

The magazine of Museums Australia Inc.

MUSEUM NATIONAL

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Editorial

By Simeon Kronenberg

This is an exciting edition of *Museum National*, as it deals with organisations that are critically important in a world cultural context - UNESCO and ICOM - as well as organisations that help to promote Australian creative work and importantly, Australia's image overseas, Asialink and the Australian Council. Also in this edition there is a report from a major New Zealand art museum, from an Australian perspective and the experiences of a young Australian museum intern working in Japan, at Tokyo's prestigious Museum of Modern Art. As well, the Reconciliation Convention, an historic event for all Australians, is considered in its international context.

All of this points to a vital engagement between Australia's museum community and colleagues and institutions overseas. It is indeed important to see ourselves in terms of international cultural issues and to realise the important and often ground-breaking contribution Australian museum professionals make to them.

Museums Australia is a vital link for the international museum community, especially because of its partnership with ICOM and the forthcoming assembly in Melbourne in 1998. This will be a major cultural gathering and one that will resonate within the Australian museum community for some time to come. Melbourne itself, a city proud of its 'cultural capital' tag, is currently undergoing great change and development in its already significant cultural infrastructure. Next year will be an exciting time to be here, especially while the ICOM assembly is happening which is now little more than twelve months away. This is not to forget Museums Australia's annual conference in Darwin in September. 'Unlocking Museums' should prove to be a most exciting and innovative event, one that will give many of us a real chance to visit one of the most interesting and beautiful regions in Australia, where Indigenous issues and culture are paramount and where links with the rest of Australia and Asia, in particular, are increasingly recognised and fruitful. The Museums Australia team in Darwin has developed an excellent program and again, the National

Council of Museums Australia hopes that as many as possible will attend. Our conferences are vital and challenging events in the cultural calendar and should not be missed. They are becoming increasingly important - as opportunities for wide-ranging and genuine professional development. It is important that all museums support as many staff as possible to attend the 'Unlocking Museums' conference.

It has been a pleasure to work on this International edition of *Museum National* and I would like to thank all of the writers most sincerely, whose efforts are reflected here in articles that raise our horizons and place us, as Australians, within the international cultural context. All of the articles have much to contribute in helping each of us to define our place and identity.

I would also like to thank the *Museum National* Editorial Committee for its advice and support and to thank Marianne Wallace-Crabbe, in particular, who has worked tirelessly with me on this issue.

Museums Australia - Executive Committee

President

Dr Sue-Anne Wallace
PO Box 223,
Pymont, NSW, 2009
Ph: (02) 9252 4033
Fax: (02) 9252 4361
wallace@warrabee.starway.net.au

Vice-President

Dr Christopher Anderson
Director
South Australian Museum
North Terrace, Adelaide, SA, 5000
Ph: (08) 8207 7396
Fax: (08) 8207 7444
canderso@enternet.com.au

Secretary

Genevieve Fahey
Scienceworks, 2 Booker Street,
Spotswood, VIC, 3015
Ph: (03) 392 4814
Fax: (03) 9391 0100
gfahey@mov.vic.gov.au

Treasurer

Peter O'Neill
Wollongong City Gallery
PO Box 696
Wollongong, NSW, 2500
Ph: (042) 287 500
Fax: (042) 265 530

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All correspondence to:

The Editor, *Museum National*
24 Queens Parade
North Fitzroy Vic 3068
Telephone: (03) 9486 3399
International: + 61 3 9486 3399
Facsimile: (03) 9486 3788

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Editorial Committee

Margaret Birtley (Chair), Deakin University; Gina Drummond, Aust. War Memorial; Richard Gillespie, Museum of Victoria; Rose Lang, 200 Gertrude St; Kenneth Park, Wesley College; Ian Watts, Museum Consultant; Marianne Wallace-Crabbe, Museums Australia; Linda Young (Reviews Editor), University of Canberra.

Editor

Marianne Wallace-Crabbe

Guest Editor

Simeon Kronenberg

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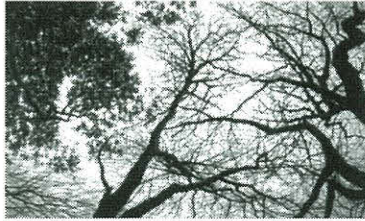
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Cover Image (detail)

Rieko Hidaka, *From the Space of Trees II* 1996, acrylic and pigment on canvas 240 x 360 cm. (See page 11)

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DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND THE ARTS

Museum National aims to present news and opinions and to encourage debate on issues of museum practice within art, history and science museums, including the business of the association as appropriate. It seeks to represent the diverse functions and interests of the many institutions and individuals who comprise Australia's museum community. *Museum National* is published quarterly by Museums Australia Inc., and provides a major link between the association and its membership. Policy and content are directed by an editorial committee. Contributions from those involved or interested in museums and galleries are welcome.

UNESCO as a Cultural Organisation

By Margaret Coaldrake

It is an impossible task to do justice to UNESCO's role as a cultural organisation in 1500 words. This article, therefore, concentrates on two aspects of this topic only: the World Decade for Cultural Development finishing this year and Australia's place in UNESCO.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation was formed in November 1945 with just 20 Member States. A little over fifty years later, membership stands at 184. The 50th anniversary of the founding of UNESCO, celebrated in 1995, called for a renewed commitment to UNESCO's original belief that 'it is in the minds of men (sic) that the defences of peace must be constructed'.

It is significant that UNESCO's 50th birthday fell during the UNESCO World Decade for Cultural Development. Proclaimed by the United Nations as a 'system-wide' effort to rethink development, the World Decade set out to increase worldwide awareness and understanding of the interface between culture and development.

The World Conference of Cultural Policies, in Mexico City, in 1982 defined culture in the context of the World Decade as 'the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.'

The aims of the decade were to: acknowledge the cultural dimension of development; assert and enhance cultural identities; broaden participation in cultural life; and promote international cultural cooperation.

Projects conducted under the UNESCO banner around the world included the Silk Roads project involving at least 205 scholars and local people from 45 countries, participating in scientific research, creative arts, literature and music, international cooperation and intercultural dialogue. Throughout 1992, the 500th anniversary of Columbus' journey from the Old to the New Worlds, the international community commemorated the Encounter between Two Worlds with over 1500 projects on five continents.

The Decade also saw the beginning of a project to establish a twenty-first century library and other facilities in Alexandria, on the site of the great Ancient Library. Many World Decade projects involved young people in support of UNESCO's wish to build a culture of peace in the world.

Our Creative Diversity, the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development was released in time for the UNESCO biennial General Conference in Paris in 1995. The Report concludes with an International Agenda.

Too lengthy to reproduce here, the ten point Agenda aims to: provide a permanent vehicle through

which issues of culture and development are discussed and analysed at the international level; initiate a process in which principles and procedures that are commonplace within nations are extended to the international and global arena; and create a forum where an international consensus on central issues related to culture and development can be achieved.

It is too soon to measure the longer term benefits of the Decade. The integration of initiatives into normal programming rather than maintenance of a dedicated secretariat and funding will make it difficult to follow and identify extended outcomes.

In addition, the 'cultural' part of UNESCO, along with the social sciences and communications has often taken a back seat in funding and priority terms to the 'E' and 'S' components of the acronym - Education and Science. Looked at objectively in the context of developing countries, this has been both inevitable and, I believe, justifiable.

To me there is, however, one identifiable benefit of the World Decade at this point. It has made clear to everyone interested what those of us in the cultural sector knew incontrovertibly. It has forced a recognition that development is a cultural process generated from within a society rather than something which can be donated or imposed by external agencies.

The effects of the World Decade in the Pacific are even harder to define. Countries in the region moved late and slowly to establish projects. The most ambitious, Vaka Moana, a Pacific version of the Silk Roads project described above, is only now having some impact and is expected to last beyond the end of the World Decade.

I turn now to Australia's role in UNESCO. Traditionally, Australia has had an external focus to its UNESCO activities, preferring to strengthen developing nations in the Pacific region rather than attracting scarce funds into Australia itself. Australia is also committed to developing an interdisciplinary approach in project development and program coordination and to support efforts to reform UNESCO to make it both efficient and effective.

The twelve member National Commission has as its primary goal to 'promote awareness of and support for UNESCO's work, building on its 50th anniversary, in fostering international cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, and information, in order to further the respect for justice, the rule of law and human rights'.

The work of the National Commission is enhanced by networks for each of the disciplines, including a culture network with representatives from a range of Australian cultural organisations including the Australia Council, the Australian Heritage Commission, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the Department of Communications and the Arts.

'Culture' members of the Commission, Dr Colin Pearson and Ms Virginia Henderson, also participate in network meetings.

There are three Australian initiated projects funded by Paris in 1996-97 in the cultural sector. They are: preparation of a model training package for site managers in the Pacific (Australian Heritage Commission and ICOMOS); a regional symposium on sustainable tourism under the auspices of the Australian Heritage Commission; and a second meeting of heads of cultural agencies from Australia and the South Pacific chaired by Ms Cathy Santamaria, Deputy Secretary, Department of Communications and the Arts.

One recent development of interest in Australia itself is the establishment in 1995 of the Centre for UNESCO Visiting Fellows at the Australian National University. Jointly funded by the ANU and the National Commission, the Centre has attracted scholars of note and is running a range of projects augmenting the activities of both the National Commission and UNESCO.

Australia has put a great deal of time, effort, and money into its UNESCO association. The organisation is sprinkled throughout with Australian expertise: people such as Ms Lyndal Prott, the backbone of UNESCO's international legislative and convention work and Dr Peter Bridgewater, head of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency and Chair of UNESCO's important Man and the Biosphere project, to name only two.

Dr Barrie Jones, MP a member of the Executive Board until recently, and Dr Ken Wiltshire, Chair of the Australian National Commission, continue to make sizeable contributions. In particular, they, and many others have pushed long and hard for a more efficient, accountable and less bureaucratic organisation. Their efforts have been central to changes in the administration, with Barrie Jones now a member of a specially appointed task force to review the operation of the immensely complex and lengthy UNESCO General Conference.

Other significant Australian participation can be seen in: Dr Colin Pearson's efforts in the Pacific over many years, the National Film and Sound Archives' extensive training programs in conservation and other aspects of archival management, Mr Ray Edmondson's participation in the Memory of the World Program and membership of the World Heritage Committee - the list of activities and contributions is impressive.

Also worthy of note are recent Australian and New Zealand efforts in the South Pacific with the result that Member States in the region are increasing steadily in numbers.

In fact, Australia's influence on the operations and outcomes of UNESCO have, at least in the time I have been associated with the organisation, been disproportionate to our size and world status. The absence of the United Kingdom and the United States of America from the organisation in recent years has undoubtedly contributed to this and it will be interesting to observe the dynamics following the anticipated return of the UK in the near future.

Australia has worked well with UNESCO and its agencies such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM) over a very long period. As Australian museum people prepare for the ICOM conference in 1998 in Melbourne I encourage *Museum National* readers to reflect on how we might continue, or better still, increase that involvement.

**Margaret Coaldrake, Management Consultant,
DGJ Consulting, Chair, Culture Network,
Australian National Commission for UNESCO.**

Further information

You can find detailed information on the activities of the National Commission on its web page <http://cis.anu.edu.au/CCE/homepage.htm>. This web page hot links to the UNESCO site in Paris.

Readers wishing to become more involved in UNESCO's activities in Australia or elsewhere should contact Adam Patterson at the Secretariat to the National Commission for UNESCO by email on adam.patterson@dfat.gov.au.



Ms. Coaldrake at the last UNESCO Conference in Paris in November 1995.

Museums Co-operating Internationally - International Council of Museums

By Andrew Reeves

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) is the international peak professional body, similar to Museums Australia Inc, but which is devoted to the promotion and development of museums and the museum profession at an international level. ICOM works to assist museums to co-operate internationally and as an organisation relies on the co-operation of people working in museums throughout the world to carry out much of its work.

ICOM has a rich history. It was established in 1946 and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1996. ICOM is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) maintaining formal relations with UNESCO, the United Nations' Economic and Social Council. Today ICOM has around 13,000 members in 145 countries. The membership participates in the activities of 112 National Committees and 25 International Committees. In many countries ICOM is the only professional body available to people who work in, or are interested in, museums in the widest sense. In other countries such as Australia, USA, UK etc, ICOM has grown and developed alongside the peak professional bodies such as Museums Australia, the American Association of Museums and in the UK, the Museums Association. In many instances the ICOM National Committee acts as the link between these national associations and their international colleagues, as it does here in Australia.

International Specialist Committees offer another important level of participation and activity. Similar to the Special Interest Groups of Museums Australia these Committees allow members with particular subject interests or professional disciplines to gather together and share and exchange ideas and address issues of particular importance or relevance to them. There are over 25 Specialist Committees ranging from Applied Art (ICAA), Numismatics (ICOMON) and Science and Technology (CIMUSET), to Marketing and Public Relations (MPR), Museum Security (ICMS) and Training of Personnel (ICTOP) to name a few.

ICOM is a non-profit making organisation whose funds come mainly from membership subscriptions. It receives support from UNESCO's program activity for museums and from public and private funds. Based in Paris, France, the ICOM headquarters maintains a Secretariat staffed by ten people, incorporating the UNESCO-ICOM Information Centre, an important resource on museums practice and activity from around the world and available to all members via Internet and ordinary mail.

ICOM's international activities are many and varied and are developed under six key long-term objectives:

- *to support museums as instruments of social and cultural development*

This general objective is the underlying theme to all of the work of ICOM and its National and International Committees.

Each year since 1977, International Museums Day has been celebrated on 18 May and is co-ordinated by ICOM. A theme is selected for the day by the Advisory Committee under which activities can be held in each country. International Museums Day provides an opportunity for museum professionals to meet the public and develop their awareness of the challenges that face museums as they strive - in the words of ICOM's definition - to be an institution in the service of society and of its development. Recent themes have been Response and Responsibility, in relation to museums threatened by natural or human disasters (1995), Collecting Today for Tomorrow (1966) and the Fight Against Illicit Traffic in Cultural Property (1977 and 1998).

- *to reinforce professional ethics and to promote national and international legislation for the enhancement and protection of cultural natural heritage*

Following growing concern about the collecting practices of museums, ICOM was instrumental in facilitating discussions concerning the establishment of guidelines for museums in this area. After extensive consultation and collaboration this resulted in the adoption of the ICOM code of ethics, for museums and their staff, in November 1986. This code has now been widely circulated and guides aspects of museum practice throughout the world. The ICOM code forms the basis of many national codes of ethics such as those adopted by Museums Australia. The need to establish and define acceptable activity amongst the museum community continues as new issues arise. The code of ethics is a continually evolving document in response to issues raised by museum staff.

Importantly, ICOM was and continues to be instrumental in the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural property and works with INTERPOL and other law enforcement agencies to assist in the location and return of stolen cultural property. ICOM continues to press nations for the ratification of the 1970 UNESCO and UNIDROIT Conventions to fight against the illicit traffic in cultural property. Most recently, in January 1997, France signed the conventions after 27 years illustrating the need to continue this important work. Workshops and publications on the issue serve to highlight its importance and assist in locating stolen works. Publications such as *Looting in Angkor* and *Looting in Africa* have enabled a certain number of objects stolen from museums, or looted on sites, to be relocated and returned to museums.

- *to develop networks for regional and international co-operation*

ICOM is active in a number of regions throughout

the world with specific development and assistance programs. Two areas of particular activity are Africa and the Arab countries. The AFRICOM program involves the sharing of experience and making comparisons about professional practice and is aimed at enhancing the skills of African professionals and institutions in order to bring credibility to their activities in the eyes of the international community. In partnership with museum personnel in Africa, a series of priorities were identified including the need for regional co-operation, specialised training, exhibitions, and fighting the illicit traffic in cultural items. With the co-operation of many people who work in museums around the world, including some from Australia, and with the help of some of the International Specialist Committees, a wide range of activities and programs have been conducted which have significantly enhanced and supported the level of museum practice throughout Africa.

ICOM also assists with and operates a number of international exchange and partnership programs for museum professionals. This kind of professional exchange is becoming increasingly valuable.

• *to establish a mechanism for defence and advocacy of the cultural and natural heritage*

The museum community world-wide has to face up to emergency situations. In response to the growing concern about the destruction and loss of cultural heritage because of armed conflict (the former Yugoslavia, Chechen Republic, Iraq and Kuwait, Afghanistan and Liberia), the ICOM General Assembly in Stavanger, Norway, in July 1995 adopted a resolution concerning the Protection of Cultural Heritage during Armed Conflict. Since this time ICOM has joined with the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in the development of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS). The objectives of the ICBS are to:

- provide advice for the protection of cultural heritage in the case of identified threats or of emergencies created by natural or human causes, particularly in the case of armed conflict
- facilitate international response to threats or emergencies through co-operation between participating organisations and national organisations
- act in an advisory capacity in cases arising under the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954
- encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property and particularly to promote higher standards of risk preparedness
- facilitate professional action at national or regional level to prevent, control and recover from disasters

• *to respond to economic liberalisation trends facing museums*

The changes introduced by numerous governments as part of economic liberalisation policies have major repercussions for museums and the museum profession. In order to accompany this transformation of museums, while protecting the structures, role and

established values of museums, ICOM has initiated a broad forum for discussion and debate.

• *to expand and consolidate communication networks amongst and for museums*

The explosion of information technology in all sectors of society enables museums to take a more active part in the way in which knowledge and ideas are being spread, while making it easier for professional networks to communicate and exchange ideas. To encourage museums to make full use of all the new capabilities available ICOM is leading an active policy of information and support. This area of activity will continue to grow and expand as museums link into the Internet and develop and use multimedia presentations. Through the activities of a number of the International Specialist Committees, international standards and protocols are being developed to ensure all can participate in the technological revolution. ICOM's home page can be found at <http://www.icom.org>

The ICOM Australian National Committee (ICOM ANC) is an entirely voluntary body with a Committee elected annually from amongst the 220 members. The major benefits of ICOM membership include free or reduced entry to many museums throughout the world, a quarterly international newsletter, ICOM News, regular ICOM ANC newsletters, reduction on certain ICOM publications, participation in the annual meetings of International Committees and the ICOM triennial conference, and participation in international exchange programs organised by National Committees.

Membership of ICOM, however, should not only be considered on the basis of what's in it for you but how you can assist and co-operate with colleagues in museums throughout the world to support museums as instruments of social and cultural development. Your membership of ICOM means joining with 13,000 museums professionals throughout the world and supporting the vital work of ICOM in the international arena as outlined above.

As many of you would know ICOM ANC together with Museums Australia, bid to host the next ICOM triennial conference in Melbourne. (The Noticeboard section of this issue has details of the conference.) This is an important opportunity to showcase the Australasian museum experience and know-how to the world. Attendance at the conference is restricted to ICOM members. If you would like to join or get more information please complete the membership application inserted in this issue of *Museum National*, or by contacting the secretary, Mr Andrew Moritz, c/- National Wool Museum, PO Box 770, Geelong Vic 3220, tel (03) 5227 0701, fax (03) 5222 1118, Email, amoritz@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

Andrew Reeves.
Director, Western Australian Museum,
Chair, ICOM, ANC.

Information in this article is drawn from the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Triennial Programme 1995-1998 tabled at the 55th Session of the Advisory Committee held in Paris, France in June 1997. The assistance of Andrew Moritz, ICOM Secretary/Treasurer with the preparation of this article is also acknowledged.

Art, Art Museums, Asia and us

By Alison Carroll

The Asialink Centre of the University of Melbourne has worked with contemporary art exchange between Asia and Australia for some six years now and this article is written from this context.

Can you name one or two or five curators from Asian art museums? Can you name the best art museums in Asia? Or some major internationally focused exhibitions initiated by them and their staff?

No? You are not alone.

There are dozens of major art museums in Asia and more are being built all the time. Many are very fine and prestigious, with excellent amenities and long experience of devising their own locally based exhibitions, as well as accepting shows from abroad. However, they are mostly very poor at initiating international projects which either incorporate their own cultural material, or which engage on bilateral bases both within Asia and with other continents.

In Australia we are rarely requested to take exhibitions from these institutions or to engage in projects with them. So, usually, unless we initiate the contact, we do not know them or their staff.

I suspect that at this stage you are rummaging through your mind to disprove this statement. But think of the examples of contemporary art from Asia seen in Australia. The Asia Pacific Triennial is generated by the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG). The Adelaide Festival exhibition 'Beyond the Material World' was Australian based. The single nation exhibitions, like those from China ('Mao Goes Pop'), Taiwan ('Arttaiwan'), Japan ('Zones of Love'), India ('India Songs; Fire and Life') and Singapore ('Rapport'), have all been initiated by Australian curators (and then, to be fair, developed often in partnership with Asian curators). General or theme based exhibitions have of course included artists from Asia, but the same point applies. (This is not a criticism of the exhibitions themselves, which have all been very credible.)

Things are slightly changing on a wider international front. The Venice Biennale now includes both official and non-official exhibitions of art from Asia, initiated and organised by local curators.

Venice is currently the main exception to the lack of international focus, and obviously to a large extent is driven by other agendas (like government backing), but the Biennale may give impetus to Asian curators to extend the experience given.

Many Asian Governments espouse an internationally active agenda in principle. A main focus of the Korea Foundation and the Japan Foundation for example is to promote their own culture internationally. Also, artists in Asia, in my experience, are extremely keen to have their work seen abroad and to undertake international exchanges. What stops the curators and institutions? An explanation lies in the local culture.

It is always problematic to raise the differences of 'Asian' cultures, which are often simplistically or

politically used. However, it can be said that respect for authority, respect for position, respect for 'face' (and very real fear of losing this), respect for control, and respect for tradition, and desire for harmony are much more strongly felt in Asian countries than in those of the West. An October 1996 *Far Eastern Economic Review* notes the results of a survey of its readers on their 'Asianness'. It notes the differences of attitude within the region, but also some major areas of consensus. Here is one example: 'respect for authority, harmony and learning were highly valued by the Asian people surveyed, and considered a low priority by Westerners. Conversely, freedom of expression is seen as vital by Westerners, but not considered important by many Asians, particularly in Singapore and Taiwan. Filipinos, with their lively independent press, are an exception.' And another: 'A hefty 47% of Singaporeans did not care or felt "neutral" about human rights as an issue. The three groups in Asia who were most concerned about human rights were Western expatriates, Australians and the Japanese.'

Artists in Asia negotiate these positions. If you accept that artists challenge status quos, then being an artist in Asia is necessarily complicated. Being overtly critical - in both the broadest, discursive sense as well as focusing on specific issues - in Confucian-based, harmony-driven societies is often problematic. Some artists are very oblique in their critiques and the references need explanation to outsiders. When overtly critical, the artist knows there will often be social (or worse) reactions. Singaporean censorship is well known. Critiques of paternalistic societies by women artists are much more potent in Asian than here. References to gender issues are not undertaken lightly. References to specific political issues in countries less used to democracy can indeed be dangerous.

(It is true that some artists do feel freer to make politically or sexually overt work outside their societies than within them. This is sometimes questioned, on the basis that the artist is not being 'true' to his or her own culture and is pandering to 'western' expectations. It is an interesting dilemma, but surely to some degree we all adjust our work for the particular audience...)

It is even harder for curators, who are usually employed by the state or by corporations. As in Australia, governments and corporations are *comfortable* with supporting traditional or historical exhibitions for all the obvious reasons of prestige, tested 'quality' and absence of problematic, subversive agendas. But if a curator or an institution in Asia is working with contemporary art, there is the additional issue of cultural pressure not to promote displays of conflict or challenge, reinforced by the nature of the employer.

In societies where age and status are important, respect for older artists is assumed. The western promotion of new, controversial, challenging and

often young artist's work is frequently questioned by those in power in and outside arts organisations in Asia and deemed inappropriate and certainly unrepresentative of local culture. The local curator must work with this - and it seems to be a much tougher and more complicated role than we in Australia understand and acknowledge.

For some international exhibitions, especially in the region (like touring ASEAN shows), the local cultural pressures on Asian curators increase, and often a more conservative, traditional, older generation can take precedence. An uninformed foreigner looking at some official catalogues of contemporary art from Asian countries will often misread the representation on this basis. The art institutions of the region are currently almost always headed by older, more conservative men. Often it is the younger curator who understands the international agenda and easily negotiates on an international level, but finds it impossible to convince his or her superior of these very different situations.

There are young, very knowledgeable, active and keen curators in Asia, but often they have neither the status nor the cultural position to make their own marks. They are subject to a hierarchy of approval. These curators, outvoiced in selection, and unwilling to publicly criticise their elders, suffer because outsiders do not realise a lot of more radical art is excluded because of deference to these elders. This is where working at the invitation of outsiders, especially from the West, can free the local curator from these constraints. It places responsibility on others and can be a good mechanism by which to negotiate locally with no-one losing face.

(One irony of Australia's role in this is that I think of all nations of the world, rightly or wrongly, we hold fondly to values which are at the opposite extreme of the so-called Asian ones. We are anti-authoritarian; we regard equality as an extreme virtue. Youth can get precedence over age. It is important for us at all levels to be seen to do menial jobs, for example, for curators to use hammers and brooms and physically work to put up exhibitions, to show they do not regard themselves as above others in status.)

One other part-cultural, part-historical issue arises in the region for those of us interested in museum exchange: compared with the West, there is little expectation of the public system working in the interests of its constituency. By and large, in Australia, government institutions are respected and expected to be proactive, and work for us. Most Asian countries do not have this history. There are other systems - based on family, clan, language or ethnic group - in which to trust. When the question is asked about why a museum is not active, the answer is often a look of surprise to think that it *could* be so.

Sometimes, too, the reasons are organisational. If the museum is under the Ministry of, say, Education, staff can be rotated through it who have no relevant cultural experience. And within this larger system, the museum can have lower career status, so less able people are sent there. Working in museums does not bring high salaries, and sometimes, in a 'tiger' economy, this is an important issue for younger, bright people. Also, with the economies of the region growing so rapidly, and more funds becoming

available to spend on cultural institutions, there is an inevitable time lapse for experienced, qualified staff to become available to fill all the positions. For example, The National Gallery of Malaysia has been waiting to appoint a Director for some years. Understandably, for important cultural institutions like this, there is a desire to appoint a local expert.

Another reason for the lack of overt international initiative from the cultural institutions is the issue, often felt by all public servants, risk taking. This again is magnified in Asia, when making what is judged a public mistake and thereby losing face is a much worse humiliation than here. I remember one museum director in South East Asia who, on hearing reports of poor reviews of an exhibition organised by his institution in America, was appalled and said they would never do a similar project again. He was so unused to negative public comments in his own culture, that to have them from America was really shocking. I should perhaps note here that this is an important reason why art criticism as we expect it does not usually occur in Asia - the person who criticises loses face as well as the person or art work criticised. Some people in Australia think it is because 'Asia has not caught up' with such practices.

So, what will happen? John Prescott, head of BHP, recently said that success in Asia meant success in the rest of the world. In this climate, will Asian arts infrastructure become easier for Westerners to approach? Will globalisation of the world impinge on the authority modes noted in the *Economic Review* and flow through to cultural organisations?

Or more overwhelmingly for all of us, will the changes, particularly in China, mean a strengthening of the so-called Asian positioning? Asian values are being espoused more and more obviously - taken for granted in public forums in the region. Will the new Shanghai Museum ('state of the art' as it is) affect the international Chinese museum agenda? Senior officials from the Ministry of Culture in Beijing recently in Australia clearly expressed interest in 'conservative' art visiting from Australia. Will China's increasingly strong role tip balances in our art world? Will this put pressures on where we thought them lifting? Will we have to negotiate with Chinese cultural agendas as we currently do not? The relationships between Korea, Japan and China are changing, with growing cultural exchanges, reinforcing the East Asian cultural bloc. Will China's agenda sway the way others in the region interact, and make the difficult negotiation with Western ways easier to avoid?

I used to think all the museums of the region would increasingly look to open, global (yes read 'Western') agendas, showing work which challenges society, and increasingly engages in international exchanges, but now, I wonder. The role of the Asian curator remains pivotal here, almost a symbol of the centre of the difficult seesaw balance - between a conservative cultural ethic, an expanding regional art administration, and the more and more confident international artist. Which way will the seesaw settle, and for how long?

Asialink, despite the questions raised in the article, continues to encourage partnerships with curators in the region. The Centre has moved from facilitating 'straight' touring exhibitions towards more bilateral

partnerships, and has plans currently for exchange exhibitions with Korea (between the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne and the WhanKi Museum in Seoul, and the National Gallery of Victoria and the Sonje Museum, which has two sites in Seoul and Kyongju), with Taiwan (between independent curator Michael Lim and the University of Melbourne Museum of Art) and Hong Kong (the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, and the Hong Kong Arts Centre). 'Rapport' (between Monash University Gallery and the Singapore Art Museum) has just finished its tour, and 'Fire and Life' (between various Australian and Indian curators) is on throughout 1997 around Australia. Anne Kirker of QAG is working on a photography project which includes curators from New Zealand, Korea and Japan. Similar projects are being developed with Malaysia and Thailand.

With Museums Australia, Asialink has initiated a training program for art museum personnel, particularly curators, from ASEAN. This has had the support of Business Victoria, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and ASEAN itself.

A current project in this program is being coordinated in Melbourne by Deakin University.

And please note, included in the residency in the Asia program (which mainly is for practising artists, craftspeople, performing arts people and writers) is an arts administrators' residency section. A new part of this program specifically deals with Japan.

The Centre has recently been adding up some figures: in five years, 23 exhibitions have been toured to 100 venues in Asia and 70 Australians artists and arts managers have taken up residencies in almost all countries of the region. Asialink is a Strategic Partner of the Australia Council, and just won the tender for devising and touring art exhibitions in Asia from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the next two years.

For more information: Asialink, 107 Barry Street, Carlton Vic 3053, tel: (03) 9349 1899, fax: (03) 9347 1768.

**Alison Carroll, Director,
Arts Program,
Asialink**



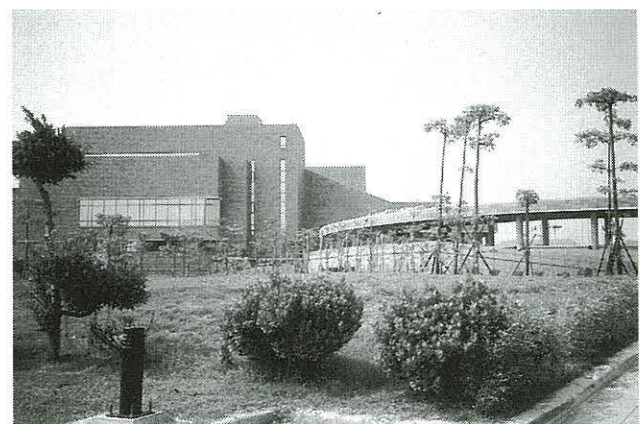
Singapore Art Museum. Recently opened newly renovated premises in old colonially built school; co-curated *Rapport* exhibition, touring Australia 1997.



Alhambra Arts Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan. The Arts Centre, run by the Arts Council of Pakistan, is modelled on the architecture of the ancient Indus valley city of Moenjodaro.



National Gallery of Art, Islamabad, Pakistan. A new Gallery building is being planned; *Aurora* exhibition, curated by RMIT Gallery, there in 1997.



Kaohsiung Museum of Art, Taiwan. City run museum in second city of Taiwan; recently opened.

An Internship in Japan

*Natalie King, Curator, Monash University Gallery,
is interviewed by Simeon Kronenberg*

How did you come to go to Japan?

I sought advice from a number of colleagues who had visited Japan as part of a fact-finding delegation last year, as to which museums had innovative contemporary programs. From this information, I narrowed my thoughts to a shortlist of potential host institutions. I wrote to each of these institutions but because of language barriers and the fact that there are no museum studies courses in Japan, the concept of 'intern' or 'secondment' was unfamiliar. Also space is at a premium in Japan so even the logistics of providing me with a small desk was problematic.

Fortunately, it was through a brief encounter, that I secured a placement as Curator in Residence at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Previously, I had met the Senior Curator, Mr Kunio Motoe when he came to Melbourne to deliver a lecture at the National Gallery of Victoria. We met during a heat-wave in Melbourne, at an exhibition at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA). As a result of this, Mr Motoe lobbied his director to accept my placement at the National Museum. I then secured a Travel Fellowship from the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities, which contributed to costs associated with the residency. These funds were supplemented by a contribution from the City of Melbourne for a visit to Osaka, Melbourne's sister city, to report on gallery activities.

What motivated your interest in working in a Japanese institution?

I realised that in order to consolidate my curatorial and management skills, particularly in relation to developing programs with Asian institutions, one of the most obvious ways to proceed was to second myself to a major Asian museum. In order to start thinking about developing projects in the region and learning about the arts industry I wanted to work within the museum sector. With this in mind I commenced lengthy negotiations for a residency in a Japanese museum.

Has your work practice to date led you to be interested in dealings with Asian countries? Perhaps you could outline your previous engagements?

In 1994 I was the recipient of a Museums Australia Professional Development grant, to develop skills in

bilateral exchange and collaboration with Asia. This was a self-directed program in which I undertook secondments with the doyenne of cultural exchange with Asia, Alison Carroll. I was trained by Alison at Asialink and worked on her project of outdoor installations by Asian artists, for the 1994 Adelaide Festival. Then, I worked with Caroline Turner at the Queensland Art Gallery on the Asia Pacific Triennial. The APT is a vast and visionary project that has paved the way for new forms of curatorship and new forms of professional engagement based on a model of consultation. Both Alison and Caroline were generous and encouraging mentors with a serious commitment to working with Asia.



Collections storage of Japanese scrolls at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

The professional development grant led to a collaborative exhibition with the Singapore Art Museum called 'Rapport': eight artists from Singapore and Australia. Co-curated with Tay Swee Lin from the Singapore Art Museum, 'Rapport' opened in at the newly refurbished Singapore Art Museum in June 1996 and then travelled to Monash University Gallery, Canberra School of Art Gallery and the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane.

Why do you think it is important to work in Asian countries?

Despite the blows that Pauline Hanson has caused to our image in Asia, I firmly believe that there are real opportunities for arts workers to participate in order to facilitate cultural dialogue and exchanges in the region.

Did your visit lead to anything specific - like say possible exhibition or professional exchanges between Japan and Australia?

As a direct result of the Travel Fellowship, I met Ms Yukiko Shikata, Curator, Canon Artlab who curated a travelling video project called *Maniacs of Disappearance - Today's Japan as a Disseminator of Video Messages*. This project is a survey of contemporary Japanese video art that examines the transmission of urban culture through video images and is included in *Screen* at Monash University Gallery. Because of the portability of video, this was an effective and immediate way to introduce contemporary Japanese art into our exhibition program at Monash.

The forthcoming solo exhibition by Rieko Hidaka, an artist based in Tokyo, was initiated during a field trip to Osaka, funded by the City of Melbourne. I met Masaharu Ono, Senior Curator of the National Museum of Art and we discussed the possibility of an exchange project. The arrangement is that the National Museum of Art in Osaka covers all costs other than installation and a publication and in 1999 we will send a return exhibition to Osaka. Hidaka's exhibition opens at Monash on September. (See cover, Ed).

What struck you as the most important features about working within a Japanese museum?

Being based at a well established national institution, with one of the largest collections in Japan, meant that I was able to access key information about the industry while promoting Australian contemporary art.

During this period I worked closely with Mr Kunio Motoe who is a highly respected Curator in the museum industry in Japan. Because of the protocol of 'introductions' in Japan, Mr Motoe organised a series of meetings with senior museum professionals, in a range of high profile museums and assisted me with a comprehensive itinerary of visits to other institutions. This was an essential starting point since the most effective way to establish a network of contacts in Japan is through personal introductions. On some occasions, I was escorted to different galleries by museum staff. It is critical when one is working in a foreign professional context to learn about protocols of introductions and networking. Without the

generosity of these senior introductions, I am convinced I would have floundered.

These meetings enabled me to gain invaluable access to curators and learn about their program of exhibitions, collections, publications and public programs. Essentially, I was able to undertake an extensive field trip of the museum industry in Tokyo based at the National Museum of Modern Art. I was able to establish a network of colleagues in Japan including curators, artists, writers and embassy personnel.

Would you think it would be useful for Australian institutions to host Japanese and other Asian curators here in Australia?

Definitely, this would foster exchanges and facilitate projects.

Institutions in Australia, like state galleries and so on, are sometimes criticised for their perceived lack of commitment to the cutting edge in contemporary art practice. What were your impressions of the commitment to contemporary Japanese culture within the museum you worked in and others you visited?

During my residency, The National Museum of Modern Art had an engaging exhibition of contemporary Korean art on display. Otherwise the program seemed to be traditional in focus with a permanent exhibition of Japanese scrolls from the collection on display.

Overall, I saw a tremendous variety of exhibitions in terms of scale, concept and approach at other museums, usually accompanied by lavish publications. But I also saw many cutting edge shows in commercial galleries, corporate galleries and in public art displays. It's a very different cultural landscape from Australia.

Also it is important to recognise that in Japan, the term 'gallery' and 'museum' do not always possess the same connotations as they do in the Western art world. Many commercial galleries in Japan for instance do not show a 'stable' of artists. Others have no specific policy of their own, these are rental galleries that, as the name implies, rent their spaces to artists. The effect of this is very short-run exhibitions, usually no longer than a week and of variable quality. The majority of galleries operate in this way and the average cost of renting space is exorbitant.

The many corporate galleries in Japan, are often an important extension of a company's activity and policy, with costs underwritten by the parent firm with a network of galleries across the country. For example, Kirin and Shiseido have spaces. Most department stores have galleries so that the act of looking at art is integrated with shopping and daily life. The visual arts landscape in Japan is incredibly diverse and complex.

For instance one of the most exciting things I saw was a fantastic billboard by Yasumasa Morimura outside the Issey Miyake store in Omote-Sando as well as Nan Goldin images in the Matsuda store. Fashion and art were integrated in a challenging way.

In Japan cutting edge contemporary art is not just seen in museums.



Curatorial staff in collections storage at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

Perhaps you could outline your overall impressions of working as a curator in a major museum in Japan. What are the essential differences and similarities?

Being in Japan was at once tough and terrific. Prior to my visit I had my business card or *meishi* translated. The ritual of exchanging cards is an essential starting point to meeting colleagues in Japan. This is incredibly important. Formal structures mean a great deal.

At the National Museum, hierarchies were firmly in place and the Japanese work ethic which seems to be very demanding, was paramount. It was difficult for me to get a sense of reporting lines and responsibilities, probably as a result of language barriers. But unlike in Australia, most of my colleagues had been trained by the institution, only a couple had trained in museum studies or art history abroad.

The hospitality shown to me in Japan was extremely gracious. I think there is a lot we can learn in this area. I was received like a distinguished international guest. The Director of the Museum, who was formerly from the Ministry of Education, took me out to an exquisite dinner to eat Japanese delicacies, a type of cuisine called *Shabu Shabu*, which is like a mixture of fondue and hot pot. We ate crab that had been flown in from Alaska. On another occasion, the curatorial staff took me out with the Deputy Director and each staff member stood up and

made welcoming speeches to me, in Japanese. The level of hospitality was overwhelming. These kinds of memories have lingered, along with being trapped in Shinjuku station, the largest train station in the world, where there are approximately forty exits with signage in Kanji and no daylight.

What do you think you brought back to Australia in terms of developed skills and understanding?

Outcomes of the residency include the development of skills in museum practice and protocol in Japan with a view to establishing partnerships between Australian and Japanese institutions on joint art projects and events. This knowledge has been disseminated to my colleagues at Monash University Gallery and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in the form of briefing sessions. Being based at a national museum enabled me to gain first hand experience of curatorial practice, publishing, collections maintenance and public programs.

I feel tremendously privileged to have had the opportunity to work in a professional capacity in Japan and it has certainly renewed my passion for working in the region. But it is only early days.

Parts of this interview were discussed at the Museums Australia (Vic) forum 'The Export of Cultural Expertise, Contemporary Practice in Museums', RMIT Storey Hall, July 1997.

Market Forces and the Creative Process

By Philip Rolfe

A key issue - some would say 'the' key issue - in the current arts management debate is expressed in the term 'audience development'. For old hands in the arts scene this is hardly contentious; the constant need to search for and pamper the vital audience is not news to them. Many of our most successful and high profile arts organisations have relied on their staff's marketing skills and excelled with the help of loyal subscribers and attendees for many years. However, in the contemporary climate, where both subsidy restraint and competition for the entertainment dollar is the fiercest ever, the importance of an audience development strategy is now as relevant to the grass roots companies and even the individual artist. It is no longer just about the paying public or 'bums on seats' but takes into account new channels for creative expression and new forms of art that were only dreamt of in the late 1980s. The exponential growth of opportunities for artists and arts organisations is a reality of our age in which all are invited to participate and many can potentially benefit. The challenge for the old hands is the ability to adapt to change and contend with a broadening market across entertainment and the arts.

Recently at a meeting with the Program Director for BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) in New York City, we were told of the plan to gut their main 1000 seat theatre and replace it with four smaller multimedia and cinemathèque venues. The rationale being that future audience growth is in that direction. This bold move aims to position this major arts complex at the fore by increasing the diversity of presentations on offer, by acknowledging the legitimacy of new arts media and the blurring of the boundaries between the arts. It solicits the eclectic tastes of current audiences - from film culture to new chamber opera, grunge bands, Chekhov, and the internet. Similar rethinking is underway within many other arts institutions abroad and in Australia where the emphasis is not only on better marketing practices in support of existing sorts of programs, but also in analysing the nature of the changes to the creation and presentation of the arts and implementing plans for capturing abundant new audiences. Moves such as BAM's are at the radical end of changes that are going on, but ultimately it is probable that more costly physical alterations to performing and exhibiting spaces will occur in order to keep up with the expectations of contemporary audiences.

Australian arts producers are also investigating better means of exposing their works to new audiences and potential new buyers, through more conventional means. Today there is a concerted interest in prolonging the life of quality productions and exhibitions by touring and exploiting the benefits of more efficient advance planning and networking, including co-producing. Government touring schemes

such as Playing Australia, Festivals Australia and Visions of Australia are part of the new mechanisms of assistance.

To underpin issues such as these, in recent times, the Australia Council has adapted its funding programs and organisational structure. In 1995 Council created a New Media Arts Fund in support of obvious changing creative practices and in the following year, created a Partnerships Program to encourage business and industry to engage with arts producers in the development of new work. Most recently, it established a new division called Audience Development and Advocacy. Unlike Arts Funding, Audience Development and Advocacy invites arts organisations and individuals to approach it with proposals that directly address audience development issues. Skills development and improved marketing of the arts are critical to the brief, but the bigger picture also incorporates issues to do with globalisation, export and international market development and the future creative directions of the arts in an environment of technological change. The Division will work with the various Funds of Council and other arts agencies at state and territory level to develop its programs and chart its course.

Audience Development and Advocacy has brought a stronger focus on and commitment to audience development and arts marketing within the Australia Council. Whilst increasing demand for the arts has been an ongoing aim of the Council, Audience Development and Advocacy specifically seeks to engender partnerships with arts organisations and industry bodies, particularly those committed to improving current practices or seeking to develop new approaches in Australia or internationally.

The work of the Division is quite diverse: for example it is collecting audience development and marketing case studies across the arts. It will highlight and promote these through seminars and workshops, publications, and at a national audience development summit to be held in early 1998. As well, an associated Internet site is being created as a major means of accessing resources to assist and guide arts organisations with marketing.

In April this year, in association with the Australian Commercial Galleries Association, the Division presented a successful series of seminars in most capital cities based on *To Sell Art Know Your Market*, a new Council report on the buyers and potential buyers of Australian visual art and fine craft.

In January 1998, young Australians will be invited to participate in the world's first national media festival of youth culture and the arts. Titled LOUD, and funded by the Federal Government and a string of major sponsors, this event is delivered via television, radio, the internet and the print media and has the potential to involve millions of young Australians

throughout the whole month - as audience and creative participants. The Division manages this event on behalf of the Council.

The Division funded four new multicultural arts marketing positions in organisations in Cairns, Lismore, Sydney and Melbourne in May this year, to develop and implement strategies for the creation and fostering of audiences in targeted ethnic groups. In a follow-up program in 1998, the Division aims to broaden the reach of this type of program into more arts organisations. Allied to the development of better marketing practices, the Division is also continuing to assess the needs of distinct constituencies and the potential of arts marketing consortia and grouped marketing schemes.

In August, an organisation named ArtsLink will begin a comprehensive on-line information service geared to Australian and overseas arts organisations and artists, providing access to vast fields of data on touring circuits, important contacts, major and minor arts events, festivals and arts programs, and other key references, in Australia and in most countries of the world.

Audience Development and Advocacy has recently set in place a new Arts Export Strategy designed to expand the market for Australian arts internationally. It includes the successful Visual Arts Export Strategy which was managed in conjunction with Austrade from 1991 to 1996. During those five years it assisted 62 galleries to attend 32 international expositions, representing the work of more than one thousand visual arts and craft artists, and thirteen Australian art and craft publications to an estimated audience of two million people. Australian artists have benefited not only through financial assistance to attend international art and craft expositions, but also through significant flow-on benefits. In Australia, importantly, the burgeoning Australian Contemporary Arts Fair is central to this strategy.

Export and international market development activities have been carried out within other areas of the Australia Council, including the Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and the Literature Fund. The latter has supported the translation and overseas publication of many works by living Australian writers, as well as the participation of Australian writers at international promotional tours and their attendance at international book fairs. The former is buoyed with ideas for the promotion of Australia's indigenous arts into a world seeking uniqueness and cultural exploration. Australian indigenous painting is our hottest seller on the international market.

The new Arts Export Strategy consolidates the coordination of arts export and international market development activities within one division of the Australia Council to enable the exchange of ideas and initiatives across art forms.

In addition to the Arts Export Strategy, Audience Development and Advocacy also manages the Australia Council's Major Festivals Initiative and Australian arts involvement in various important international events including the government's New Horizons Program in India and NewImages program in Britain, the Australian representation at the Venice Biennale and a range of strategic promotions including the appointment of overseas arts publicists to promote Australian programs, and visits to Australia by foreign arts journalists.

Australian artists are highly productive and creative. The array of organisations and infrastructure established to support contemporary arts practice and arts development have the responsibility to ensure there is a conducive environment encouraging better marketing and greater earnings. Whilst the future is boundless in its potential, but impossible to accurately 'vision', at least the practical marketing issues are now on the agenda as key priorities of bodies such as the Australia Council.

**Philip Rolfe,
Acting Director,
Audience Development and
Advocacy, Australia Council**

Announcement

Research Listing 1998

Following the highly successful Research Supplement published as part of *Museum National* in August, 1996, the Editorial Committee is pleased to announce that the Supplement will be published biennially. The next one will appear in the August 1998 issue.

If you would like your name to be on a mailing list to receive a copy of the questionnaire please give your contact details to

Elke Kerr,

Museums Australia,

24 Queens Parade, North Fitzroy, 3068.

Tel: (03) 9486 3399 Fax: (03) 9486 3788.



Reconciliation: a Peoples Movement

By Trevor Pearce

As a grandson of one of the many Indigenous leaders who assisted in bringing about social and political change for Indigenous Australians, through the 1967 Constitutional Referendum, it was my observation that the critical Indigenous issues addressed at the Reconciliation Convention, had in many ways come full circle.

As a child of seven I remember attending countless meetings with my grandfather, being told to sit under the table and play with my toys, while adults talked. I was also at many important social gatherings, which were in fact informal meetings of the same group of people in houses of friends in Sydney.

These meetings were attended by a mixture of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, all with a strong commitment to addressing Indigenous social

and related political issues. They met in their own homes, shared travel expenses, slept on living room floors, all in order to attend and be part of the movement for change. This was grass roots action. There was drive and compassion in everything talked about and planned and much was achieved.

Political commitment of this kind led to the building of hostels, the establishment of community based medical centres and legal services, successful lobbying of politicians and countless board rooms and select committee meetings and fruitful post event discussions in car parks after formal meetings.

As part of the audience at the Reconciliation Convention, this year, as we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the 1967 Constitutional Referendum, watching as some of the people involved in this



Thirty years ago, campaigners celebrated the goodwill of the nation and the success of the 1967 Referendum. Herbert Stanley Groves (back row, far right) is Trevor Pearce's grandfather. Photo courtesy of Australian Consolidated Press

watershed of Australian history were ushered onto the stage, and then looking at the 1997 Reconciliation Convention participants around me, I felt that the movement had in fact returned to the original issues. In 1967 people from all sections of the Australian community were involved: doctors, lawyers, ethnic groups, returned soldiers, secretaries, women's groups, students, business groups and even a few politicians. This same composition of people was also reflected within the 1997 Convention participants.

Once again, in the face of virulent opposition from the likes of Pauline Hanson and her supporters, it is imperative that the broadest possible coalition of people meets together to make clear that Australians support the ideals of reconciliation. There was a vital peoples movement leading up to the Referendum in 1967 and again in the 1990s. Australia, in the current destructive climate of Hansonism, is again drawing strength from the broadly-based support of the Australian community.

Therefore, for us in Australia, as working professionals in the museum industry, the question must be asked, how do we make reconciliation truly a museum's movement?

In fact the Australian Reconciliation Convention held in May 1997 in Melbourne sought to map out a firm direction for the advancement of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, as we head towards the Centenary of Federation in 2001. This impacts on museums and museum professionals. The Convention was attended by more than 1,500 participants from many sectors of the community all with the aim of advancing reconciliation as a positive movement for Australians; many museum workers were in attendance from all sections within the industry.

In leading up to the convention the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation approached Dr Des Griffin as Co-Chair of Museums Australia's Standing Committee on Museums and Indigenous People to seek the involvement of Museums Australia, as the sectoral contact for cultural heritage issues. Museums Australia employed Ms Lori Richardson, as a consultant to carry out the dissemination of issues and materials to the cultural heritage sector on behalf of the Convention.

Reconciliation and Indigenous people is not, of course, an issue unique to Australia. In 1982 the United Nations established a Working Group in Indigenous Populations, its major role has been to develop a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is hoped that by the year 2004 the members of the United Nations will vote to accept the Declaration.(1)

Museums exist within a global community. This issue was addressed by Gordon Metz of the Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture, Capetown, South Africa, at the Museums Australia's national conference in Perth 1994. Metz highlighted the challenges to the new South Africa, especially in relation to museology, after 300 years of colonialism and apartheid. In creating a new kind of museologist, Metz drew on the analogy of guerilla warfare, from which the emergence of the new South Africa owes much. He did not suggest that the museologist 'don camouflage and attack her/his own institutions', rather that 'museums and museologists should make provisions for more dynamic structures in order to encourage meaningful change. Metz concluded that the struggle against apartheid is a 'collective heritage of struggle and that museums must become organic in order to reflect the historical and cultural diversity of South Africa'.(2)

Like Metz, I would now recommend that we adopt a more radical stance. It is necessary to move beyond the tactics of my grandparents, holding meetings in the living rooms of museum directors. What must be recognised now is that while the groundwork for where we currently stand in the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people was born out of this commitment, we must now move on. In respect to museology the movement must involve a collective commitment by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The first two paragraphs of the introduction of *Previous Possessions, New Obligations* outlines the past, often inappropriate, relationship that existed between museums and Indigenous peoples.(3) In fact, the portrayal of Indigenous peoples as primitive and exotic is well recorded in museums archives. However, the practice of such by museologists, I hope is now only historical fact. The frank recognition of these past attitudes forms the foundation upon which new and inclusive attitudes are to be built - across the broad sector.

Some Indigenous critics of museums cling to a particular kind of rhetoric as a political tool in labelling museums as the last bastion of colonialism, especially in relation to their dealing with issues concerning the repatriation of ancestral remains and secret sacred cultural materials. Such positions are certainly dated given the development of museums relationships with Indigenous peoples over the last twenty years.(4)

Certainly the repatriation of ancestral remains and secret sacred cultural materials is one of the most crucial factors in addressing the issues surrounding museums and reconciliation, but it is not the only one. In Canada, the United States and New Zealand repatriation issues have progressed because of policies

similar to *Previous Possessions, New Obligations*. However, Museums Australia's policy goes beyond the issues of repatriation. The fundamentally important and broad scope of the policy is intended to recognise the fact that Indigenous peoples have a right to be involved in all aspect of care, management and presentation of their culture.

Previous Possessions, New Obligations was nominated as a national document of reconciliation for the National Reconciliation Awards. Dr Des Griffin was disappointed that the policy document did not make it into the finals. Nevertheless, Des was pleased with the final results because the finalists and recipients of the awards had implemented reconciliation. Des further commented that perhaps we within museums are only just scratching the surface when it comes to reconciliation issues and their impact on museums.

The majority of important issues facing Indigenous Australia are not easy to deal with - they often demand much difficult soul-searching and long-term commitment. Issues such as the ongoing existence in Australia of third-world health conditions for some Indigenous people, problems to do with the notion of Native Title and the resentment this sometimes causes, the issues of the Stolen Generations and Black Deaths in Custody. These are only a few of the vital issues that we see in the media and only some are addressed by museums - for example the National Museum's Travelling Exhibition, 'Between Two Worlds', focussed on the regrettable story of the removal of Aboriginal children of part-descent. We need to see more exhibitions like this in order to educate the public and further the process of Reconciliation. We must face these issues collectively as Australians.

It should not been seen, as our Prime Minister has done, that we are promoting a 'black arm band view of history'. Reconciliation and issues associated with Indigenous Australia are about truth and not guilt. Senator Cheryl Kernot, Leader of the Australian Democrats gave us a telling example of appropriate behaviour by stating what the Convention participants felt the Prime Minister's response should have been to the Stolen Generation when she said, 'don't we teach our children to say sorry?'

Museums will continue to play a major role in the further definition and development of Australia's cultural identity as we head towards the centenary of Federation in 2001. Indigenous issues must have a prominent position in the contribution museums make to Australia's cultural identity.

It has been a significant achievement by Museums Australia to have developed and implemented *Previous Possessions, New Obligations* as a national guideline and policy. Reconciliation is a national program and the

policy document *Previous Possessions, New Obligations* affects all museums, large and small, regional and state.

The Australian Government is currently under international scrutiny. The Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Herron's recently addressed the Annual Conference of the United Nations Working Group of Indigenous Populations. In leading up to this event the Australian film producer George Miller has warned that Australia is in danger of being labelled worldwide as 'the new South Africa'.(5) Given Australia's current international standing on Indigenous issues the rest of the world is also watching.

Reconciliation is only attainable through what Metz has called a collective heritage of struggle.(6) It should be the concern of each museum professional and of all Australians.

**Trevor Pearce,
Program Manager,
Museums and Indigenous People,
Museums Australia**

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Finding Aotearoa

By Chris Saines

Aotearoa New Zealand is different, but in ways and to an extent that I think would surprise most Australians. For those who have never travelled here I can imagine that their sense of the place, its peoples and its cultural landscape might have paralleled mine of 18 months ago. I saw New Zealand then as a good thing to do when finally I had the time...(meaning probably never). I would have done well to come here sooner. Not only is it a country replete with elemental drama, which I had known, but it is also one of resurgent cultural strength and dynamism, of which I was largely unaware.

I nonetheless vividly remember hearing Cheryl Sotheran and Cliff Whiting speak in Hobart in 1993 to the then Council of Australian Museums Association conference. Theirs was, and remains today, a shared leadership of an ambitious pan-museum model for a new millennium. This was biculturalism in action: Pakeha (foreigner, white New Zealander) standing with Maori, each articulating a common vision of what is currently the world's largest museum project. Te Papa, Our Place, as the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa project is now known, opens in early 1998. It now stands like a beacon on the summit of the bicultural agenda, and a lightning rod for contested notions of national identity, so it is already working.

I recall too the impact of the New Zealand contingent at the Museums Australia Perth conference in 1994 and, for perhaps more acute reasons, Jonathan Mane-Wheoki's presence in Brisbane in 1995. These occasions saw papers preceded by *karakia* (prayer, incantation), and *waiata* (song) offered in greeting and reply. While I had no remote concept of those Maori traditions then, let alone their spiritual intent, I could not fail to recognise that they were part of a wider cultural compact which touched if not enjoined all New Zealanders - Pakeha and Maori alike - at least in formal settings abroad. (The equivalent, if you will, of the All Blacks *haka* - as powerfully unifying in its force as it is stirring and unsettling in its effect.)

And, if I am honest, I would have to concede that those New Zealand delegation performances were indeed a bit unsettling, as I suspect they were for other non-indigenous Australians. Understandably, few in

the audience fully shared in their meaning, or we would have risen to our feet as we might (well..., we might) respond to the strains of *Waltzing Matilda* sung in a far off place. There were rumblings about New Zealand being too culturally correct for its own good - an upstart out there in the South Pacific. Could this be a country actually getting it right?

Indeed, New Zealand is a country deeply committed to reconciling itself with its past, if equivocal about the shape of its cultural future. Much of this stems from the existence of a founding instrument of reconciliation between colonised and coloniser, the *Treaty of Waitangi*, and a national tribunal that asserts treaty principles and rules on land and natural resource claims. This is not to deny the tensions created by the dis-engaging and re-drawing of cultural boundaries, but nor is it to exacerbate them, as happens when social and political contracts are found so wanting that they too easily invite in the polemical and the doctrinaire.

As an Australian, whose professional life was shaped in Australian art museums, I was largely unprepared for the shift of consciousness required to meet that of longitude. It is, in my own setting - the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki - at a moment of real reconciliation with the past. Not since *Te Maori* in 1986 has the Gallery been so fully engaged in a bicultural project as it is with its current exhibition of the works of Charles F. Goldie.

A turn-of-the-century academically trained Pakeha artist, Goldie is best known inside New Zealand for his compellingly realist depictions of Maori with ta moko (facial tattoo). Once looked upon as the last consoling



Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki *Goldie*, July 1997

relics of a noble but dying race, these searching and earnest studies of Maoris have long since transcended rescue ethnography. They are now *taonga tuku iho* (precious likenesses of the ancestors) for a vigorously resurgent people. Through Goldie's historicist filter, these *tupuna* (ancestors) speak so directly to their descendants that they invoke both verbal and physical greeting.

It is difficult to think of any parallels for this phenomena in the western portrait tradition, and it is entirely unlike early post-contact depictions of Aborigines. Yet this is only one element in a complex bicultural infrastructure and response which has converged upon and now contains this exhibition. The process of *iwi* and *whanau* (tribal, family) liaison began more than two years ago, with descendants of Goldie's Maori sitters being traced across the country.

On arrival in the Gallery a *tapu lifting* (blessing) ceremony preceded the installation of the works, with staff and members of the Gallery's Maori Advisory Group gathering quietly at pre-dawn, to be called into and through the exhibition spaces. We drew together around the walls of the main gallery and *mihis* (prayers, greetings) were exchanged. As representatives of local *iwi* welcomed their *tupuna* home I welcomed them to this place. In that early morning light, art had a transcendent power that has never seemed more alive to me.

There is, too, widespread understanding and everyday use of terms such as *tangata whenua* (people of the land). Nonetheless, in spite of the surge of multiculturalism it is becoming more difficult to hold. Indeed, the changing face of New Zealand is most fully revealed in its now well established Polynesian and rapidly developing Asian communities. (Auckland is the largest Polynesian city in the world.)

Where is this place, then, in cultural and museum terms? And how is it different from Australia?

New Zealanders are, for the most, prepared to acknowledge cultural difference and diversity, even if they are not always as quick to celebrate it. Indeed,

through their propensity to travel, many especially seek out those very qualities of experience. It is nonetheless apparent to me, as a very recent arrival in New Zealand, that cultural understanding is something we are more willing to embrace when abroad than at home. The spurious immigration debate of the last several months is evidence enough of that.

The Gallery is entering a period of significant cultural and organisational change: cultural, in that the social contract between the contemporary art museum and its many communities of support is changing fundamentally, and organisational, in that its core funder has clearly signalled its intent to move the Gallery onto a new, regionally-based funding platform.

Although newly arrived, I have certainly undergone a kind of rapid immersion entry into the cultural and artistic life of New Zealand. For all of the omnipresence of Colin McCahon - of which my new Gallery has an astonishing collection - it is perhaps not surprising that the richness and dignity of Maoridom has left the greatest mark. This is never more apparent than on the walls of the *whare whakairo* (carved ancestral houses) which I have visited, in public spaces and museums, and in the living language and protocols of Maori ceremony and gatherings - both public and private. (It is worth noting here that the Auckland Museum Te Papa Whakahiku, which has an unsurpassed Maori collection, attracts in excess of one million visitors per year.)

I have now come to realise how rapidly I have needed to assimilate knowledge of this country. Its history, peoples, first language and art are different from those of Australia, as of course is its sense of place and cultural identity. As New Zealand seeks to reconcile itself with the passage and consequences of its history in the world, it is, at the same time, wanting to increasingly open itself to that world. It is a question of looking backward - as it looks forward - into its future.

Chris Saines,
Director,
Auckland Art Gallery

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The Europeans: Emigré Artists in Australia, 1930- 1960,
National Gallery of Australia

On Sunday April 5 I made my second trip to Canberra to see 'The Europeans: Emigré Artists in Australia, 1930- 1960' curated by Roger Butler at the National Gallery of Australia. On my only previous visit I felt that the city was a surreal landscape, its monumental buildings reducing me to a faint de Chirico shadow. This time my sense of disorientation was exacerbated by discovering that 'The Europeans' was an exhibition without a voice. There were no display panels, no fliers, no curatorial comments, no forms of historical documentation on display anywhere. (The very interesting volume of seventeen scholarly essays by Magdalene Keaney, Anne Brennan, Roger Butler and others did not appear until May.) All the visitor could do was to roam around the three large galleries looking at the more than 200 monotypes, sculptures, paintings, jewellery, photographs and furniture - in the knowledge that they had been grouped together under a single two-pronged title - 'European' (covering artists from sixteen nationalities) and 'emigré'. While many of the individual works were compelling, they seemed lost in the gallery because of this verbal silence, and I noticed that most of the visitors passed through the rooms fairly quickly.

Such flat, decontextualized methods of displaying artworks are unlikely to add to the knowledge or quicken the historical and cultural imagination of international tourists and local audiences, nor do they generate links with contemporary cultural debates here and abroad. Yet the theme of this exhibition, as well as much of the work on display, speaks poignantly to us all about the most searing experiences of this century: exile, internment, the Holocaust, displacement and suffering of Aboriginal Australians as well as refugees, war, and the continuing struggle between individuals and groups in all countries to find spaces beyond fear and stigmatization in which their energies can flower.

I visited the exhibition having visited the site of Tatura Internment Camp, so I was particularly interested in the monotypes and other works by Erwin Fabian, Ludwig Hirschfeld

Mack, Karl Duldig, Klaus Friedeberger and Bruno Simon, all of which were produced behind barbed wire in the early 1940s in Tatura. Many viewers both local and from abroad, however, would not know this background. By providing no discussion of the historical conditions in which these works emerged, the Gallery fails to present these works as human documents and important carriers of Australian (not simply 'emigré') cultural memory. This work also needs its own space; its emotional and historical charge is too strong to merge with such essentially decorative works as Elise Blumann's oils or Paul Haefliger's *Abstract with Violin*.

Perhaps this is the real problem of the exhibition: a failure to see that emotional short circuiting is likely to happen if you try and combine hot and cold artworks in the same frame. Instead of focusing on the story of just one generation - say the artists whose entry to Australia began with internment - and encouraging viewers to examine the works through an historical optic that would give us a sense of the gradual Europeanization of Anglo-Celtic models of time, space and community, the exhibition catapults us from the 1940s to the 1960s and from painting to jewellery to architectural photographs to furniture and fabric design, until we lose all sense of the coherence of a generational perspective or of an individual practice. Clearly it was curator Butler's hope that by showing the diversity of media employed by the artists he would illustrate their 'commitment to integrating art and life'. Yet this sense of integration, evident in the essays, is just what is lacking in the wordless exhibition.

My final shock at the Gallery's no-comment policy came in reading a statement by Oswald Ziegler, introducing a book illustrated by Gert Sellheim, titled *150 Years Australia 1778-1938*: 'Nor do we forget the aborigine, and that it was his land before we claimed it. We recognize the romantic side of his existence and in an endeavour to perpetuate the memory of his dying race, we have designed this book in a modern manner with an aboriginal motif as the background.' The aborigine, Ziegler goes on, 'had not any real system of writing, but contented

himself with a somewhat complicated sign language, examples of his crudely artistic efforts still being in evidence on the rocky sides of mountains and elsewhere.' In this case, re-presenting the view of 1938 without comment, the exhibition effectively repeats the white racism of the original, and puts it into new circulation.

I find this a painful exhibition which points to the violent ruptures both in Australian and in so-called 'European' experience. But it does nothing to show how art, politics and history can work together to educate us towards better practices. I celebrate the artistic talent and the courage of many of the artists exhibited; I deplore the inadequacy of the cultural (non) frame into which they have been inserted.

M. Kay Flavell,
Melbourne.

Brilliant Careers: Women Collectors and Illustrators in Queensland *Queensland Museum, 6 March - 20 April 1997.*

A wriggling male exhibit - a live taipan - greeted visitors to the wonderful exhibition Brilliant Careers, a celebration of the largely unknown achievements of women collectors in Queensland. It recollects Amalie Dietrich, exceptional among early women collectors in achieving recognition in her lifetime, whose collections for the Museum Godeffroy in Hamburg covered almost the whole range of natural history and abounded in species new to science including the deadly male taipan.

The exhibition is the third curated by the indefatigable Dr Judith McKay in the Queensland Museum's annual series for International Women's Day. It is a tribute to a remarkable group of 48 women whose work as collectors and illustrators over the past 150 years has extended our knowledge of the Queensland environment and people. All have left a public legacy in their contributions to museums and herbaria, or in publications and advocacy of conservation causes. Yet until recently, little has been known of women's pioneering contribution to natural history in Queensland. This is not surprising, as women are conspicuously absent from official



Parasitologist Josephine Bancroft (later Mackerras) at Eidsvold, stalking snakes for her blood parasite research early this century. (Courtesy of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the Bancroft family)

histories, a fact which Her Excellency the Governor, Leneen Forde, pointed out in launching the exhibition.

Science in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was almost exclusively a male domain. But scientists like the Colonial Botanist depended on a network of distant collectors to supply specimens for their research. Most of these were unpaid women, 'amateurs' who combined their family and farm responsibilities with a passion for natural history or ethnography and who collected for the joy of discovery. Rarely were these discoveries

publicised by the women who despatched them to male professionals to interpret. The latter sometimes named a species in the collector's honour, like *Microcitrus garrawayae* for Jane Garraway of Cape York peninsula, or *Apion hoblerae*, a weevil named after Mabel Hobler of Jandowae near Dalby. Harriet Biddulph's plant specimens from the Carnarvon Range were analysed by Baron Ferdinand von Mueller in Melbourne and the exhibition includes labels from his type specimens in his very distinctive handwriting.

By the 1920s amateur collectors were being replaced by professionally trained female scientists. Dr Gabriele Neuhäuser, a professional zoologist, collected mammals in North Queensland from 1937; her gun is on display in the exhibition! Emeritus Professor Dorothy Hill studied Australia's geological history; some of her collection of tens of thousands of thin rock sections now in the University of Queensland's Geology Museum adorn the exhibition along with the Professor's academic gowns. As well as the important role of women in science as collectors, women were also crucial as illustrators, and the large scale paintings of Ellis Rowan are given pride of place at the entrance to the exhibition.

'Brilliant Careers' extends beyond natural history to include other collections. Ursula McConnel, an early anthropologist who undertook fieldwork with the Wik Mungkan people of western Cape York from 1927 to 1934, collected artefacts representing indigenous women's culture, previously overlooked by male anthropologists. The spectacular bark canoe at the entrance to the exhibition was a specimen from Mapoon Mission which she gave to the Queensland Museum in 1935. Gladys Henry of Bellenden Station purchased a considerable collection of artefacts from the Jirrbal people; shields from this collection, now in the Museum of Tropical Anthropology at James Cook University, are exhibited. Non-Aboriginal Australian material is represented in the exhibition by Marjory Fainges' doll collection and Audrey North's fan collection.

The main criterion for inclusion in the exhibition was that the collectors had deposited a substantial number of specimens in public collections. To determine this, McKay sought the advice of Museum and Herbarium colleagues, and the involvement of 25 specialists is seen in the rich collection of personal memorabilia and carefully worded captions which make the scientific detail eminently understandable without being too generalised.

It is a great pity that such scholarship was only on exhibition for six weeks - the pitifully small time allocated by the Museum for this rich

multimedia exhibition. Maybe it reflects the Museum's current attitude to temporary exhibitions about natural science and women's history, as distinct from those which followed, featuring jewellery or Australian rock music. Maybe it reflects its attitude to women professionals, too few of whom are employed as curators but whose contribution to the collections has been immense.

Yet 'Brilliant Careers' is a model of what all good contemporary exhibitions should be - multidisciplinary art and science; visual and sculptural; educative and entertaining; highlighting the didactic value, authority and authenticity of the artefacts of traditional museum displays; multicultural in content; building on the Museum's own collections with well-acknowledged loans from other collections; and finally, having on sale a beautifully designed book compiled by the curator to cover the highlights of the exhibition.

The book, *Brilliant Careers*, is the lasting product of the exhibition. It features 34 biographies, most complete with a portrait, historical photographs of the collectors at work, some stunning photographs in colour of the specimens, all with the text printed over a faded background of Dorothy Hill's geological map of Queensland. It will be the only record of this fascinating exhibition.

**Jane Lennon,
Board of Trustees,
Newstead House, Brisbane**

Mugga Mugga cottage,

*Narrabundah Lane, Symonstown,
Canberra.*

Canberra has often been vilified for its acres of little box houses surrounding the formal functions of government. But even Canberra has a history, and the suburbs build upon a tradition of cottages dotted about the slopes and valleys of a river landscape. A handful of these buildings survived the depredations of urban planners, and of them, Mugga Mugga is the tiny gem. It is willed to the people of Canberra by its present owner, Miss Sylvia Curley, but has been transferred already to the care of the ACT



Mugga Mugga cottage - 'the kitchen furniture and equipment still survives'

Museums and Galleries Unit. Mugga Mugga has now been stabilised and cleaned, and is open to the public on the second Saturday of each month. Even by the standards of Lanyon and Calthorpes' - both notable house museums already managed by the ACT government - Mugga's unique family collection of humble furnishings and ephemera makes it something special.

The site comprises a four-room stone cottage with slab lean-to, a detached kitchen of timber slabs and various outbuildings. Parts may date from the 1830s; the site has been continuously occupied since then by the families of shepherds originally employed by the Campbells of Duntroon, and thereafter by lessees. Patrick Curley, father of Sylvia, first lived at Mugga Mugga in 1865, but it was not until 1913 that he, Mrs Annie Elizabeth and their grown-up family of daughters moved from Duntroon when the lands of the Limestone Plains were compulsorily acquired by the new Commonwealth. In 1948 Miss Curley's sister Evelyn built a comfortable modern flat adjoining the old cottage, which was then closed up and mothballed. After Evelyn's death it suffered from bushfire and vandalism, but with repairs to a stone corner, a persistent quantity of gentle cleaning, some readhesion of lifting wallpapers and reinstallation of the furnishings, the cottage now presents

as a slice of late 19th - early 20th century domesticity.

The major furnishings are common enough to find in antique shops today, but their provenance and original decorative fittings and coverings give them unique value. Machine-woven laces of artificial silk and linos with block-printed designs are the kind of items that have nigh on disappeared from the material world and have been little collected in conventional museums. In Mugga Mugga they can be seen complete with the accretion of photos, mementoes, equipment and ornaments that families acquire over the years, thoroughly contextualised by personal history.

So-called 'intact' house museums - houses where a substantial proportion of the original occupants' furnishings remain in situ - number about fifteen in public ownership throughout Australia. Just two of them could be called humble dwellings (Scholz cottage in Riverton, SA, and Langenbaker cottage in Ilfracombe, Qld) as opposed to the more or less substantial middle class houses and even mansions that constitute the majority of the type. The addition of Mugga Mugga to the national stock of these rare and complex assemblages is therefore significant, in itself, its geography and its materials.

Just what do 'intact' houses tell us that re-created house museums don't,

and museum specimen collections can't? I believe that their special quality is to offer a context to idiosyncrasy, thus bridging the gap between the curatorial categories of representativeness and exceptionalism. Even the most meticulously informed re-creation is ultimately a fantasy, leaving the critical possibilities of the literal presentation of historic objects open only to vignettes or taxonomies. But 'intact' collections contain the authenticity of personal experience in marrying the ordinary, the rare and the improbable. In truth, they are never totally intact (and hence the inverted commas throughout this review), but they enable us to come as close as is ever possible to knowing the past in its own terms. At Mugga Mugga, we can see Australian life in the round and feel its sensory presence. It's a rare thing.

Linda Young
Cultural Heritage Management
University of Canberra

Boats : A Manual for their Documentation, edited by P. Lipke, P. Spectre and B.A.G. Fuller, *Museum Small Craft Association/American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, Tennessee, 1993, \$A68, distributed by Astan Books.*

In approaching their subject, the editors of *Boats : a manual for their documentation* have brought together a group of contributors, each an expert in some facet of the documentation of watercraft. There is a nostalgic air about it all - memories of adolescence and *Popular Mechanics* magazine, filled with advertisements offering immediate skill in any trade.

In American can-do fashion, the subject is approached from the perspective of 'You don't need experts - we'll teach you how. Anyone can do it.' Whilst in some cases this is a valid assertion, ignoring the existing body of knowledge and expertise can result in a constant reinvention of the wheel. In fact, the introduction states: 'Keep experts away', and a later chapter suggests that a qualified naval architect is not the person you want to take off lines and prepare drawings: 'They don't understand'. However, the book

highlights the need for a measure of expert input and experience, especially if this is the first time such a task is to be undertaken. The assertion that expertise is unnecessary falters in later chapters dealing with the subject of the analysis of a boat, its construction and condition. A reasonable amount of experience and understanding of the subject needs to be present so that the craft can be seen in context.

In using this volume it should be borne in mind that the idiom is American and may or may not bear relation to Australian practice and usage. For instance, the term 'lapstrake' is used to describe a form of construction generally referred to here as 'clinker'. If one is attempting to record Australian maritime history and technology, vigilance is required to prevent a slide into inappropriate nomenclature. To be fair, it should be noted that the book is pitched to an American audience, so American usage is understandable.

Despite these concerns, the book should not be dismissed. In fact for the complete novice, the volume could be invaluable in gaining understanding of the tasks involved. There are many texts available which detail various methods of taking off lines, but this book is probably the first to bring them together under the one cover, with notes and guidance on documentation. Profusely and comprehensively illustrated with clear step-by-step directions, any neophyte can attack the lines-taking exercise with some confidence in the outcome, no matter how the vessel may be lying or what its condition.

However, for a museum-quality result, the argument that a novice can do it all must be open to question. The greater the skill and experience, the better the result - it is necessary to determine what is actually required and then plan accordingly. But again, all the information is here, even down to lists of possible tools and implements required, all in the one volume and perhaps that is the book's great strength.

For the most part, the type of craft dealt with are referred to as 'small'. The size of the vessel, as the text points out at some length, as well as the purpose for documentation, will determine the level of detail that will

need to be collected. The book makes it seem that these tasks are always carried out under cover in comfortable conditions! Both issues of course will have an impact on the resources available.

One contributor suggests that a boat is not a complex structure. I would have to contend that until comparatively recent times, ships were among the most complex structures built by human hands. Boats, being essentially smaller versions of that technology, share this complexity. Each part of a boat is purpose-made to fulfil a particular function and in attempting to document any craft it should always be remembered that the likelihood of any two parts being interchangeable is very remote.

For those who have little experience in the documentation of boats, the volume has quite an extensive section detailing construction features. This section is a valuable source. Although with an obvious stress on American conditions, probably most variations in design and construction are covered, with labelled sketches of every part.

Any museum or individual contemplating the documentation of a vessel should include this book in a list of required reading before commencing. For those with no experience, it provides essential information on the task, ideas on how to organise the work and an insight into its complexities. For the experienced and indeed the expert, it may serve to reinforce and strengthen knowledge already gained and perhaps suggest some new techniques to expedite the task.

Neil Brough
Fleet Engineer Superintendent,
Australian National Maritime
Museum

Prehistory to Politics: John Mulvaney, the Humanities and the Public Intellectual, edited by Tim Bonyhady and Tom Griffiths. *Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1996*

The conference from which this volume comes, 'The Making of a Public Intellectual', was held in November 1995 to mark John

Mulvaney's seventieth birthday. Unable to attend myself, I ensured that the National Museum of Australia supported the conference financially. Mulvaney did not always agree with the directions in which the Government, or I as Director, took that institution. That does not detract from the outstanding contribution he made to the Museum's shape and to its survival. John is a worthy, often terrifying, opponent and one who I have admired ever since I first opened *The Prehistory of Australia* as an anthropology student at the University of Sydney in the mid-1970s. It was, therefore, with great interest that I read this book in search of clues to what made Mulvaney the fearless and most public intellectual he is.

The twelve papers reproduced in *Prehistory to Politics* are a mixed bag. I enjoyed about half, finding the remainder far too removed from Mulvaney and public intellectualism, or just very hard going. While this may well be due to inadequacy on my part, I would expect most readers to dip into this book rather than read it from cover to cover.

The list of contributors to *Prehistory to Politics* says much about the quality and extent of John Mulvaney's contribution to his various careers. For readers wanting an account of Mulvaney's public activism, Tim Bonyhady and Tom Griffiths trace his shift from a preoccupation with Aboriginal artefacts in the late 50s and 60s to museums as a member of the Pigott Inquiry on Museums and National Collections, and then as a member of the Australian Heritage Commission from 1976 to 1981. They document Mulvaney's involvement in the Franklin River dam dispute, where he became one of its most vocal public opponents, and finish with an account of his opposition to the return of the Kow Swamp remains by the Victorian Government. For museum professionals who missed that debate, this is essential reading.

The synopsis on the back cover claims that the book will have 'much to say about the changing nature of Australian universities and the opportunities and obligations of academics... and to cast new light on a range of archaeological, anthropological and environmental issues. It is both a history of ideas and a book about their implementation'. Does the book do this?

A chronological study by Ken

Inglis of Mulvaney's career as an academic includes a brief but enlightening account of the nature of universities and university teaching. Humphrey McQueen gives us a wide-ranging and pacy discussion of the nature of intellectuals and their responsibility to become 'public'. Some of the papers do indeed deal with issues of archaeology and history, to the point where Mulvaney is barely mentioned. I confess I found my attention wandering during the semantic discussion of 'heritage' and 'national estate' by Tim Bonyhady and in Howard Morphy's discussion of the ideology of 'the Dreamtime', though I'm certain they will be useful to students of anthropology or archaeology.

Tom Griffiths' 'In search of Australian Antiquity' and Isabel McBryde's 'Past and Present Indivisible' proved the most readable and enlightening papers. They examine the evolution of Australian archaeology and historical archaeology respectively, detailing events and issues and Mulvaney's involvement in both. In the process they come closest to explaining what has driven Mulvaney to hold and express his beliefs so strongly.

I also enjoyed Marcia Langton's description of Mulvaney's input to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and the issue of indigenous membership of Council and its academic versus political role. While she clearly disagrees with Mulvaney on matters such as the reburial of human remains, she speaks of him with respect and gratitude for his input to a wider debate in which she is herself a key player.

There is much more in this volume of the 'humanities and the public intellectual' than the 'John Mulvaney' part of the sub-title. Yes, *Prehistory to Politics* ranges across those areas it claims to present. Practitioners or students of the many disciplines in which Mulvaney's interests and expertise lie will be able to pick and choose ideas and articles to enlighten and entertain. However, for me the whole is somewhat weakened by this diversity. As with translations between movies and books, I suspect this is an instance of the original conference being better than the resulting publication.

**Margaret Coaldrake,
Museum Consultant,
Canberra**

A Bibliography of Museum Studies

11th rev. edition. Compiled and edited by Simon J. Knell. Scholar Press, Aldershot, 1994.

This is an extensive and extremely valuable publication developed from earlier course bibliographies compiled for the students in the pioneering Leicester University Museum Studies courses and made freely available to others. Previous versions provided a model for the establishment of later museum studies courses, like that at the University of Sydney. The University of Leicester has maintained its international leadership in museum training through an active program of museum scholarship and writing published primarily, though not exclusively, by the University of Leicester Press and Routledge. The field of museum literature is expanding so rapidly that it has become a challenge to remain abreast of new writing. One of the limitations of the bibliography is that it is already out of date, little more than two years after its publication. Ironically, a significant percentage of the new publications that created this situation were produced by the Leicester stable of writers including Susan Pearce, Eilean Hooper Greenhill, Gaynor Kavanagh and Kevin Moore. All museum scholars owe them a debt of gratitude for filling a clear need. However, the quality and dominance of Leicester writers coupled with a bibliography that provides and guides our access to the contemporary literatures pose a risk that the entire museum world will be viewed through Leicester-coloured spectacles. The bibliography contains impressively comprehensive listings accessible through a less successful thematic arrangement, an author index and a list of information sources. The organisation of the themes - and presumably the courses they reflect - is curiously old-fashioned. The different sections have no clear conceptual relationship and some sections are oddly placed, for example, parts of 'Museum Services' (ch.8), particularly 'Site Interpretation' (8.5), would have worked better in 'Communications and Exhibition' (ch.5). There is an over-emphasis on the technological characteristics of different categories of material and factors influencing their conservation, both of which would have been better

placed in a conservation bibliography. Several important aspects of museum activity are ignored or down-played. There are no sections devoted to information management, surely a vital aspect of museum work, or tourism, an increasingly important element for museums. There is no apparent recognition of the relationship between the fields of heritage and museums and scant attention is paid to that most pressing of current museum issues, cultural pluralism. A chapter devoted to issues of cultural pluralism might include sections on museums and indigenous peoples; women, gays and lesbians; specific ethnic groups; disabled people and others.

In 'Collection Studies and Museum History' (ch. 2) the section on Australia and New Zealand is limited and oddly skewed. While there is an entry for the Markham and Richards report of 1933, no mention is made of the more important Piggott report of 1975, and various papers produced in the '80s, including *What Price Heritage?* and *What Value Heritage?* The Heritage Collections Working Party reports completed at the time of publication are not included. But a bibliography is only as good as the information received by the author and this would indicate a need for a better exchange of information with Leicester. At present the flow of information is mostly one way and the only Australian sources listed are the former CAMA publications. The bibliography is sufficiently important for Australian academics and museums to suggest that we should be contributing information to it, if not adding to the literature listed.

Shar Jones,
Director, Museum Studies Unit,
University of Sydney

Touring Exhibitions: The Touring Exhibitions Group's Manual of Good Practice, edited by Mike Sixsmith. London, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1995.

This 237 page, soft-covered manual is a comprehensive overview of the many interdisciplinary areas that compose and form a touring exhibition. Produced by the Touring Exhibitions Group (TEG) in conjunction with the

Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) of Great Britain, it is one in a series of publications aimed at raising museum standards. It follows on from and complements the 'Standards for Touring Exhibitions', also published by the MGC. The one sets out requirements and obligations, and the other provides practical guidance on how to achieve these standards in either organising or hosting an exhibition.

The TEG, founded in 1985, is a membership body 'concerned with providing, assisting or using the touring exhibition as a medium for interpreting and promoting historical or contemporary culture'. It works to provide an exchange of information, to improve standards of touring exhibitions and to campaign for better resources. There is no equivalent body in Australia, although the federally-funded and managed Visions of Australia program has certainly increased the profile of Australia's touring exhibitions in the traditional museum areas of science and history as well as the visual arts.

Touring Exhibitions contains 56 concise and well cross-referenced sections by 53 specialist contributors, reflecting the great diversity of tasks, practicalities, logistics and areas of professional interest involved in creating and managing a touring exhibition. The statement that 'a single showing of a temporary exhibition raises a whole series of questions which are further multiplied with a touring exhibition' is a more-than-accurate statement that all who have been involved with touring exhibitions will appreciate.

It is very important at every stage of an exhibition's development, design and implementation to be aware of the requirements for the end product. This is well covered in *Touring Exhibitions*. It contains examples in the areas of development, such as research, policy, evaluation, scheduling and budgets; logistics, such as design, lighting, showcases, security; and tour-related requirements, such as facility reports, hire agreements, fees, insurance, packing, condition checking and transport. It further covers other related areas of education, publicity, publishing and retailing; all are integrally important to the success of an exhibition at each of its venues.

Potential audience and cost are significant factors also discussed in sections dealing with collaboration, market research, evaluation, budgets, sponsorship and scheduling.

The advantage of *Touring Exhibitions* is that TEG, as a body, is concerned with embracing historic as well as visual arts material, advocating 'public access to public collections'. A limitation of the manual is that it takes as its premise the idea that exhibitions are based on real things from real collections and that exhibitions are primarily from museum situation to museum situation. Whilst this is important, it is a fairly limited and traditional view of exhibitions. In Australia in recent years, exhibitions have diversified to embrace a range of different media, presented in non-traditional museum contexts, thus encouraging the transfer of ideas beyond conventional notions of collections and museums.

There are very few publications dealing with touring exhibitions. In Australia a number of small publications covers specific areas of interest, such as *Condition reporting and general conservation guidelines for touring exhibitions*, by Errol J. Allen and *Principles and guidelines for curating a touring exhibition* by Margaret Moore, both for NETS WA. The most comprehensive example is *Travelling Exhibitions*, written and compiled by Sara Kelly for NETS Victoria in 1994 as a 'Practical Handbook for Non-State Metropolitan and Regional Galleries & Museums'. This is a useful, practical guide to mounting and touring existing exhibitions. However, it is not as exhaustive as *Touring Exhibitions* and does not deal with curation, development, interpretation, evaluation, market research, graphics and design, installation, education and public programs etc. *Touring Exhibitions* indicates the complexity of issues in the process of achieving a successful touring program.

In style and presentation, *Touring Exhibitions* is similar to the *Manual of Curatorship*, edited by John Thompson, first published in 1984 by the Museums Association of Great Britain (new edition published by Butterworths in 1995), that I and so many other budding curators were brought up on in the 1980s. Whilst

both are easy to read, it is disappointing, particularly with *Touring Exhibitions*, that in dealing with such a visually strong and design-related medium as exhibitions, the book presentation and design are not more creative. No doubt factors of cost and production were critical in this equation; however it is regrettable that there is not more use of visual material, and that the print is relatively pale and small and presented in the two column newspaper style.

This being said, however, the manual contains lots of useful examples of checklists, forms and contracts for different purposes, including market research questionnaires, exhibition scheduling, budgets, hire agreements and condition checking procedures. *Touring Exhibitions* is a solid reference book with good practical advice, a great deal of expertise and excellent cross-referencing, designed to be 'consulted, rather than read from cover to cover'.

Finally, reference to British examples, conditions and organisations is, of course, standard. Any publication such as this is necessarily based on local conditions, and whilst basic museum standards are internationally recognised, local factors will vary. This is evident particularly in chapters to do with sources of grant aid, sponsorship and information. In Australia our geographic conditions are very different, placing different emphases on aspects of freight and tour coordination. With the addition of specific local information, however, this manual is what it promises, a manual of good practice and a useful reference.

Caroline Mackaness,
Exhibitions Coordinator,
Historic Houses Trust of
New South Wales

Collected Curios: Missionary Tales from the South Seas, by Barbara Lawson, *Fontanus Monograph Series III*, published by McGill University Libraries, Montreal, Canada, 1994.

On the back jacket of this handsomely produced monograph there is a short explanation of the

Fontanus Monograph Series, of which this is the third publication. The Series is 'devoted to the exploration and presentation of the collections of the McGill University libraries, museums and archives'. *Collected Curios* itself is devoted to the exploration and presentation of a collection of 125 objects from Vanuatu held in the McGill University's Redpath Museum. These objects were donated to the Museum between 1883 and 1896 by the Reverend H.A. Robertson, a Presbyterian missionary who lived on the island of Erromango, Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides) from 1872 to 1912. Barbara Lawson, Curator of Ethnology at the Redpath Museum, has in this book brought together all the resources of library, archive and fieldwork, including reviewing a similar collection in the Australian Museum, to illuminate this initially undocumented collection.

As such, the book traces a process familiar to many whose work with ethnographic collections begins with objects and museum records and works outwards. Such research is directed both at the donor/vendor and the circumstances of the acquisition, and at the ethnographic context from which the objects derive. Lawson found answers to both in a book by Robertson himself, *Erromanga: the martyr isle* (1902) (five missionaries who worked on the island prior to the Robertsons were murdered by local people). Robertson was a missionary who was interested in, and to some extent able to work with, the beliefs and practices of those he sought to convert, as his book and his collections make clear. However, if the discovery of Robertson and his book was a great resource, Lawson has found few others. Apart from a 1926 ethnographic account of the southern New Hebrides by C.B. Humphries, there is little other published material about Erromango, and certainly no more recent anthropological research.

Lawson's analytic strategy is to approach collected objects 'as a form of representative text constructed by an authoritative assembler' (p.19); she views objects 'as evidence of specific intercultural relations' (p.53). This approach enables her to discuss in

some detail the context of the collection and acquisition of the Robertson material, discussing the history of the Redpath Museum, and of missionary activity on Erromango. Her problem is to make specific links between this background and the collection itself, since there are no records to explain how Robertson made his donation to the Redpath Museum, nor how he viewed the making of his collection. Some of the material she discusses, while interesting, is not immediately germane to the 125 objects. In the end, Lawson resorts to deduction and interpretation, concluding that in making and donating his collection Robertson 'intentionally excluded objects showing European influence, those of an ordinary nature, artefacts of crude manufacture, and those embarrassing to missionary propriety' (p.151).

The evidence which Lawson is able to muster has more to do with European goods given to the Erromangans than with objects moving in the other direction. She makes the nice observation that 'a continuing exchange of European and Erromangan goods ... served as the primary language of contact', and remarks that during the nineteenth century 'missionary transformations were most successfully realised within the domain of material culture' (p.143). A view of ethnographic collections which sees them as a return exchange for European goods, along with food, land and services, is a most useful perspective.

Collected curios contains a detailed catalogue of Robertson's collection, including clear and attractive line drawings of every object by David Rose. The catalogue includes a description of each object, and lists bibliographic references for each object type, as well as page references for discussion in Lawson's text. The book is also illustrated with a series of black and white photographs drawn from missionary publications and archives. Lawson has chosen to include maps drawn at the period of Robertson's collection, and to use place names current at the end of the last century. This might be consistent

with the material with which she works, but to anyone familiar with Vanuatu it is a little jarring.

The book illustrates clearly both the potential and the frustrations of collection-based research. The detailed attention to this collection is valuable, and much background is mustered about the material. At the same time, the book tantalises the reader with questions about the use and meaning of these objects, and about their relation to contemporary Erromangan life and belief. As it happens, Erromangans are very much aware of their missionary history, borne down still by the guilt of those five murders, and interested in news of Erromangan objects preserved overseas. The Australian Museum, which also holds a Robertson collection, has sent photographs of objects to Erromango in support of a cultural revival project, bringing about a revival of barkcloth production on the island. Lawson's book, returned there, promises to continue this revival process.

Lissant Bolton,
ARC Research Fellow,
Archaeology and Anthropology,
Australian National University.

Conservation of Glass, by Roy Newton and Sandra Davison. London, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996.

Conservation of Glass is a compilation by two authors of differing but complementary backgrounds. Roy Newton is a renowned scientist who has worked both in the glass industry and in the field of medieval painted window restoration, and Sandra Davison is a conservator of antiquities with many years of experience. The book is completed by contributions from authors who are experts in their fields: Alfred Fisher, Velson Horie, Janey M. Cronyn and Peter Gibson. The book is intended as a textbook for conservators working with glass artefacts and painted medieval glass windows. In the first half it gives an introduction in an extremely complex technical subject - glass as a material,

and its historical and cultural significance. The second half is dedicated to the examination, preparation and finally, treatment of damaged or deteriorated glass artefacts of various kinds.

The book begins with a good overview of the nature of glass and discussion of glass colours and reactions. It also addresses some often misunderstood topics like devitrification and plastic flow at room temperature. The history of glass-making in the next chapter is well structured and doesn't exclude the history of American glass, as do many textbooks. The illustrations help to explain the countless and sometimes confusing terms used to describe techniques and shapes. The examples for modern glasses, however, could have been more numerous. A treasure box of information on raw materials and manufacturing techniques comes in Chapter 3, specially its second part on the development of furnaces and melting techniques.

Newton's core research area, the durability and deterioration of glass, is the subject of the next section. He provides an excellent summary of recent research on the durability of modern glasses of known compositions. An important aspect for conservators is that ancient glasses, with their often more complex compositions, deteriorate differently under natural conditions. The paragraph on micro-organisms is surprisingly short and would benefit from an update, for micro-biological attack can be a significant factor in the deterioration of some types of glass. Chapter 5 reads like a materials science course: an encyclopedia of materials and techniques applied in the treatment of glass and their effects. It can be used as guide for conservators at any level of experience in the treatment of glass objects.

Careful examination and documentation of condition are an essential prerequisite for the treatment of any museum object. Chapter 6 describes a whole range of simple methods and more advanced instrumental techniques to establish the condition of glass objects and their physical and chemical properties.

Many of the tests are carried out via immersion in water or other liquids, which can be a hazard for some objects. I agree the information obtained from such tests is interesting but it may be of academic interest and therefore unnecessary. Only a few properties, like the refractive index (important if an adhesive has to be matched), strain, and the pH value are of practical interest, and can be obtained without endangering the stability of the object. Obviously, knowledge of glass composition is important, but it can nowadays be determined non-destructively, eg with energy-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometers, though admittedly, such instruments for the study of weathered layers are not easily accessible by the average conservation laboratory. The suggested assessment of the fabrication techniques used is too a difficult task since it requires a knowledge of manual and machine glass-making techniques which is not part of the general education of a conservator.

The most valuable part of the book for the conservator is the last chapter on the conservation of glass. Three groups of objects - archaeological, decorative and architectural glass - are covered in this extensive compilation of techniques, illustrated by interesting case studies. It can be used as a guide to the stages of the conservation of glass.

Overall, *Conservation of Glass* is filled with invaluable information and provides excellent assistance for conservators who are challenged by the treatment of any glass artefact. The chapters are well structured, which, together with the glossary, makes it easy to find information on specific subjects. For the majority of readers the information provided will be exhaustive. More ambitious readers may follow the innumerable references given throughout. This unique volume should be accessible to all conservators and must be compulsory reading before any treatment of a glass object is carried out.

Stanislav Ulitzka,
Phillips Electronics,
Sydney

The Royal Palace Museum, Luang Prabang, Lao

By Tanja Porter

The Royal Palace Museum embodies the wealth and privilege of the former Royal order. It represents the power to rule by divine birthright, and Lao's role in French and American commercial and strategic interests. The Royal Palace served as the residence of the Lao royal family from 1904 until 1975, which marked the end of over 500 years of monarchical rule. The Palace became a national museum in 1975, following 30 years of war and a communist revolution.

The Royal Palace is a national landmark, featuring both traditional Lao and French *beaux arts* architecture, and is nestled in a manicured tropical garden on the banks of the Mekong. Recently renovated, the walls are beautifully decorated with murals, gold leaf motifs and glass mosaics; marble and teak pave the floors. It displays gold, silver and crystal Buddha figures, ceremonial swords, robes, jewels, ceramics, tapestries and furniture from around the world. The Museum's collection is considered by Lao to be their most valuable national treasure.

Recently, with the government's attempts to liberalise social and economic life, there has been a renewed interest in the history of the Royal family. Once vilified by the Party, it is now common to see photographs of the King on household walls and to find royal souvenirs on sale in the local markets. The Palace Museum seeks to balance contending forces: an historic loyalty and pride in the Royal family, with revolutionary history, based on the overthrow of the monarchy and an end to the intervention of their colonial allies.

After six months I can't pretend to give more than early impressions of a day's work at the Museum. These 'snapshots' give a glimpse of the complexities, the mix of joy and frustration I've experienced while working here, far from the usually expected facilities that come with a Museum of such national significance.

Today, in my blunt, broken Lao, I asked the Director for access to the King's Library. I hoped to start an inventory of the books and journals stacked to the ceiling of the storeroom, and to gain a better understanding of the interests and educational background of the family. Quick to the 'phone, the Director sought permission from his boss at the Provincial office of the Ministry of Information and Culture. In turn, a call was made to the Prime Minister's Office in Vientiane. 'Can a foreigner have access to the King's documents?' The answer from on high was 'no'. I was startled to hear that the Prime Minister needed to be consulted, but I can appreciate their concerns, given the nefarious dealings of foreigners in Lao's tragic past. But when will preserving the documents become a higher priority than keeping them under a rusty lock and key?

The Director, Mr Chanpeng, a former soldier in the revolutionary forces, is at his desk quietly counting and recounting a large plastic bag of money. The Museum is on the 'must see' list for a growing tourist industry in Luang Prabang. The admission charges, which raise thousands of dollars each year, are delivered to the Provincial Treasury each afternoon, and re-issued as a US\$900 annual budget. This keeps the Palace gardens green, the communal motorbike in good condition, and allows for five hours of electricity each day - never enough for the storeroom fans. Always struggling to minimize the pre-monsoonal humidity, these fans are also shut down with the power cut. Mr Chanpeng regularly asks when money is going to arrive from Australia and, on two occasions, wondered aloud what items in the collection would be worth in Thailand. To sell some items to Thailand may be a fair expedient, given the shortage of resources for preservation and display, but I wonder what floodgates of plunder could be opened if an item was 'de-accessioned' in aid of the rest of the collection.

The Museum is now closed for the day - it is 10.30 am. The office has emptied and through a window I can see staff members picking mangoes and jackfruit from the Palace gardens; others are at second jobs, some driving tourists around in Tuk-tuks, others selling noodles on the roadside. All staff have been appointed to their jobs. The Museum's six professional staff do not have prior experience or training in museum work. They are in civil servant's jobs, where it is difficult to move up or out, and initiative and performance are rarely rewarded. The attraction is the security of the civil service position, despite its paltry US\$35 monthly wage, and most will stay until retirement.

Whilst I began by pointing to 'complexities', life at the Museum also seems quite straightforward. As in Australia, museum work here involves consulting authorities and reconciling the political past and present; convincing others of your need for more money and fashioning a work team with the skills and motivation to fit the work requirements.

I'm keen to see how my album of snapshots will enlarge over the next eighteen months as I learn to communicate my queries and realise that my early questions were probably the wrong ones. Whatever I discover, I hope the beauty, mystery and wonder of living and working in Luang Prabang remains my overriding impression.

Tanja Porter

Tanja Porter is an Australian Volunteer, working on behalf of the Overseas Service Bureau and employed by the Lao Ministry of Information and Culture. She is posted to the Royal Palace Museum for two years as a Curator/Collections Manager. We hope this is the first in a series of articles from Tanja.

Appointment to World Federation of Friends of Museums

In Paris on 26 May, Carol Serventy OAM, was elected President of the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) an international body established in Barcelona in 1972 that represents a million and a half individual Friends of Museums, grouped in national federations and many single associations around the world.

A Past-President of the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums, Carol Serventy represented that body on the Board of the Council of Australian Museums Association (CAMA) and is a member of Museums Australia.

Long active in the fields of community use of museums, public programs, volunteers and friends, Carol was the inaugural Chair of the Australian Museum Society in Sydney, the first President of the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums and is a past member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Australia National Committee.

From 1976 to 1986 she was a Trustee of the Australian Museum, and from 1982 - 1990 Carol was a member of the Council of the National Museum of Australia.

WFFM's aims in 1975 were to promote public and government awareness of museums worldwide, to provide an exchange of information between Friends of Museums on activities, fundraising, education, volunteers, work with young people, the handicapped, the underprivileged, and tax structures for donations.

In order to achieve these aims it was decided to encourage the formation of associations of Friends of Museums around the world and to encourage these societies to group together in national federations, in a structure that would strengthen them, and enable them to support each other with information and ideas.

National federations include all kinds of museums, (including botanic gardens, libraries etc) according to the ICOM definition of a museum.

No national federations existed in 1975, but in a very few years Australia, Britain, France, Canada, Belgium and Spain had formed federations and there are now national federations in fourteen countries.

Since 1975 WFFM has grown steadily in active members (national federations) and in associate members (single associations or groups such as the Museum Trustees Association) as well as individual

members.

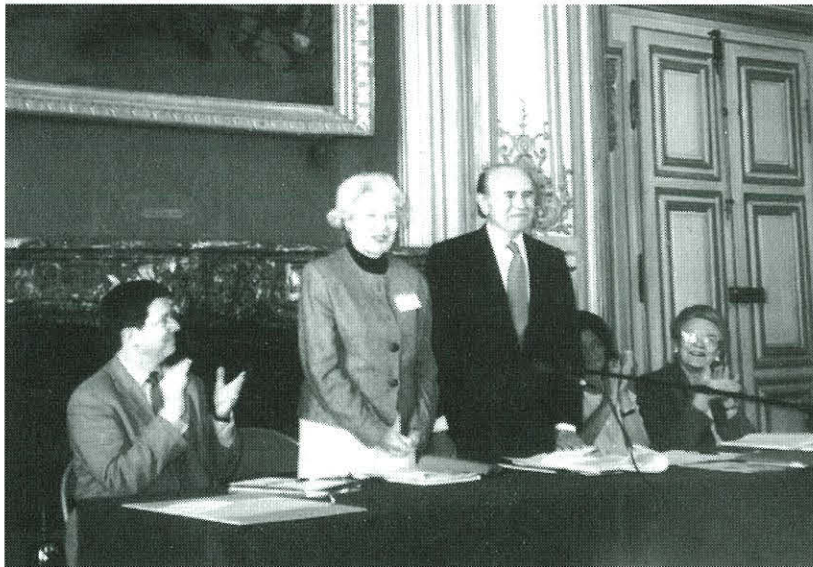
Reports that are given at each yearly General Assembly show that the newly formed associations receive great help from other members through the exchange of information, newsletters, annual meetings and the triennial congresses.

The members are a widely diverse group with very different needs and aspirations. The well-established help

those who are new to the idea of Friends of Museums, particularly smaller groups in rural areas.

It is important that Friends of Museums grow strong enough to be a useful lobbying force within their own countries, and in such forums as the European Parliament. Many of WFFM's active members are now strong enough to successfully make their voices heard to governments in support of the interests of museums.

As a Council member and Vice-President of WFFM, Carol Serventy has been involved with the organisation of each triennial WFFM Congress since 1978, led an Australian delegation to Paris - 1984, Toronto - 1987, Cordoba - 1990, Treviso - 1993, Oaxaca (Mexico) - 1996. The Australian Federation is holding the 1999 Congress in Sydney.



Left to right: Jacques Perot Director of the Army Museum, Paris and Chair of the ICOM Advisory Committee, Carol Serventy (Australia) newly elected President of the World Federation of Friends of Museums, Juan Pintado Rivera (Mexico) Past President of WFFM, Carla Bossi Comelli (Mexico) Secretary-general of WFFM, Annick Bourlet President of the French Federation of Friends of Museums.

Exhibiting Crafts in Australia

Australian public galleries want more major craft exhibitions, according to a survey undertaken by Craft Australia. In 1995, questionnaires were sent to 501 state and regional galleries and other major public and craft exhibition spaces selected from Museums Australia's national venue database. Analysis of the 141 responses was supplemented by two teleconferences, one involving the NETS agencies and the other with representatives from the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, the Jam Factory Craft and Design Centre, Shepparton Art Gallery, Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT, and the Dowse Art Museum of New Zealand.

From 1990 to 1996 the 141 responding venues held 1,257 craft exhibitions, 79% of which featured textiles, ceramics and mixed media. The crafts of basketry, paper, metal, jewellery, glass, wood and furniture made up the remainder. Gaps were not only media-related but also issues-based, some respondents identifying a lack of exhibitions dealing with functional production work.

70% of respondent venues believe that there is presently a lack of nationally significant, high quality and well publicised craft exhibitions. What is needed is more survey exhibitions rather than a series of smaller solo shows. Major exhibitions could generate new audiences and communicate current developments in the crafts. There is a preference for contemporary craft exhibited in a historical context, such as Craft Australia's 'Delinquent Angel; Australian Historic, Aboriginal and Contemporary Ceramics' currently touring Australia. There is also an interest in exhibitions of the latest innovations in craft overseas. However, galleries report that handling craft exhibitions is a drain on resources, the three-dimensional work making crating, packaging and touring expensive.

More than half of the respondent venues (57%) collect craft; textiles and ceramics are the most widely represented. Jewellery, basketry, furniture and paper are the least collected.

Few venues have staff with specific craft expertise. Of the 2105 staff in the 141 respondent venues, only 9% have specialist craft knowledge, 8% have craft exhibition development and/or touring experience, and 6% have previous experience in a craft-related field. More than half (53%) of the respondents are interested in training programs for handling craft exhibitions.

The research has yielded a comprehensive database of appropriate venues, as well as a calendar of craft shows for the period 1990-2000. Craft Australia is developing a proposal for a national touring exhibition program for the crafts, with special focus on the under-represented media of glass, wood and jewellery/metal. To facilitate the touring of craft shows Craft Australia is developing a circuit of galleries, including major regional and some state galleries as well as the Dowse Art Museum in New Zealand. Craft Australia will also seek to liaise with appropriate institutions in order to promote the development of a training program for gallery staff wishing to learn more about handling craft exhibitions.

Contact Emanuel Psaltis at Craft Australia, 414 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010, Ph: (02) 9211 1445, to obtain a copy of the report *Craft Exhibitions in Australia: A Survey of Public Venues and Craft Exhibitions*.

Beth Hatton,
researcher and writer,
Craft Australia

The National Touring Exhibition Program Research and Development Project was funded by the Visual Arts/Craft Fund of the Australia Council

Artwork: a Report on Australians Working in the Arts

Recently published, this report covers work in a diverse range of cultural and leisure activities including museums, art galleries, libraries, writing, visual and performing arts etc. It is the result of extensive research conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the work of one of the country's well-known arts researchers, Professor David Throsby of Macquarie University, for the Australia Council.

The new Chair of the Australia Council, Dr Margaret Seares said, 'The Australian Bureau of Statistics makes a vital contribution to tracking and

understanding the progress of the arts in Australia. The Bureau's other works-in-progress for the Australia Council on indigenous arts and public attitudes to the arts will serve to reinforce their role as leading cultural researchers.' No doubt Artwork and the yet-to-be-published reports will make significant contributions to research opportunities.

For more information contact the Public Affairs Manager, Australia Council, PO Box 788, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012, Ph: (02) 9950 9000, Toll free 1800 226 912

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