce the historical frame from its historical setting?

A far more contentious issue relating to the appropriateness of certain objects within particular settings is raised by the curators' bold decision to borrow 29 Aboriginal works (weapons, baskets, ornaments and bark paintings) from the National Museum of Australia's ethnographic collection to be included within the new re-hang. The introduction of non-Western material into the National Gallery's presentation of Australian art has been explained by Mary Eagle in terms of the nation's diverse cultural identity: 'In this display of June 1994 are works of Maori and New Guinea art in the Oceania gallery alongside portraits by an artist of the 18th century European "Enlightenment". Some works of Aboriginal art produced in Victoria in the 1860s are located next to contemporary paintings by an immigrant German artist... The works of Maori, English, Aboriginal and German colonial art do not address each other. In putting them together, we face the charge of falsely asserting a culture which accommodates them all. We would hope that the separation of Aboriginal art in displays elsewhere in the gallery offsets that impression; and, in defence of their representation within the context of colonial Australian art, we believe the fact of their co-existence needs to be seen.'⁽⁸⁾

The presence of the Aboriginal material has been recognised as the most controversial aspect of the entire display. Applauded by some commentators,⁽⁹⁾ it has been rigorously condemned by others – such as Humphrey McQueen, who deplored the installation of '29 artefacts from the National Museum... in glass cases surrounded by oil paintings in gilded frames. The meanings of those Aboriginal pieces are thus being expropriated as surely as was the country of the peoples who made them. The juxtaposition of cane baskets with

marble busts has the opposite effect of the one intended.'(10)

Mary Eagle observes that there has been in fact 'no single Western definition of Art. The function of visual and other "art" has changed radically several times throughout the past 500 years. The 14th century Italian definition of art probably bears a closer relation to the 18th century Aboriginal function of art than either to the late 20th century Western or Aboriginal functions of art.' When selecting the pieces for the National Museum, the curators had sought 'for a notion of art – if you like "affect" – which we know that they had, a notion of art which is prior to museums, and that is wider than Europe, and that is to do with the social function of visual and other art. The word that goes across both cultures is presence... In the mid 19th century the triviality and the materialism of one culture, with its ambition to express bigger and better buildings, and more cattle and more sheep, and a landscape transformed for economic use... by comparison with the clearly ritualised and religious significance of other objects... There's no excuse for evading or avoiding our responsibility, I think, to represent the art that was being produced in this country – our history has to include Aboriginal and Western art.'

The curators' identification of Aboriginal production as art – indicating a shift from regarding anthropological items as documentation to valuing them for their 'social function as visual codes with formal or intrinsic qualities' – could be said to fly in the face of recent post-colonial thinking. As James Clifford has argued: "Culture" and "art" can no longer be simply extended to non-Western peoples and things. They can at worst be imposed, at best translated – both historically and politically contingent operations'.(11) Nevertheless, while agreeing, Mary Eagle believes that the appreciation of Aboriginal works as art rather than science, represents a refreshing alternative to conventional anthropological stereotypes: 'What we've done, in fact, is a very useful difference from anthropology. Anthropology has tended to ignore history within these cultures, and change within these cultures, for the sake of the notion of a working structure... We've opened up a Western question about anthropology.'

However, Patrick Wolfe, in a recent discussion of post-colonial approaches to anthropology, would claim that it represents more than just science, that it is, in fact, a 'total cultural practice... one which both expresses and sustains the hegemonic process of colonial settlement'. Thus, changing the emphasis in a presentation from frozen anthropological time to a more contextual artistic dating is not necessarily 'enough to give strength to a colonised subject... simply letting both parties speak cannot redress an all-encompassing machinery of inequality'.(12)

One particular example within the new re-hanging could be said to encapsulate the issues raised by the inclusion of Aboriginal works with a history of Australian art. Recently, Mary Eagle was asked about the incorporation of 1948 Groote Eylandt bark paintings in the room devoted to early 20th century abstraction. What was the visitor going to assume from their placement side by side? Would they now read this ancient and different culture in terms of Western art history, in terms of modernism? Wouldn't this close off too much of its own history and identity?

Mary Eagle responded by asking a question in return: 'Why do you think it's closing off its own identity? I think that they are so strong, those works, that they tend to retain their independence... This is the only period in Australian art, and those are the only white artists led by

a kind of spiritual, scientific concept of the universe... that's the only time that the styles of black and white artists are at all close. I think it's so exciting to go in there and see the works... It is the first time that you can draw a connection from within the art itself. We don't want anyone thinking that this is the only way for the works to be read. We've succeeded if they invite questions, if they invite a new perception...'

There is no doubt that the new Australian galleries in Canberra provide its audience with an opportunity to reflect on the nature and meaning of our national collection of art – a collection that has been dramatically enhanced by the addition of the Nan Kivell Collection, the inclusion of major loans (such as William Strutt's *Black Thursday*) from other public institutions and private patrons, as well as the controversial incorporation of Aboriginal material from the National Museum. Indeed, it is the ability of this rich array of works to provoke questions and raise debate, that is the single, most important, achievement of the new display of Australian art.

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GENDER PERSPECTIVES

Gender Perspectives. Essays on Women in Museums, Jane R. Glaser and Artemis A. Zenetou (eds), published Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington & London, 1994. US\$15.95

In their preface to a collection of over 30 essays on women and museums, the editors note that in America the feminist movement of the 1970s bypassed the museum community. Very much the same could be said of Australia although here, perhaps, the contours of that feminist bypass operation were slightly different. Because of the similarities, however, the essays in this volume chime well with the full range of feminist political positioning within the world of Australian museums.

The outlines of the gendered structure of that American museum world are referred to by several authors for several quite different purposes, but what they are saying is that 25 years after the feminist struggles of the '70s, at best, round about ten percent of the directorate of American museums is female. Clearly this situation has implications for the ways in which museums operate as institutions, for the knowledge they create, for the politics of museum and museological culture, and for the women who have to grapple with the racialised and gendered world of museums. The essays in this volume describe those implications from personal, theoretical and practical points of view and Australian readers will find much of their experience reflected here.

The inclusion of men within the volume sits oddly with the attempts of most contributors to locate a feminist position for women within the museum. The need to 'include' men in the feminist project is also found within the Australian museum world. Yet on reading their contributions there is little to be gained from them that is not covered by women contributors and within *their* essays. Too many of them write pieces of the 'what famous women have taught me, and how I promoted one or two, here and

there' kind. Frank Talbot's contribution is an excellent example of this tiresome genre. One finds, too, the view that men claiming sympathy with women's work and ambitions are somehow entitled to press women to develop the theories and practices that are cool, collected Perrot: 30, and no doubt male, that will let men once again discover that as Perrot says, there are fundamental inequalities in our trade. Do we need men to tell us this? And why do women constantly give over that one small space to the men who have access to the full range of publications, conferences, seminars and jobs that women are regularly excluded from. Surely feminist men, like anti-racist women, recognise that there are times when one withdraws? Not to do so necessarily brings into question the quality of the male support being offered.

The essays by the women contributors, no matter what political stance they take, are very much the stronger – more thoughtful, sensitive, responsible and rigorously analytical. The essay on the history of women's participation in museums by Lillian B. Miller is effectively theorised. Barbara Clark Smith's paper makes a strong conclusion to the volume, a conclusion which seeks the centring of women within museums, not their assimilation and re-invisibility.

This is a useful volume and will be widely read. It bears the hallmark of its genesis in a conference that will be readily recognisable to Australian readers – too many short exhortatory papers, too little engagement with the politics of our trade, and too little familiarity with the important theoretical debates that characterise women's studies, women's history, cultural studies and feminism outside the domain of the museum. An index would have helped enormously.

Professor Julie Marcus
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Charles Sturt University

MUSEUMS AND THEIR VISITORS

Museums and their Visitors, by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, published

Routledge, 1994, 206pp, hb, \$75.
Distributed by The Law Book Company Ltd (Sydney)

Dr Eilean Hooper-Greenhill was keynote speaker at the MEAA/MEANZ Conference, 'Pathways to Partnerships', in Melbourne last year. In her paper, 'Education at the Heart of Museums', she advanced the debate on the centrality of education to the museum's function and purpose. Hooper-Greenhill aligns herself with the recommendations put forward in the AAM Task Force on Museum Education document, *Excellence and Equity, Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (1992). The submission's first priority is '...that museums place education – in the broadest sense of the word – at the centre of their public service role. Assure that the commitment to serve the public is clearly stated in every museum's mission and central to every museum's activity.'

In her latest book *Museums and their Visitors*, Hooper-Greenhill has written an essential text for students studying museum courses, covering most of the issues associated with the demands for extroverted museums by a more informed and vocal public. For the museum professional, the book provides an excellent (and at times provocative) discussion of the need for museums to become more audience centred: 'The future for museums and galleries lies in the hands and the hearts of their users; those social institutions that cannot demonstrate a real and perceived need for their continued viability will not last for long in the climate of radical change that we are currently experiencing.' (p.182)

The first three chapters establish why, how and with whom communicative functions should be developed if museums are serious in their intention to become extroverted. This will interest students and those in the museum profession who do not work 'on the floor'. Hooper-Greenhill discusses the implications of museums taking on the role of communicator in terms of expanding their educational role, the need to find new ways of working with audiences, and the

need and use of market research.

The relevance of communication theory and the necessity for a dynamic exchange between provider and receiver is also covered, followed by an analysis of the varied profiles of museum audiences and their needs, plus the impact these variables have on the way museums are perceived and used.

Chapters four to eight offer practical guidance on planning and evaluating museum processes with the needs of visitors in mind – a useful section where theories are supported by examples, diagrammatic strategy charts and sample sheets.

The final chapter, 'Managing museums for visitors', stresses the need for policies ranging from marketing to education, which are visitor centred.

Museums and their Visitors is informative, easy to read, and includes an extensive bibliography. I would urge museum studies coordinators to include it as an essential text.

Henry Gaughan
Education Officer,
National Gallery of Victoria

TRAINING AS ACCESS

Training as Access: Guidelines for the Development of Heritage Curricula and Cultural Diversity, by Amareswar Galla, published Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1993. 94pp

In 1989, in a document entitled *The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, the Commonwealth Government released its blueprint for changes that sought to foster a multicultural society. Shortly afterwards, another Commonwealth initiative turned to museums and cultural institutions through which to solicit such changes more actively. This was pursued through a special-purpose committee and a document entitled *A Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia's Cultural Diversity* (DASET, Canberra, 1990).

The term 'multiculturalism' gained leverage in cultural policy

planning during the 1970s. This was eventually overtaken by the more inclusive term 'cultural diversity' – based not solely on race or ethnic origins, but involving a broader and more pluralistic sense of multiple social constituencies. Both terms co-exist in cultural policy discussions today, though the latter term stands up to much better analysis and operational usefulness.

Dr Amareswar Galla's recent compilation of an evolutionary, workshop-developed document on Heritage Curricula and Cultural Diversity (through his base at the University of Canberra and as convenor of the course in Cross-Cultural Heritage Management) is an immensely detailed and rich composition of material. It is designed to promote cross-cultural awareness and development of multiple training strategies around issues of cultural diversity in an increasingly heterogenous Australian society.

The document – in fact a 'project' – specifically seeks to develop guidelines for training to benefit the museum sector. However, the methodology expands to many aspects of ongoing social interaction and training. Its implications could be applied directly (and in many cases, this is already happening) to all levels of the education sector, and to employment and training in many areas of contemporary Australian society and industry.

The virtues of this publication – its richness, multiplicity, detailed recommendations and proliferating strategies for implementation – might also make it daunting for those who have not yet travelled far in the cultural landscapes it opens up. These landscapes involve increasing awareness and facilitation of cross-cultural understanding in our society. They involve ever greater attention to the diversity and experience of multiple migrant communities, but also (and most especially) awareness of the primary position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in any coherent mapping of Australian cultural history.

For those who find the volume, the complexity of material, and the

multiple exhortations set out in this study daunting, it is advisable to focus on the nine *key recommendations* and to then seek a relevant and practical path for their implementation.

Though many might find the volume and extent of the recommendations difficult to adopt speedily, or to align with their immediate institutional character, it would be hard to accept as just that *any* museum or teaching institution could afford to dismiss this project, or fail to find its general cultural thrust important. Indeed this project is vitally relevant to some of the most pressing ethical, professional, theoretical and operational matters facing Australian museums and heritage institutions today.

This study has aroused thoughts in my own mind about further work or considerations to be pursued in the near future. First: the notion of *community*. Recent discussion of progressive museological work has extolled *moving from an object-centred to a community-centred approach* in the management and development of collecting and heritage institutions. There is perhaps insufficient attention to the complexity of a *community* – an entity made up of such different and often contesting currents (even within particular ethnic groups) that it seems there is a danger of totalising or monumentalising the idea of *community*, just as the notion of *collection* or *museum* was monumentalised earlier.

I also wonder about the desire to incorporate the project's deepest and most far-reaching objectives for change in our social awareness and functioning into the form of an 'Academy' for cultural diversity. Perhaps academisation would produce not an exemplary national modelling but an institutional refrigerator, in which the most lively impulses of interactive connection and exploration of the subtleties of cultural difference would congeal into an immobilised single site and setting. Perhaps the models of 'centres' and 'networks' would best suit the genuinely admirable and experimental aspirations of this project, rather than the older one of

institutional 'academy'.

This dense but relatively slim and inexpensive publication is a necessary purchase for all institutional libraries. There will be diverse responses to the study. However, at least one senior policy-influencing staff member of each museum should find the time to read it soon and report on its implications for operational management and institutional goals. It would be useful to current thinking in many other social institutions as well.

Bernice Murphy
Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

ABOUT FACE

About Face, National Portrait Gallery, Old Parliament House, Canberra, to 22 September

The National Portrait Gallery opened at the end of March with an exhibition named 'About Face'. It was described by the Prime Minister in his inaugural address to the crowd in King's Hall, Old Parliament House, as representing the range of Australian identity, the unknown and the famous. Curator Anne Loxley made more complex claims in the catalogue: that it is a dual study of national achievement and national identity.

What kinds of Australian's appear in 'About Face'? Slightly more dead than alive, by my rough count; somewhat more famous than unknown; more with names than totally anonymous. Anyone can quibble about who's in/who's out; but the mix of traditional portrait subjects with informal images and modern artwork images is evidence of the aim of inclusiveness. As achievers, the subjects are a very mixed bunch, and the media of presentation reflect this ambivalence. For all the value of the substance of the images, the media carry another meaning – and sometimes the messages are discordant. Some images of Aboriginal people best display this contradiction. There is more than a note of mockery in the oil portrait of Bungaree.

The media on show are predominantly the traditional one-offs of painting, drawing or

sculpture, plus a handful of popular culture mass media such as photographs, a souvenir handkerchief and a commemorative jug. As demonstration of the range, Prime Ministers appear on canvas in gilt frames, in holiday snaps, moulded into a jug and cast into a doorstep. An argument could be made about the continuum of the production of personal images via types of media, but it isn't. Instead, the show turns on a fundamental contradiction: it presents the mass media images as equivalent to the unique artwork portraits. In doing so, it confuses its claims, both as a gallery of achievement and as a survey of Australian character.

What is a portrait, as opposed to an image? Traditionally, the portrait was a likeness of a person or group, a record of physiognomy or character. But it was a form available only to those sufficiently well-off to commission an artist-technician to work it in paint or pencil or stone. Portraits were prestige products, even in their cheaper, bourgeois forms such as painted miniatures or tinted drawings. Whether large or small, such pieces were valued for the artistry of the producer, for their sentimental or ceremonial meaning to viewers, for their uniqueness. As specimens of the larger field of artworks, they carried the aura of the patron, the collector, the aristocrat with money and taste. They were the expressions of a time and social system, a technology which limited their availability.

In their exclusivity, artwork portraits contain prestige which puts them out of kilter with today's society and technology. This is why formal likenesses of modern princes and magnates look so old fashioned – it is an anachronistic form, consciously intended to evoke other ages and relations of power. But it is misleading to group portraits in the style of old with mass produced images.

Today, images of people are widely available to all audiences, for the old reasons of sentiment and ceremony, but now also for information and spectacle. The means of making images are not confined to craftspeople trained in

specialised techniques, but to anyone with the hand-eye coordination to focus a camera. So can *any* image of a person or people now be called a portrait? Is a press pic of Lindy and Michael Chamberlain outside court a portrait, or a holiday snap of Hazel and Bob Hawke on a motor bike?



Funding Assistance for Touring Exhibitions

Visions of Australia is a Federal Government exhibitions touring program designed to make the nation's collection of scientific, heritage, Aboriginal and artistic material accessible to more Australians.

The program provides assistance to organisations to tour cultural exhibitions across State / Territory boundaries where this is currently not commercially viable and there is a demonstrated need.

The majority of funds are available to help tour exhibitions, although some assistance is available for project development.

Assistance may be available for not-for-profit organisations including:

- Commonwealth, State and local government-funded cultural organisations, including museums, art galleries, science centres, cultural centres;
- community cultural organisations such as community museums, heritage trusts, cultural centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural groups;
- biological and zoological institutions and botanical gardens;
- organisations specialising in curating or managing touring exhibitions;
- professional and voluntary associations in fields such as the arts, history and science.

Expressions of interest are now being sought from organisations wishing to apply for assistance in the 1995-96 financial year. Applications must be received at the address below by close of business **13 January 1995**.

Program guidelines and application forms can be obtained by writing to:

Project Officer, Visions of Australia
Australian Cultural Development Office
Department of Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT, 2601
or by telephoning 008 819 461
during business hours.

I'd argue that such informal images are not portraits, that a portrait is to some degree formal and purposeful. The pix that news photographers catch in breathless moments of public spectacle are information or even entertainment, whose currency is usually shortlived: they are not portraits. The snaps we take on holidays are powerful personal images, but usually meaningless to most other people: they are not portraits either. That ordinary people recognise this distinction is evident in the continuing ritual of taking the family to a professional photographer for a studio portrait, a standard grouping in a conventional setting: *these* are portraits.

I think the distinction matters. It's like the difference between memory and history, the one personal and contingent, the other structured and purposeful. While we can find value in, and make use of, both types of thinking or imaging, we need to be aware of the internal messages carried by each medium. Thus the oil portrait of Mother Mary McKillop, painted well after her death from a photograph, tells us more about Mary's growing cult than about the woman herself, though the label makes no such comment.

Visitors to the National Portrait Gallery are surprised to see popular and mass media images among the gilt-framed portraits, but I don't believe their surprise is a sign of delight – rather of dissonance and incongruity. That audiences swallow such mixed feasts without demur is evidence of the power of the gallery space, for the Portrait Gallery renovations of Old Parliament House follow the classical 'white cube' style of art presentation. It feels calm and classy, and very unlike the rather grotty historic offices on the opposite side of King's Hall. But it could be argued that the less polished approach would be more appropriate to 'the range of Australian identity', as Paul Keating introduced it.

Thus the question arises as to whether the National Portrait Gallery will take the route of art or of history in its mission. Child of the

National Library, which long collected images as documentary evidence, it has taken the name of its famous London prototype. But in Australia the 'Gallery' moniker orients it distinctively toward art, which perhaps determined the pure white layout and the nature of its first exhibition. The appointment of an anthropologist to the manager's position may open a third path; if so, Australia may yet have a National Portrait Gallery which is critically aware of messages as well as media. I hope so.

Linda Young
Lecturer, Cultural Heritage
Management,
University of Canberra

THE MARY ROSE

The Mary Rose: Life and Death on Henry VIII's Lost Warship
Australian National Maritime Museum, to 6 November 1994;
Warrnambool Art Gallery, 10 December – 26 February 1995;
Queensland Museum, 4 April 1995 – 30 June 1995; Western Australian Museum, 8 August 1995 – 20 October 1995

This exhibition seeks to recapture the moment when, in 1545, Henry VIII's revolutionary flagship, The *Mary Rose*, faced a massive French invasion force of 235 ships carrying 30,000 soldiers. She moved majestically into battle, heeled over to starboard and sank.

Built during the first two years of Henry VIII's long-to-be-remembered reign, The *Mary Rose* served her king valiantly for 35 years. Her demise, however, was through the particularly ungalant combination of overloading and negligence. As one historian charges in the exhibition catalogue 'The *Mary Rose* was, by too much folly drowned... for she was laden with much more ordnance and the ports left open, which were very low'. On the seabed off the coast of Portsmouth, this human folly and a thick layer of silt combined to uniquely preserve The *Mary Rose*, much of her cargo and the remains of the hundreds of crew who drowned with her.

This touring exhibition is the

result of many years of hard work by Alexander McKee (historian), Margaret Rule (archaeologist), and the *Mary Rose* Trust. This dedicated group devoted itself, as described in the exhibition's text, to opening a 'sealed capsule preserving a cross-section of maritime life in Tudor England'. Begun in the 1960s, under the patronage of Prince Charles, the Trust's president, this project required 28,000 dives between 1979 and 1982. In October 1982, The *Mary Rose* and over 17,000 objects and timbers were brought to the surface after 437 years on the seabed.

The *Mary Rose* Trust exists 'to clarify the relationships of the people who perished in the *Mary Rose* tragedy to their personal possessions, tools, weapons, and the ship itself'. Yet the elusive human component of this collection of remarkably old and well preserved objects remains deeply buried in the murky waters of the past. This exhibition stands more as a testimony to the advanced equipment, diving and conservation technology, the sophisticated archaeological procedures and considerable individual talent and expertise that made the recovery of The *Mary Rose* and her contents possible. The exhibition shares the opportunity and the potential that these longbows, arrow holders, rigging blocks, navigational instruments, pewter and wooden plates, games, personal combs, musical instruments and medicine chests may one day open a window upon Tudor England.

The Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) brought The *Mary Rose* exhibition to Australia and coordinated its Australian tour. The mammoth task of recording and conserving has meant a twelve year wait before the tour was possible, and the ANMM should be congratulated for taking on such a complex and difficult project. The opportunity to actually see such a unique Tudor collection, many pieces previously known only through drawings and paintings of the time, is the main attraction. Under colourful banners and atmospheric medieval music, the exhibition presents a general historic

context – most memorably a life-sized and magnificently dressed mannequin of Henry VIII in front of portraits and details of his six wives – and text panels about the ship's recovery. The rest of the exhibition presents a selection of objects recovered from The *Mary Rose* in theme display cases ('Tudor Archery', 'Built for Battle', 'Life Aboard Ship' etc). Unfortunately, the layout is confusing and the choice of colour dull (greys and black). The labelling is in very small print and is often bunched together under artfully arrayed objects. On the busy Sunday of my visit, it was almost impossible to see the text without waiting to stand directly in front of the case.

Much of this was offset by the colourful and lively public programs. I spent an enjoyable afternoon watching films about the raising of

The *Mary Rose*, the life and times of Henry VIII, the search for the *Sirius* and other famous shipwrecks. An introductory film narrated by Orson Welles is particularly dramatic. I also enjoyed an enthusiastic and very funny interpretive theatre performance by the Tudor Troubadors (actors Sam Wilcox, Raj Sidhu and Kris Bidenko). 'Medieval' minstrels also performed and a craftsperson demonstrated medieval calligraphy. An inexpensive, well produced catalogue published by the ANMM on behalf of the Mary Rose Trust, also complements the exhibition.

Australia, as a recognised leader in maritime archaeology with famous shipwrecks of its own, provides a fitting location for this exhibition. Yet, the awe of actually standing in the powerful presence of history, as must surely be the case

when viewing this same exhibition in Portsmouth, just metres away from where The *Mary Rose* was built and launched on her final journey, is missing. This shallowness is often apparent in international touring exhibitions, and museums frequently try to add depth and local relevance with additional programs. Maritime archaeology is one dimension surprisingly absent: how the ship's contents were excavated, where in the ship they were found, and whether the wreck should have been raised at all would have added an interesting interpretive layer. Overall, however, the programs offered enhance the exhibition and make for an entertaining and enjoyable visit.

Beth Hise
Exhibitions Assistant,
Historic Houses Trust (NSW)

'AN 18TH CENTURY ENGRAVING COPIED FROM A 16TH CENTURY PAINTING THAT RECORDS THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE SINKING OF THE *MARY ROSE*. IT SHOWS HENRY RIDING THROUGH THE ENCAMPMENT OF HIS ARMY, WHILE OUT AT SEA ONLY THE MASTHEADS OF THE SUNKEN SHIP ARE VISIBLE.'



Looking for Alternatives – Strategies for Public Access

During the last twelve months, a series of new strategies have been developed for displaying the City of Fremantle Collection. The Collection, which doesn't have a permanent gallery, is being displayed in community centres and temporary exhibition venues.

Background

The City of Fremantle Collection comprises over 900 artworks, mostly by Australian artists. It started, as did many Western Australian local government art collections, with the gift by Sir Claude Hotchin of 41 artworks in 1958. Since then it has developed with purchases and donations and now includes significant holdings of paintings, ceramics and prints (including winning prints from the annual Fremantle Print Award).

From 1978 to 1987, the Collection was stored and exhibited in the Fremantle Art Gallery, which also presented solo and group exhibitions of Western Australian artists. The State Government's decision in 1987 to hand this building over to a performing arts organisation has had long term negative effects on the profile and public perception of the Collection.

Increasing public access

Until mid 1993, only a small proportion of the

Collection was on public display and the lack of a permanent art gallery for its display seemed a huge obstacle to the Collection's public profile. The public access program is an attempt to overcome these perceptions and to re-establish the Collection as a significant cultural asset for the community. It also stems from a particular philosophical stance which seeks to break down the elitism often associated with art galleries. As curator, it has been my responsibility to develop and implement the public access strategies. However, this has inherent difficulties: there is constant tension between increasing public access through the use of non-conventional spaces and my curatorial responsibilities to care for and maintain the Collection.

The program focuses on two venues, both part of larger facilities, for changing exhibitions, and four Council-owned community facilities in which small numbers of works are displayed in public meeting rooms and communal spaces.

One of the changing exhibition venues, the Kathleen O'Connor Gallery (named after the significant WA artist represented in the collection) is located within the Fremantle Arts Centre, and benefits from the institution's high profile activities. The other venue is the Town Hall Centre Gallery, in the city council office building, where works are viewed by ratepayers and visitors to the offices.

Other community facilities such as a senior's centre/hostel, a women's refuge, and a community centre offer more diverse audiences. Works are hung on a six to twelve month basis, with standard artwork labels indicating they are from the City of Fremantle Collection. Each of these facilities has different lighting and environmental conditions, and not all have security systems.

Linking the Collection with other arts activities attempts to further broaden its audience and relevance. The Fremantle Arts Centre has now offered two workshops using selected works from the Collection as a reference point. They were designed to enable students to refer to original artworks, learn from the curator about the artists and techniques, and to explore their own techniques in the painting studio with guidance from a professional artist.

Compromise or strategy

The implementation of these initiatives is, of course, only part of the equation – their promotion is vital and it has been necessary to promote them in a particular way. The arts are integral to the Fremantle community's identity, and it has been necessary to draw on this.

There is also a collective memory of the Fremantle Art Gallery and a general belief that a similar edifice is necessary if the Collection is again to be taken seriously. To avoid the public access strategies being seen as a mere compromise, it has been important to turn what might be seen as a disadvantage – a permanent collection without a permanent home – into an advantage. The public access program allows

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for a considerable proportion of the Collection to be displayed throughout the year, in comparison with art galleries which usually show works from their collection for only part of the year. It has also been important to stress the considerable costs involved in running an art institution.

Art or interior decoration?

One of the most difficult aspects of hanging works in different community facilities is the user's expectations about art and the misperceptions about my role and interior decoration! Everybody seems to want bright, happy works. It is also difficult explaining to people that they cannot have a particular painting because of its value, while at the same time promoting the Collection as an important cultural resource to be enjoyed by the community.

Selecting works for display in community facilities is a mental balancing act: one is constantly weighing up the condition of the work and the realities of increasing public access. The work's value, condition, size, subject matter, and whether its surface is protected by a frame of glass or ultra violet acrylic all have to be considered. This balancing act has intensified as an increasing amount of curatorial time and budget is directed to conservation and maintenance of the Collection, which also decreases the pool of works available for display in non-conventional spaces.

Another issue is the individual's experience of viewing art in non-conventional spaces. A gallery environment has a powerful influence on how an audience views and appreciates a work. In locations such as an office or community meeting room, the art

is incidental to the purpose of the facility and is therefore not viewed with perhaps the same motivation as an audience viewing an artwork in a gallery. It is also evident that the display of works in a range of locations dilutes the impact of the Collection's strengths. But on the other hand, the Collection, which is after all a public collection, is being viewed by a diverse audience which potentially develops new audiences for the visual arts.

Twelve months down the track, the public access program has contributed to raising the Collection's profile and has significantly increased the proportion on public view. While I still support the philosophical basis for the program, the tension between the strategies and the fulfilment of my curatorial responsibilities in the long term care of the Collection has led to some ambivalence towards the current activities. The need for appropriate display and the desire to present its strengths on an ongoing rather than occasional basis obviously means the Collection deserves a permanent, purpose designed gallery space with adequate storage and appropriate environmental controls.

At this stage, the goal of obtaining such a gallery is a five to ten year plan. The increased public awareness of the Collection resulting from the continuation of the public access program will be invaluable in pursuing this goal.

A gallery, rather than meaning the end of the public access strategies, will provide a centre from which more activities to involve the community can develop.

Annette Davis

Curator, City of Fremantle Collection

Living Judaism – new education programs at the Jewish Museum of Australia

In February this year, the Jewish Museum of Australia ran an unusual seminar for VCE students. It dealt with racism, genocide, migration, persecution, dislocation and the search for roots in a multicultural society.

The panel included Hour Bak, a survivor of the Pol Pot regime, Helen Siggers, Director of the Monash Orientation Scheme for Aborigines, and Ted Zygier, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. They discussed their individual experiences. Bak, who had not spoken publicly about his experiences before said, 'To forget these sorts of things is not an intelligent thing to do. To forget is to approve.'

Chairing the seminar was Arnold Zable, author of *Jewels and Ashes*, who told the audience of 150 VCE students, 'We have reached a stage in our multicultural society when we can reach out beyond our various backgrounds and see the parallels, and yet respect the differences'.

The Jewish Museum of Australia is in a unique position to encourage public understanding of Jewish culture, history and religion. However, like many museums, it has been searching for ways to *actively*

engage the interest of the community – particularly teachers, students and their families.

Following a request last year from a teacher at a Catholic school for material on the ritual of the Jewish marriage, it was decided that students should see some of the rituals first hand. A mock wedding ceremony at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Toorak Rd was organised. A rabbi from the synagogue conducted the ceremony while the Museum's President, Rabbi Lubofsky, provided the commentary. The most important people, the bride and groom, were Jewish university students.

The 'ceremony' was attended by about 300 students, all of them non-Jewish. As they entered the synagogue, the boys were given a *kippa*, the traditional head covering males wear on entering a synagogue. Students were intrigued by the experience and asked many sensitive and intelligent questions about the ceremony, the synagogue and its ritual objects. Their questions highlighted the importance of staging the ceremony in a synagogue because it allowed students to see the ritual objects being used in context and to ask questions on the spot. The

students were given a bibliography and a glossary of terms relevant to the Jewish marriage.

Encouraged by this success, the Museum then organised a *Bar mitzvah* ceremony (*Bar mitzvah*, meaning 'son of the commandments', is a ceremony Jewish boys traditionally go through at age thirteen signifying their entry to manhood). This time, instead of having just the rabbis talking (although Rabbi Lubofsky was there to offer deeper explanations), three boys from Mt Scopus Memorial College, resplendent in their *tallit* (prayer shawl), explained their experiences of the *Bar mitzvah* ceremony. One was preparing for his own *Bar mitzvah* and read, in Hebrew, the section of the *Torah* (Jewish law) he was preparing for his ceremony. This presentation involved students talking to students and it seemed to make the experience more meaningful.

In July this year the Museum ran a seminar, 'Half the Kingdom', in the form of a forum to discuss the role of women in religion. The panel included women representatives from the Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim religions, and included two female ordained ministers of religion. This seminar enabled

speakers to give their own interpretations of their religion and to discuss what it is to be female within those religions. Each woman acknowledged the different gender roles, especially in prayers and rituals, but stressed that these differences did not amount to an inferior position in their religion.

These seminars and presentations are part of an education program which aims to share the richness of Jewish culture, religion and history with the general public; and to define and illustrate the unique Australian Jewish identity and its place in the Australian community. The program locks into the VCE religious syllabuses and requires regular liaison between the Museum and the education sector. With the Museum's move to larger premises next year, future presentations will be held in conjunction with permanent exhibitions on the Jewish life cycle, and will be further enhanced by detailed work kits. There are plans for the program to be expanded to deal with major Jewish festivals and aspects of Jewish and Australian history.

Lena Martin

Education Officer, Jewish Museum of Australia

Touring exhibitions in regional Queensland

Regional Services, an integral part of the Queensland Art Gallery Public Programs, provides art services for regional Queensland through touring exhibitions, education programs and related professional activities.

It has recently undertaken two major surveys of the regions into (a) the feasibility of a database network, and (b) an assessment of the services offered by the program and future exhibition requirements.

The initiative to investigate a data network in Queensland followed the resolution made at the 1993 Regional Galleries Association of Queensland Directors' Conference, that the QAG would coordinate a survey into the feasibility of developing a standardised documentation system and a data network for art galleries in Queensland. The survey looked at major funding sources; the types of central processing units, operating systems, software and numbers of terminals; number of works in major regional gallery collections; percentage of collections catalogued and documented; the number of works catalogued on computer; venues using a catalogue manual; the number of current policy documents; and interest in networking. It revealed the database is both feasible and desirable.

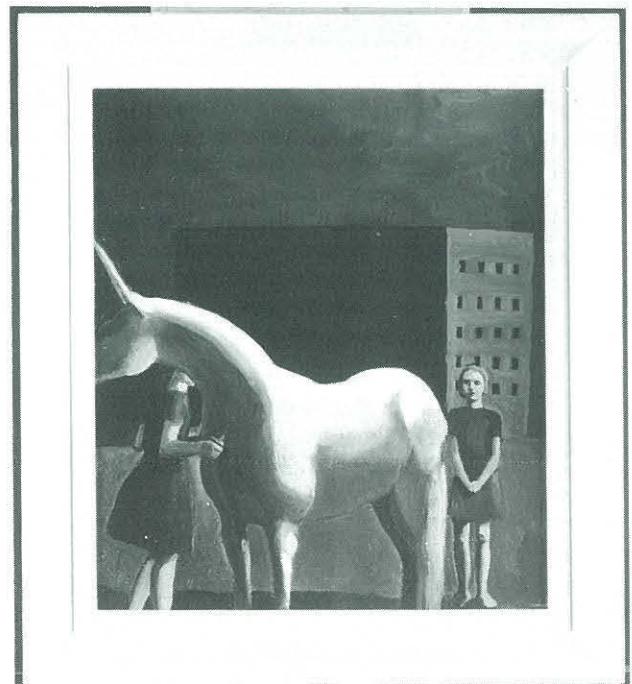
The Exhibition Survey was developed to enable regional directors and committees to have direct input into touring exhibition development. Although the QAG touring exhibition program is directly linked to exhibitions curated from the Collection, the Gallery endeavours to match themes or interests with regional communities. The survey also provided data on visits by QAG personnel to the regions; gallery facilities; an analysis of attendances; the value of QAG education and promotion; and responses to exhibition publications and merchandise.

The Regional Services Touring Exhibition

Program is a unique way of providing access to the Gallery's Collection. During the past five years sculpture, photography, ceramics and paintings from the Collection have toured the state as far north as Cooktown, west to Mount Isa and south to Murwillumbah (NSW), and to many other regional towns.

Recent exhibitions have included 'Decorated Clay', featuring the works of 29 Australian ceramic artists, which toured 25 venues over a period of two years; and 'The Trout Collection in Profile: Chevalier to Nolan', an exhibition of 38 paintings, prints and

ANNE WALLACE, *VIRGINS*, 1993, OIL ON CANVAS, 28 x 24 cm. COURTESY OF THE QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY AND THE ARTIST.



drawings which has now toured five major regional galleries, and has been viewed by 17,000 visitors.

Regional services, education staff and/or conservation personnel install, demount and report on the condition of the works of art. Regional services and education officers provide an educational program in conjunction with the exhibitions. Staff touring with the exhibition program also provide practical and theoretical insights into the implementation of museological practices for volunteers and professional staff. Dependent on the individual gallery, practical tuition includes: installation and hanging techniques; labelling formats; storage of works of art; handling and packing works of art; interpreting exhibitions; basic registration methods for documenting a collection; using a standard format to catalogue works of art; and condition reporting. Discussions between regional

gallery staff, committee members and volunteers focus on national heritage and the rationale for preserving works of art for future generations through correct museological practice.

The major 1995 touring exhibition, which coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the first International Women's Day in 1975, will focus on women's art from the Collection in the context of several female stereotypes: the madwoman (the hysteric, the anorexic, the neurotic etc); the badwoman (the bitch, the witch, the whore), and examine these in the light of their opposites: the 'nice girl' and the 'angel in the house'. Artists include Cindy Sherman, Julie Rrap, and Anne Wallace.

Susan Herbert
Acting Coordinator, Regional Services,
Queensland Art Gallery

The Global Museum: A Report on the American Association of Museums (AAM) Annual Meeting

The 89th AAM Annual Meeting, 'Museums: Response and Responsibility', held in Seattle in April, was attended by 4,200 museum professionals from 29 countries, making it the largest single cultural conference in the world.

As an Australian attending my first AAM conference, I was almost overwhelmed by the array of resources and information available within the meeting's format. The general, concurrent/double sessions, keynote addresses, committee and affiliate activities, poster sessions, marketplaces and tours conducted over the five days covered a broad spectrum of topical museum issues.

Underpinning the entire conference structure were the principles of *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, the AAM's landmark document 'based on an expanded notion of public service and education as a museum-wide endeavor'.(1)

It states that 'in every aspect of their operations and programs, museums must combine a tradition of intellectual rigor with the inclusion of a broader spectrum of our diverse society. By making a commitment to excellence in public service, museums can assure that decisions about collecting, exhibitions, programs and other activities are supported by rigorous scholarship and a respect for the many cultural and intellectual viewpoints that museum collections stand for and stimulate'.(2)

Keynote speakers addressed the principles of *Excellence and Equity* in broad sociological terms, stressing the vital role museums can play in re-building a nation's faltering sense of community. The moral responsibility and relevance of museums to contemporary society was most obvious in these sessions.

Dr Amitai Etzioni, Professor at George Washington University, stressed the important role that public spaces, and museums in particular, must

play in re-building communities. He advocated the fostering of diversity within a set of core values, a shared framework based on a belief in democracy. Raul Yzaguirre, Chairperson of the Latino Taskforce at the Smithsonian Institution, emphasised the primacy of the museum's role in a nation's collective search for meaning. He called for museums to become more inclusive and culturally aware, an important element of accountability and one of the fundamental principles of *Excellence and Equity*. Dianne Pilgrim, Executive Director of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, The Smithsonian Institution, addressed the principles of physical inclusiveness. She called for museums to make their institutions physically accessible in the broadest sense, advocating the widespread adoption of the principles of universal design.

Sessions with the most wide reaching implications for the future of museums were perhaps those dealing with the National Information Infrastructure (NII), the information super-highway. The rapidly increasing amount of automated information technology in the museum field, and the need for museums to articulate a strategic response to growing international electronic information networks were addressed in each session dealing with new technology.

The United States Congress is soon to pass ground breaking legislation in order to build the NII, with the nature of the marketplace and the specifics of the communication system yet to be determined. However, commercial telecommunications companies are aggressively lobbying lawmakers, and museums were called upon to determine and articulate the role they wish to play as information providers into the 21st century.

The application of new technology has many exciting implications for museums: as a tool for collaborating with people in remote locations; for

facilitating collection, curation and management tasks within the museum; for developing sophisticated and far-reaching educational and public programs; for enhancing the museum visitor experience through interactive programs; and for developing image and multimedia databases. The international electronic exchange of information is set to revolutionise the manner in which museums reach their audiences. In fact, such technology will, in all likelihood, re-define the museum audience entirely.

The conference provided an introduction to the vocabulary and potential of the technology. Working with their communities, museums must now adapt these technological innovations to meet their institutions' missions and the principles of *Excellence and Equity*.

Bridget Sullivan

Protecting Outdoor Heritage

Enthusiasm is growing in Australia for the protection of outdoor cultural heritage items that lie beyond the jurisdiction of museums. Outdoor sculpture, monuments, memorials and relics which are largely the responsibility of local councils and private owners have been neglected for too long. Consequently, many are in a deplorable condition.

With the Olympics and Australia's 100th anniversary of Federation looming, city planners in Sydney are looking at the urban environment with fresh eyes. State and local government administrators are beginning to notice the deteriorated condition of some of the city's historical features. Key players, namely the Heritage Group (Department of Public Works) and Sydney City Council are taking action to preserve publicly accessible heritage items. Locating works, rating their significance and assessing their condition and treatment needs are essential first steps in developing appropriate conservation maintenance plans.

The Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM), through its special interest group Sculpture, Monuments and Outdoor Cultural Material (SMOCM), has established a forum for discussion and action amongst related disciplines to improve the plight of outdoor cultural material. By working with a range of heritage professionals and concerned citizens, SMOCM is working to develop, support and promote professional standards for the conservation of such material. Its objectives are: to develop awareness of the need for conservation of outdoor cultural material; to provide a forum for the

References

- (1) Cochran, Hirzy Ellen. 1991, *Excellence and Equity. Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, American Association of Museums, Washington DC, p.6
- (2) Ibid, p.6

Bridget Sullivan recently spent three months working at the National Center for Nonprofit Boards in Washington DC, assisted by Museums Australia's Professional Development Program, the Australia Council, and The Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Trust for Young Australians. She attended the AAM Conference on a grant from the Tasmanian Minister for Education and the Arts, through Arts Tasmania.

exchange of ideas amongst professionals and to provide advice and assistance to public authorities who are responsible for preservation and maintenance of outdoor cultural material. Although SMOCM is an AICCM initiative, it seeks to involve the community in its activities.

At the 1994 SMOCM conference in March, the diverse group of participants agreed on the urgent need to compile an inventory of all publicly accessible outdoor artworks and monuments in Australia. A national committee was established to strengthen SMOCM's networking, pursue funding sources and develop the methodology.

Consequently, SMOCM has applied for grants to the NSW Department of Planning Heritage Assistance Scheme and the NSW Ministry for the Arts Public Art Program. Committee members have been encouraged to do the same in their own state or territory, as the aim is to create a national inventory. To date, a pro rata grant of \$10,000 has been committed to the project from the NSW Department of Planning. It is hoped the NSW Ministry for the Arts will match this so a part time project manager can be employed with a small budget to establish the project. It is envisaged the NSW project will act as a pilot for a national plan.

Donna Midwinter
Conservator, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Donna Midwinter is SMOCM's Coordinator and can be contacted at the Art Gallery of NSW. Ph: (02) 225 1735, Fax: (02) 221 6226.

Policy Initiative Promises to Preserve Australia's Culture

The climate for Australia's material cultural heritage has never been more favourable. Late last year, in a partnership between the states and the Commonwealth, the Cultural Minister's Council established the Heritage Collections Committee, granting it resources to develop a three year program to implement key recommendations of the Anderson Report. Early in June the Heritage Collections

Committee announced the appointment of consultants to research and prepare the draft conservation policy. The project has been awarded to a team of conservation and museum specialists working under the auspices of the Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre at The University of Melbourne: Susan Abasa, Eric Archer, Jacqueline Macnaughtan, Catherine Millikan and Robyn Sloggett.

The Distributed National Collection is located throughout Australia in state and Commonwealth museums, art museums, libraries, archives, regional museums, historical organisations, parks and other places. Material of national significance is also held within the collections of businesses and private individuals. Recent research has shown that current conservation services are ad hoc and generally inadequate, especially as collections age and grow. The preservation of cultural material returned by museums to communities – as well as the fragile and irreplaceable collections of ethnographic material held in museums – remain issues which need to be addressed by a national conservation policy. The team will consult and collaborate widely and is seeking involvement from key stakeholders and the wider

museum community in all phases of the Policy's development.

First amendments and the Draft National Conservation Policy will be distributed for comment in early September. Following collation of public responses and incorporation of further amendments, the Draft Policy will then be presented to key industry conferences. Last minute amendments will be incorporated in mid November, before the Draft Policy is submitted to the Cultural Ministers Council for consideration. Community input is critical. Comments should be directed to the Draft National Conservation Policy Project Team, c/- The Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville 3052, Ph: (03) 344 7989, Fax: (03) 347 7448.

University Museums Get a Guernsey

The Minister for Education, Employment and Training, Simon Crean, recently announced funding of \$94,000 for a survey and review of university museums and collections.

It will benefit curators who have found it increasingly difficult in recent years to provide adequate conservation and access to their collections which form part of Australia's national heritage. It will also benefit those managing universities because it will help define the potential uses of university collections, and thus provide a framework for forward planning. The review also has the potential to improve access for other stakeholders, such as general teaching staff of the universities, students and the public. For Australia's museum community it will bring into focus resources and exchange opportunities hitherto largely unknown.

Collections are a financial liability and the quality of the collections, like the quality of the staff, can have a significant effect on the university's reputation and its fundraising. University collections can be an important resource for teaching, research, communication within and between institutions, the attraction of students, the support of the local community and the solicitation of bequests and gifts.

The review will be carried out by a committee

chaired by Dr Don McMichael (a former director of the National Museum of Australia). Other members include Professor Colin Pearson (Director of the National Centre for Cultural Heritage Science Studies), Professor Barrie Reynolds (Director of the Material Culture Unit at James Cook University), Professor Di Yerbury (Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University), and Dr Peter Stanbury (former Director of the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney), who will be Secretary to the committee.

The committee will list and describe university museums and collections, provide basic data on their size, space parameters, holdings, staff, condition of their collections, and the estimated value.

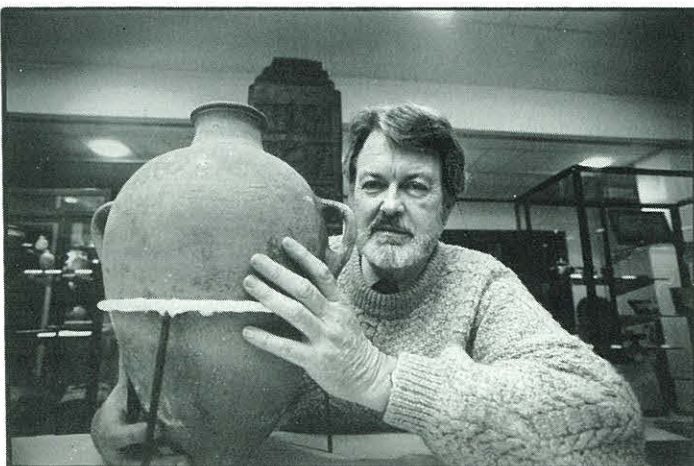
Other issues to be addressed include: the quality and extent of the collections, including the importance of the museums and collections as part of Australia's heritage; the suitability of museums and collections to the teaching and research profiles of universities and the extent of their use by students and staff; the role of museums and collections in training for professions related to the heritage industry, particularly museum studies programs; the existence and use by universities of performance indicators in areas such as collection management and the development and provision of services; availability and benefits of the museums and collections to the local community and community usage, including commercial options for cost-recovery of establishment and operating costs, relationship with and options for cooperation with national, state, regional and local museums and art galleries and; strategies to conserve and develop university collections as part of Australia's cultural heritage, including funding and training implications.

A draft report will be circulated for comment by March 1995 and the final report released by June 1995.

Dr Peter Stanbury

The committee is seeking input from stakeholders. Contact Dr Peter Stanbury, c/o the Vice-Chancellor's Unit, Macquarie University, Ph: (02) 850 7431, Fax: (02) 850 7565.

GRAHAM JOYNER, CURATOR, ANCIENT HISTORY COLLECTION, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY



Competency Standards Update

The final version of the competency standards for the museum industry has now been submitted to the National Training Board (NTB) for endorsement, and copies should be available through Arts Training Australia (ATA) in November. Implementation of the Standards are being looked at by Museums Australia and other industry representatives through ATA. Further work in the area will take place over the next two years when the Standards will be due for review.

Competency standards are part of national vocational education and training reform. A key feature of this reform involves industry articulating its requirements in the workplace in order that training providers can focus their efforts appropriately. Competency standards have to be written according to a format prescribed by the NTB, and a complex process of consultation and validation by the industry has to be undertaken for the standards to be acceptable. Competency standards do not replace educational qualifications but reflect the outcomes an industry has identified as being acceptable standards of performance. Educational qualifications reflect the completion of a formal process of learning.

Developing standards means identifying aspects of performance which are of national significance. Australia's museums are diverse and gaining agreement on what constitutes the key features of work within them required extensive consultation with museum workers around the country. Feedback on the Standards was sought repeatedly as they were developed, and hundreds of people provided either direct or indirect input. The

process was guided by a taskforce comprising unions, employers and Museums Australia. Consequently, the finished product provides a national rather than an enterprise specific description of museum work.

After some initial concern, most people now recognise the importance of competency standards as an expression of nationally acceptable performance levels. It's important to emphasise this because competency standards are not intended to describe the details of specific jobs, and museums will need to adapt the Standards to meet their requirements. To some extent, their use and the difference they make to the industry will only become clear as they are implemented.

Other issues arose during the consultation process including questions about the connection between existing job classifications and the 'industry competency levels' which the document defines, questions concerning competency assessment, and the relationship between the Standards and current training for workers in the museum field.

Standards are a useful management and training tool and represent an important step in professional self-definition for museum workers. I want to thank those who contributed time and effort to the work that's been done so far, and urge you to remain involved to ensure the competency standards work the way you want them to.

Claire Duffy
Senior Project Officer, Arts Training Australia

Texts for Tertiary Students

A 1993 survey of museum studies at Australian tertiary institutions has revealed the difficulty of prescribing a compulsorily purchasable textbooks for students. The universities surveyed were Deakin, Monash, James Cook of North Queensland, the University of Canberra and the University of Sydney.

The position was unanimous: 'We have not found a readily applicable text which we believe all students must have'. Only Sydney insisted, and only for Master of Letters students, that any text should be purchased: Davison and McConville's *A Heritage Handbook*. (1)

While all institutions provide extensive recommended reading lists, most compile selected excerpts from various books and/or journals and copy these for student use. Material is then current and students can be directed to specific and various ways of thinking about the values, policies and practices of the professional museum industry. This has been crucial for James Cook's distance education students, many of whom live in geographically remote parts of Australia with no ready access to libraries.

Overall the universities were concerned that texts are not sufficiently comprehensive and that the cost of museology books places pressure on students if required to purchase them.

Text books are a vexed issue for tertiary museum studies educators and their students. It should also be of concern to the wider industry which depends on universities to provide a high quality of education and training. Ambrose and Paine, in *Museum Basics*, have

presented a foundation of principles and practices they believe have international currency. (2) In *A Manual for Small Museums and Keeping Places*, Robbins offers fundamental practices for the non-state museums. (3) In Australia, we need to examine our conditions, review such publications, and consider if one or more texts should be written to define the Australian situation.

The evolution of copyright laws may prompt such a process. Leicester University is being forced to change its style of information presentation in its well established museum studies course because of statute changes. From 1995, the cost of providing students with the current subject packs of excerpts would be £50,000. Instead, Leicester will produce a series of Readers, published by Routledge, to cover the core elements of their courses. If such a situation arises in Australia, who will be responsible for writing and funding appropriate texts – individuals, museums and related institutions, museum associations, book publishers, or governments?

Helen Tyzack
Freelance Consultant

References

- (1) Davison & McConville, C. 1991. *A Heritage Handbook*, published Allen and Unwin, Sydney
- (2) Ambrose, T. & Paine, C. 1993. *Museum Basics*, ICOM in conjunction with Routledge, London & New York
- (3) Robbins, Richard (ed), 1992. *A Manual for Small Museums and Keeping Places*, Queensland Museum

The National Library's National Preservation Office is working with the Heritage Collections Committee to determine preservation needs of community groups. The Committee will develop and fund training programs for each state.

The Library launched its Community Heritage Grants program earlier this year and is looking to increase available funds for its 1995 program. Applications to the current round have shown the diversity of the types of projects and collections needing preservation, and of the kinds of institutions seeking funding. The applications have also shown reverence for these collections and great dedication by those caring for the materials which comprise a significant part of Australia's documentary heritage.

'Artrage', an initiative of the VA/CB and the ABC, will screen next February. Twenty artists have been invited to produce an 'artwork' video of up to two minutes duration (not a documentary or illustration of another work) for the ABC's 'RAGE' music video program. Every Friday and Saturday night two artists' videos will be shown at regular intervals throughout the program, offering a direct and challenging art experience for the audience and the artist. A compilation video plus information sheets will be available for sale to regional and public galleries to coincide with the television broadcast. Artists include: Janet Burchill, Dale Frank, Stephen Bram, Peter Callas, Bill Henson, Adam Cullen, Jacky Redgate, Robin Stacey, Mikal Dwyer, Geoff Lowe, Stieg Persson, Jeff Gibson, Narelle Jubelin, Nike Savvas, Derek Kreckler, Geoff Kleem, Eugene Carchesio, Linda Marrinon, Tobias Richardson, and Kathy Temin.

Six new shipwreck sites and more than 5,000 artefacts and relics have been discovered from Victorian shipwrecks following the Government amnesty announced in September last year. New wrecks have been discovered off Port Albert, in the Portsea back beach, near the New South Wales border and remnants of wreckage have been found in the Murray River. The discovery of the cargo ship, *The Coramba*, off the heads at Phillip Island ends a long search by Heritage Victoria's Maritime Archaeology Unit (MAU). Information collected from the amnesty will be used by the MAU to further trace the history of shipwrecks, their voyages, cargo and passengers. The MAU is able to give conservation and preservation advice to people with relics.

Support for Australian crafts has been strengthened with new VA/CB initiatives to ensure balanced funding for craft-based endeavours. Grants will be allocated equally to craft and art projects under the categories of Special Purpose Administration; Special Projects (eg. exhibitions, conferences, seminars, residencies, market development); Writing and Publishing Projects; International Exhibitions and Projects; and Professional Development of Artists and Craftspeople. The changes augment increased funding through the Crafts Cooperatives and Workshops program plus the Craft Curator program initiatives. The Collections Development program grants for 1996 will be for craft acquisitions only. A new Craft Development Fund will

be established over five years and aims to provide \$250,000 per year.

Craft Australia is facilitating a national craft exhibition program for public exhibition spaces and regional galleries in Australia. Its 1995 national conference will be held in Melbourne and will look at the role of art museums and galleries in the development of Australian craft.

Artist Janet Laurence is creating a permanent outdoor installation, *The Edge of the Trees*, for the new Museum of Sydney, due to open in March 1995. Laurence will collaborate with Aboriginal artist Fiona Foley on a modern interpretation of the first meeting of Aboriginal people with members of the First Fleet. Linguist Jackie Troy is researching the Eora language (the language of the first people of Sydney) for a sound map being designed in collaboration with writer Paul Carter. The project is curated by Dr Peter Emmett from Historic Houses Trust NSW. Other consultants include filmmaker Garry Warner, artist Narelle Jubelin, filmmaker/writer Ross Gibson, and Museum of Sydney Curator of Australian Indigenous Art, David Prosser. The Museum of Sydney, a contemporary museum, will stand on the site of the First Government House, the earliest foundations of British colonisation of Australia. The First Government House was demolished in 1846. In the 1990s a public plaza will preserve the site and the Museum will present works that interpret the early life of Sydney in the period 1788 - 1850.

'Rediscovering Pompeii', opens at the Australian Museum in September. Jointly presented by IBM Australia and the Australian Museum, the exhibition fuses culture with advanced computer technology to recreate the daily life of the inhabitants of ancient Pompeii. Visitors will be able to generate 3D images of buildings long-since buried under layers of volcanic stone, and touch-screens will provide information on ancient Roman life. The exhibition also comprises artefacts from archaeological sites around the Vesuvius volcano.

The Powerhouse Museum has won Australia's premier professional communications award - the Diamond Serif. The Australian Institute of Professional Communicator's award was for research evaluating the response of visitors to the Museum's major exhibition 'Success and innovation: achieving for Australia'. Results of the evaluation have been published in the Powerhouse Museum Research Series, *Formative Evaluation of an Exhibition About Innovation in Australian Industry*.

South Australian Arts Minister, Diana Laidlaw, recently announced the closure of the SA Film and Video Centre, citing high running costs as one of the reasons for its closure. The video collection is now available through the public library system (PLAIN), but no decision has been made about the film collection. The SA Film and Video Centre offered a range of specialist services for film students, teachers, schools, other educational institutions, businesses, community groups and individuals.

South Australia's Arts and Cultural Development Task Group was established by the Minister earlier in the year to encourage, promote and support the arts and cultural development in the State. It will also position the arts and cultural industry to play an integral role in the social and economic activity of the State. The Department for the Arts and Cultural Development has since identified three areas for economic development in the arts: a) enterprise development – the Department has established a strategic alliance with the SA Centre for Manufacturing under the National Industry Extension Scheme (NIES), which has been extended to arts and culture organisations with commercial potential through a \$300,000 grant from the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts; b) cultural export development – the Department has formed a partnership with the Economic Development Authority to conduct a stocktake of cultural export opportunities in SA and to recommend strategies for developing export opportunities; c) tourism – the Department is developing close working relationships with the Tourism Commission and the Office of Tourism Industry Development on product development and marketing.

The South Australian Museum has received funding of nearly \$1/2 million from the Federal Government to undertake two national research projects over the next two to three years: the first involves identifying all unprovenanced human remains held in the collections of all state museums and in Canberra's National Museum. The second involves compiling a catalogue and photographing all secret/sacred objects held in these collections and in those of the Central and Northern Aboriginal Land Councils. The information will enable relevant Aboriginal groups to discuss future policy and control of the items with the individual museums.

Museum staff are also embarking on the first major excavation in twenty years of an Aboriginal cemetery. The excavation site is historically significant with the last burial possibly occurring in the mid 1800s. Fourteen Aboriginal trainees from the Dareton-Wentworth Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) will be participating in the excavation plus students from the University of SA's Aboriginal Studies course.

The Museum has recently entered a joint venture with Adelaide company Australian Holographics. The company will have access to some of the Museum's most prized collection items to produce a series of life-size, 3D images, known as rainbow transmission holograms. The holograms, beginning with Australia's extinct fauna and mega-fauna, will be offered for sale to museums and science centres around the world. They provide a revolutionary way of transporting and viewing Australian fauna overseas. The potential also exists for the technology to be applied to some of the Museum's most valued ethnographic collection objects, including artefacts from Aboriginal and Pacific cultures.

The South Australian Country Arts Trust has established the 'New Land' Gallery at its premises in South Terrace, as part of its commitment to the development of visual arts in country areas. The Gallery will exhibit the works of country-based contemporary

South Australian artists, specifically acknowledging the difficulties they face in broadening their audience.

A new program of State Government support for publications about Tasmania's unique history and natural science was launched recently by the Minister for Education and the Arts, John Beswick. The grants come under the new Tasmanian Research Publications Fund. Blubberhead Press has received a grant to publish *A Biography of Marie Bjelke Petersen* by Alison Alexander, the Port Arthur Historic Site will be assisted to publish *A Database of All Convicts At Port Arthur* in both electronic and hard-copy form, and the Tasmanian Historical Research Association will publish a book by Stefan Petrow on the image of Tasmania as the sanatorium of the Australian colonies in the late 19th century.

A recent economic impact study by the Centre for Tourism and Hospitality at the Victoria University of Technology has revealed the Van Gogh exhibition brought more than 180,000 people through the National Gallery of Victoria and generated an economic benefit of up to \$23.6 million for Victoria.

According to the study, 'Shell Presents van Gogh: His sources, genius and influence' attracted 20,000 overseas and 44,000 interstate visitors to Victoria. The exhibition was the biggest in Victoria in the past ten years and the study demonstrates the importance of arts events and activities to the Victorian economy. International visitors spent an average of \$800 each while in Victoria for the exhibition, with most of this spent on shopping. Melbourne retail outlets benefited by as much as \$8 million while hotels, motels and other types of accommodation were boosted by up to \$3.3 million in direct expenditure. The study showed that direct expenditure into Melbourne was as much as \$20.5 million and that the expenditure in other parts of Victoria was between \$1.5 million and \$3 million.

Melbourne-based architects, Denton Corker Marshall, have won the national competition run by the Victorian Government to design the State's new \$250 million museum. The five month process attracted 109 entries from architectural firms around Australia and internationally. The proposed design will be further developed, with the Government's target for final approval being March 1995. Tenders for construction are expected to be called by the end of 1995.

The new museum will be the largest built in Australia in the past 50 years and one of the country's biggest civic works projects this decade. It will include a prominent Aboriginal research/collection and exhibition centre, a natural science and social history research centre, a Gallery of Life with live exhibits, a planetarium, exhibition areas three times the size of the current museum complex, and a resource centre providing access to the Museum's ten million collection items.

Scitech, WA's science centre, recently won the Sir David Brand Award for Major Tourist Attraction. Dr Seddon Bennington, the Museum's Chief Executive, has left for the USA to direct one of America's largest science centres, the Carnegie Science Centre in Pittsburgh.

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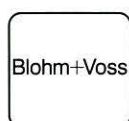
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