

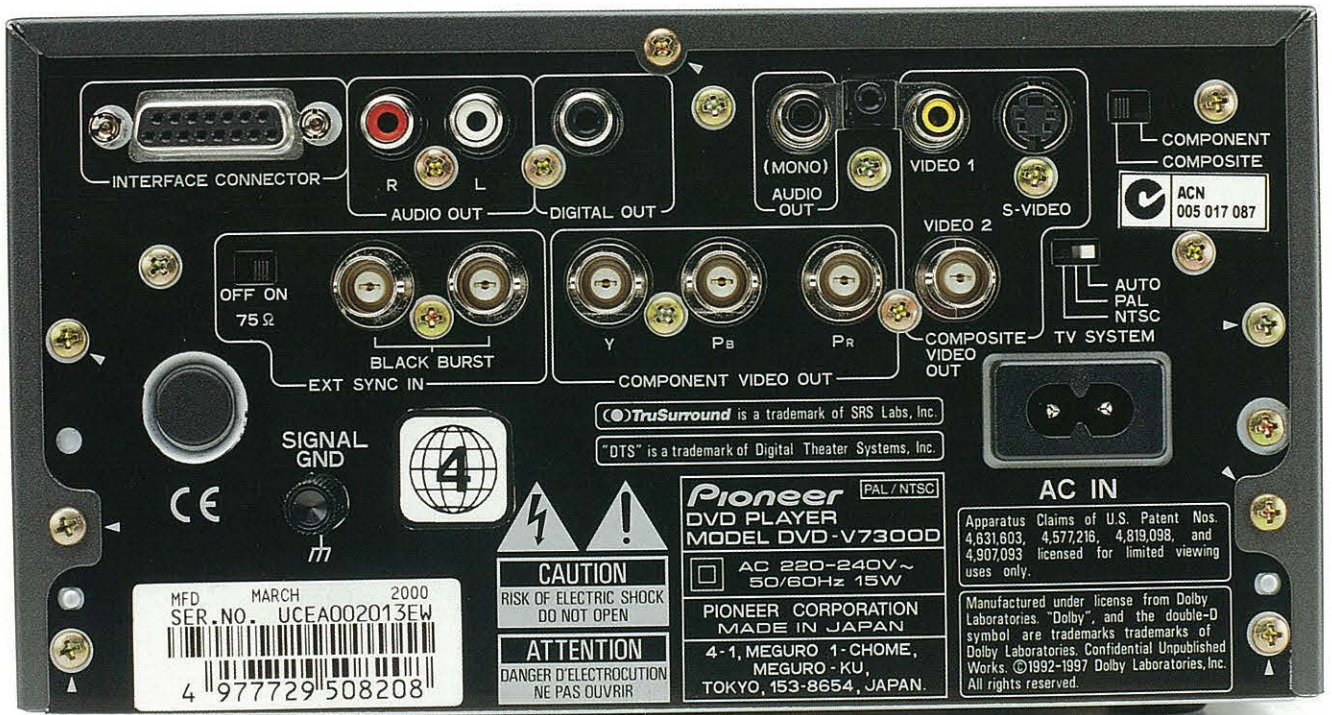
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AUGUST 2000 THE MAGAZINE OF MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA

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

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Cover: 'Universal Zoologies' (detail) by Jon McCormack, 1999, part of *Byte me: art + culture + technology*, Bendigo Art Gallery  
Reproduced courtesy of the artist



CURRENT AFFAIRS VASILIKI NIHAS

## RECONCILIATION CONNECTIONS

Over the last two decades there has been great suspicion around associating the terms immigration, multicultural and indigenous or even mentioning them in the same breath. With the best will in the world we have tiptoed around the issues and many of us have kept them separate in a very deliberate way so as not to lose the unique nature and issues surrounding both Australia's Indigenous peoples and also Australia's immigrant populations. However, while still maintaining the uniqueness which attaches to each of the groups of peoples involved and to the issues which affect them deeply, perhaps it is also time to reconcile the connections and the partnerships which may be valuable to both.

It is timely to note that government policies, both State and Federal, relating to Australia as a multicultural society made up of diverse communities has not only operated from a notion of inclusiveness pertaining to all

Australians but has also consistently through all its iterations reaffirmed the unique and pre-eminent position of Indigenous Australians.

Museums, particularly those with a brief explicitly relating to cultural diversity, have a responsibility to address the impact of immigration on the pre-existing Indigenous presence and the interactions which have resulted, both positive and negative. Museums can indeed be catalysts for the conversations it has been too unsafe to have in the past.

The Immigration Museum in Melbourne takes on the challenge. Its overriding theme is *the journey begins*; leavings, journeys, arrivals, settlements and, impacts.

Through 'impacts' particularly, the museum has made great strides in consciously addressing the impact of immigration on Indigenous peoples (specifically in Victoria) an area often dealt with inadequately and



uncomfortably and almost inevitably based on the assumption of tensions, possibly best skated over, even when they don't exist.

The story of Merle and Alick Jackomos is a particularly moving and interesting one which approaches the nexus of such difficult issues. Their story shows how a connection and lifelong partnership between a Greek immigrant from an island near the Turkish coastline and an Indigenous woman can bring out the finest in both, as well as their respective communities.

A statement in an information booklet, says: 'The peoples of the Kulin nation have always been connected to this land. For over two

The People's Walk for Reconciliation on Sydney Harbour Bridge during Corroboree 2000 foreshadowed other reconciliation events in cities and towns around Australia Photograph courtesy Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation

centuries Aboriginal people and immigrants have shared history. We recognise this past in both its losses and achievements, and invite you to work towards a shared future that respects all cultures.' This offers yet another starting point on the Reconciliation journey.

VASILIKI NIHAS WAS A SPEAKER AT THE RECENT INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY FORUM ON RECONCILIATION AND IS A MEMBER OF THE HERITAGE COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

UPDATE KRIS NEWTON

## HAVE YOUR SAY ON AMOL

Thirteen representatives from regional and remote museums and galleries, along with representatives from Museums Australia and the Commonwealth Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DoCITA) and the Online Working Party, met with the consultant (Rowan McLean) undertaking the AMOL Consultations.

- The purpose of the national consultations is to determine:
- i if the museum community believes that AMOL is serving a useful purpose, and should continue
  - ii what they believe AMOL is doing well, and what could be improved, and
  - iii if AMOL is to continue, what services should it provide, and what form might it take?

The representatives (who came from as far afield as Karratha in WA, Flinders Island in Bass Straight, Port Pirie in SA, Geelong in Victoria, Armidale in NSW, and Rockhampton in Queensland) met on May 17 at Old Parliament House in Canberra.

The overwhelming response from the group was that AMOL is serving a very vital function: firstly in keeping regional and remote museums, galleries and cultural centres in touch with the wider museum community; and secondly, in assisting with the capture of some of the distributed national collection by digital media (including collection objects and catalogues). However, this positive feedback needs to be kept in the context of relatively poor resources (including access to computers and skilled and knowledgeable staff, who are often volunteers). Some participants also said that currency of information and ease of access were issues that should be addressed in any future incarnation of AMOL.

KRIS NEWTON IS WITH THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA



**US POSTCARD** SARAH ROBINS

## A FLOATING CLOUD IN NEW YORK

Frank Gehry's recently unveiled model for a new Guggenheim Museum is attracting debate from all sectors of Gotham's community, ranging from rave reviews by *NY Times* critic Herbert Muschamp to public outrage, as exemplified by this letter to the editor of *TONY*\*

'If this monstrosity is ever built, I suggest an alternative and fully appropriate site: atop the Fresh Kills garbage dump on Staten Island. Take it out with the rest of the trash'. The model recalls Bilbao in its waterfront location and massive shimmering structure of metal and glass, and has been repeatedly described as a 'floating cloud'. The new space comprises more than 200,000 square feet for exhibitions, allowing the

Guggenheim to broaden its focus to include architecture, design and multimedia work. City officials have not yet publicly responded to the proposal, perhaps anticipating the residential outcry that has already begun.

**MoMA and the Tate Gallery** joined forces in late April to create an independent dot.com organisation. The first collaboration of its kind, the two institutions will form a

separate entity which will work in collaboration with the museums and their dot.org web sites, focusing on for-profit areas such as content, commerce and community. Initial proposals for the site include virtual tours, webcasts of live events and chat rooms, in addition to the e-commerce component which will offer design products, books, educational courses and tickets to exhibitions. The site is expected to be launched in early 2001.

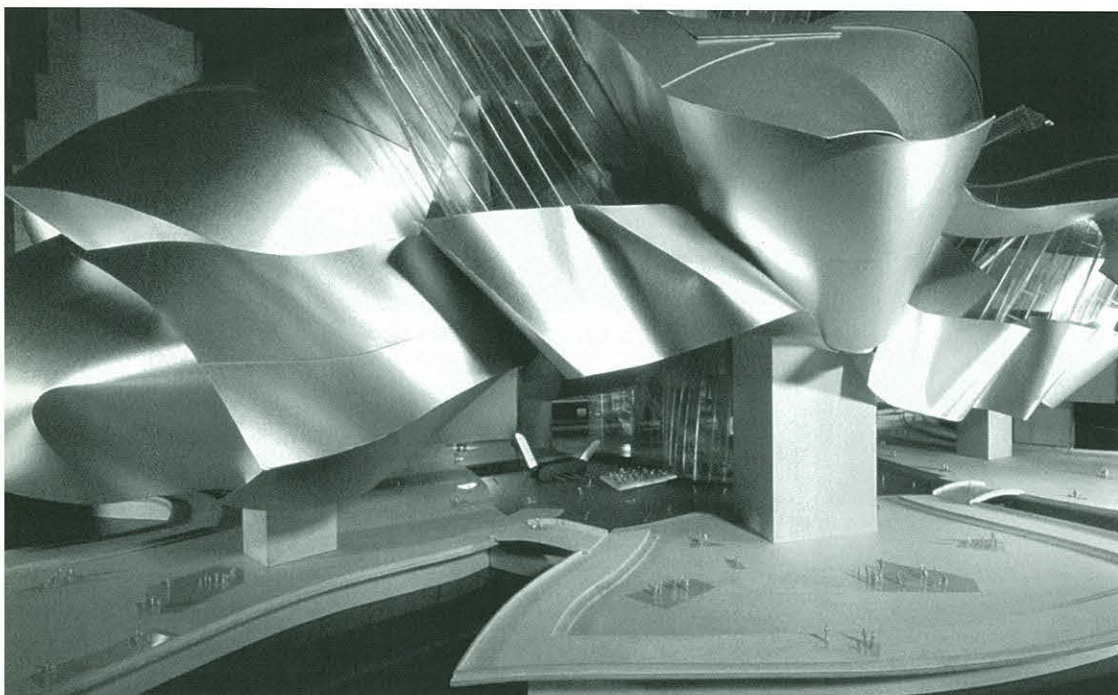
SARAH ROBINS IS A RESEARCH ASSISTANT AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, WHERE ADMINISTRATIVE AND CURATORIAL STAFF WERE ENTERING THEIR SEVENTH WEEK OF A STRIKE AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRINT

\* TONY = Time Out New York (#243)

**For a take on how American cultural institutions are encouraging teenagers to attend arts events see**

**Museum National online at [www.museumsonline.org.au](http://www.museumsonline.org.au)**

View of model for proposed new Guggenheim Museum in New York City, architect Frank O. Gehry  
Copyright Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum  
Photograph by David Heald



## EXPANSIONS

### AMOL ON EXHIBITION VENUES

One of the biggest challenges facing curators or organisers of touring exhibitions is finding the right venue in which to exhibit. Space, humidity controls, security and insurance are just a few of the factors which will determine how and where an exhibit will tour. The development of Australia's first online exhibition venue database, now accessible through the AMOL web site, makes this task a little easier.

Users of the database can browse details of over 300 traditional and non-traditional institutions which develop and/or host touring exhibitions around the country. Curators can use this information to plan their touring schedule while venues can advertise their availability to a broad national audience. This includes smaller or non-traditional venues, who can provide mainstream institutions with valuable regional information.

The online Exhibition Venues Database has been developed with assistance from Visions of Australia. Visions of Australia is the Commonwealth Government's national touring exhibitions grants program. It assists with the development or touring of cultural exhibitions across Australia.

On May 4 the Minister for the Arts and the Centenary of Federation, the Hon Peter McGauran MP, announced further Visions funding to allow the Exhibition Venues Database to be expanded. This will include the addition of some 80 new data fields showing the size of exhibition spaces, dimensions of loading docks and other details. When completed, it should be possible to not only use the database to put together the best itinerary for an exhibition, but also plan each step of the tour including delivery, unpacking and venue layout, all from your desk.

**To add your venue or to browse the database, go to the AMOL web site at <http://amol.org.au/craft/venuesdatabase/start.cfm> or contact the AMOL Coordination Unit, phone (02) 9217 0469**



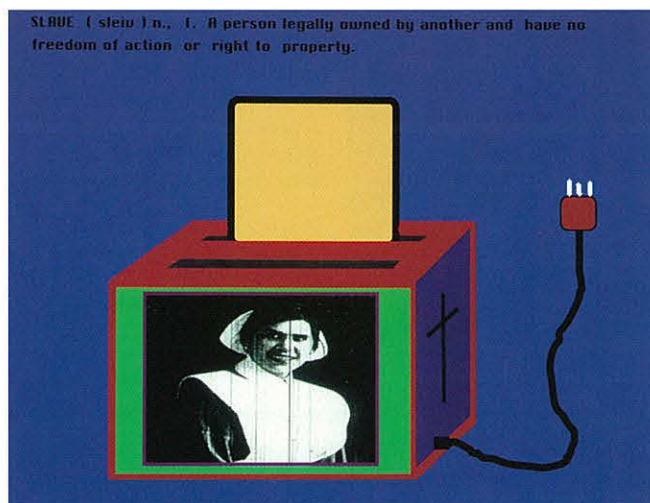
## BE CRITICAL, FEEL ATTACHED

Art criticism occupies a problematic space in Australia today. It functions largely as a spectator sport — loads of people read it but few are willing to get themselves dirty doing it. Maybe this situation is the same overseas but I'm not so sure; our pool of discussion and feedback — in short our capacity for ideological cud-chewing — appears less inclined to breeding the rarified species 'fine arte scribus' than countries with longer histories of cultural introspection.

I don't mean to fuel any theories about cultural cringe here. These comments are intended as something of a 'call to pens', arguing that more people should involve themselves in various forms of art writing — be critical, have arguments, feel attached! Too often these days discussions about contemporary art are staged in hushed voices, in small forums or lecture theatres. When an artist puts their work out into this environment of hesitant communication it is frequently met with a resounding silence or,



FOR THE RECORD,  
NOTHING ABOUT ART WRITING  
CAN EVER BE TOTALLY OBJECTIVE ...



'Look who's calling the kettle black' by Rea, 1992, from the series *Look who's calling the kettle black*

Images reproduced courtesy National Gallery of Australia  
Part of *Re-Take: Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander photography* currently on tour at the Art Gallery of Western Australia until August 27

worse, trepidation. Why are exuberance and vitriole only generated when newspapers find something in art to be upset or moralistic about?

In Australia both artists *and* arts writers suffer from a general lack of healthy, varied dialogue about what they do for a living. In fact, as something of a defense for the profession of art writing, I'd argue that there are many salient parallels between the practicing artist and the art writer. For one thing, like choosing to make art, setting out as an independent writer often means opting for a life of economic uncertainty — remuneration is intermittent and often poor, and job security is only as healthy as you are. In short, a

'Waiting for HRH' by Destiny Deacon, 1994

rewarding but lean existence. Constant compromises must be made between creativity and context. For instance, for many staff attached to our large public institutions wanting to do freelance work, writing for an outside publication means having to submit the article to their publicity or sponsorship department, or the executive director's office, before their disk can get out the door. This strangely paranoid form of editing/censorship is no one's fault as such. It reflects one unsavory side-effect of a trend that is seeing museums and galleries structure their processes under ever-stricter performance agreements and executive business plans. Just imagine what would happen to art if artists had to undergo formal workplace assessments.

Ultimately, it is difficult to guess how much institutional systems — or the other contexts within which independent writers work — fetter freedom of expression or control the output of creative work, even enough to prevent people from taking on the mission of writing independently. Certainly, there do not appear to be as many genuinely freelance writers out there as there are artists. And yet from my experience deciding to write is a bit like deciding to be an artist: the profession largely chooses you. It is something you evolve towards rather than jump into, led by a process combining personal curiosity and skill with random circumstance.

Like the self-appointed mission of being an artist, the task of choosing to write about art consigns a person to expressing their own vision of the world and its visual ideas. However, there is a crucial difference here that ends in quandary: when an artist makes a work about culture he/she is expected to take a personal tack, be subjective. By contrast, when an art writer opines about art (ie about a manifestation of culture), he/she is expected to represent the curiously unreal perspective — as an arbiter of objective truth.





## POLLY BORLAND'S AUSTRALIANS

To mark the centenary of the passing of the Act of Federation, Australia Week (July 2–9) features a program of cultural events including music, theatre and art in London organised by the Australian High Commission. Leading up to the celebration, London's National Portrait Gallery opened an exhibition of portraits by Australian photographer Polly Borland. *Polly Borland: Australians* brings together 56 new portraits of significant Australians who have made a contribution to British life and who have for the most part made their home or based



their professional life in the UK. The subjects she has chosen reflect many of the fields in which Australians have excelled and represent a cross-section of emerging and established talents.

Born in Melbourne in 1959, Borland has lived in the UK for eight years establishing herself as an editorial photographer specialising in portraiture. For this project, Borland was required to produce over 50 portraits in a very tight time frame which proved to be challenging both physically and creatively. Fascinated by her subjects Borland gets beneath their skin and intuitively captures a sense of the person, which exposes just enough without divulging too much.

It is a strange experience to be in a London gallery surrounded by Australians on the wall and Australians bustling around the portraits, acknowledging these fellow ex-patriots like long-lost friends. Most of Borland's works in this exhibition feature the subject gazing out towards the viewer. It is disconcerting to wander around and feel the eyes of these subjects meeting the viewer's gaze in such a direct manner. It instantly places us in the position of artist, highlighting the affinity between the photographer and the subject and ultimately the viewer.

The exhibition will continue here in London until mid September before heading to Australia where it will open at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra in March 2001.

K.P. HALL IS AN AUSTRALIAN WRITER AND CURATOR CURRENTLY WORKING IN LONDON

STOP PRESS: Polly Borland snubbed the Prime Minister John Howard during the Centenary of Federation celebrations in London last month by not meeting him. Borland said in a letter: 'Your continual refusal to say sorry ... is obstructing the vital process of Reconciliation'.

Left: *Leanne Benjamin, Principal ballerina* by Polly Borland  
Right: *Polly Borland, Photographer* by Polly Borland

Photographs reproduced with permission  
From *Polly Borland: Australians* currently at the National Portrait Gallery, London until September 17 and opening at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, March 2, 2001

For the record, nothing about art writing can ever be totally objective [just as nothing about art — or art history for that matter — can be either]. In other words, everything about making and viewing art is deeply rooted in private opinions and observations.

The first thing I'd like to do is abolish the term 'critic' as a label for describing those who write for the general audience about art. As a word it reeks of authority: authority to pass judgment on nothing less than the life decisions/output of another person. 'Reviewer' seems a much truer expression as it implies some creative involvement and describes the more gentle task of offering educated guidance to an exhibition: a healthy blend of summary, translation and interpretation.

Appreciating visual art is a slow experience, demanding time, contemplation and rumination that is uncharacteristic of our speedy tele-visual world. At its best, art writing can open a small window into a visual experience and prepare a person for their own journey towards meaning, rather than pretending to hold all the secrets or gospel on the nature of an artwork.

ANNA CLABBURN FOSTERS A JILL-OF-ALL-TRADES APPROACH TO HER WORK, TRYING TO DIVERSIFY ENOUGH TO KEEP FINANCIALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY AFLOAT. SHE HAS BEEN A FREELANCE WRITER/CURATOR FOR CLOSE TO TEN YEARS AND CURRENTLY WRITES AS A REVIEWER FOR THE AUSTRALIAN





IF THE SUBJECT, BY DEFAULT, WAS DEATH, THEN THE SUBTEXT FROM ALL OTHER POINTS OF VIEW WAS VITALITY.

Students from St Vincent's College, Potts Point at the Museum of Human Disease, UNSW  
 Photograph courtesy Museum of Human Disease, School of Pathology

## A VITAL DEBATE ABOUT DEATH

What do Rockhampton Base Hospital Medical Museum, the Museum of Human Disease, UNSW, the Dr Arratta Memorial Museum, Muttaborra, the Harry Daly Museum of Anaesthesia, Sydney, and the curiously named SPASM have in common? More pressingly, what are they doing in an art column?

These entities are either members or associates of Health and Medicine Museums (HMM), an active special interest group of Museums Australia, the professional organisation which incorporates our largest public museums. Notable among these is Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. Recently, the museum hosted a one-day seminar on the exhibition of human remains. Convened by Megan Hicks, the Powerhouse's curator of Health and Medicine, and honorary secretary of HMM, the event was in response to interest within HMM and the wider museum community about the ethics, responsibilities, problems and possibilities attendant on showing human remains in public or quasi-public contexts. What unfolded was a complex, demanding and occasionally controversial colloquy in which the voices of anthropologists, curators, anatomists, pathologists, historians, artists and art critics sought to make sense of a profoundly significant topic.

The seminar was confronting for some, par for the course for others and, for most, a crash course in aspects of museum procedure and policy not commonly aired or debated. If the subject, by default, was death, then the subtext from all other points of view was vitality. A sense of the dignity and living-ness of flesh, even flesh which has succumbed to one of its numberless forms of mortality, murder not least, triumphed over the many other considerations and conversational gambits competing for attention, triumphed even over the queasy reserve of those for whom the viewing of deceased body parts invokes revulsion.

While no one actually hefted a cadaver onto the podium, a misgiving that one or two among the audience might have had,

in a nearby precinct of the Powerhouse the bodies of ancient Egyptian were on open display, as part of a Science Week loan exhibition from the University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum. It made the animal antics of *Sensation* artist Damien Hirst look undergraduate indeed.

Speaking for Museum Victoria, for example, the assistant curator of its Human Mind and Body program, Ann Brothers, detailed plans for a

dedicated display of bona fide anatomical parts in the Melbourne Museum's landmark new building set to open in October. Human remains, it appears, are about to go mainstream in Melbourne, a city long associated with the most advanced in medical research and researchers.

Brothers cautioned, however, that access to the displays would be tied to certain proscriptions in respect of religious beliefs or cultural taboos. The sensibilities of non-academic staff guides, guardians and cleaners etc, would also be taken into account in regard to contact with the displays.

Sydney still keeps its collections of body parts comparatively veiled, with the largest remaining the preserve of universities and teaching hospitals. The Powerhouse itself does not, as a rule, exhibit such material, and the fashion for curiosity cabinets of shrunken heads, preserved body parts and other ritual artefacts is passing out of museological respectability. Human remains are tending more and more to be the exclusive concern of the academy, where, by and large, they can be defused of all power to offend.

Nonetheless, the issue of exhibiting human remains in the context of art galleries, as opposed to museums, remains contentious. Indigenous curators and advisors are especially alert to such matters. For the benefit of the seminar, Rosemary Stack, the Indigenous heritage officer at Macleay Museum, chartered her institution's return of Aboriginal remains to their originating locations, or country.

THIS ARTICLE BY BRUCE JAMES IS AN EDITED VERSION OF ONE FIRST PUBLISHED IN SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, SPECTRUM, MAY 20, 2000, REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

For information about the 'Exhibiting human remains' seminar or to obtain seminar papers contact Megan Hicks, secretary, Health and Medicine Museums special interest group, phone (02) 9217 0254 or email [meganh@pnm.gov.au](mailto:meganh@pnm.gov.au)





## THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE ON SYDNEY

The Bocce boys of Bronte oil up with baby oil, get into their togs, and play Bocce to Bronte rules (half the team are in their mid-eighties) which means 'not giving the ball too much air, it's more like carpet bowls,' explains Les, 'because we don't want to collect a beach goer in the head with one of our balls'.

One of the best pool players at La Hood pool hall Khuong Tran gives Ling Fang a game as Simon Lim and Harry Lin look on. La Hood Amusement Parlour and pool hall was established in 1919 by the La Hood family, who still owns it.

*Bocce Boys* and *La Hood* are part of *Sydneysiders*, an official event of the Sydney

2000 Olympic Arts Festival, Museum of Sydney, until December 3.

Some of the other people featured in *Sydneysiders* are Aneta and Bill in their Arncliffe wedding, Huon Procter at a Gothic Ritual Dance Party in Surry Hills, 14-year old James Adams who loves to surf at North Maroubra, 9-year old Fiona Anderson with her prize rat 'Pinky' and Maria Inlesias who loves to go drag racing down at Eastern Creek.

Les O'Keefe (left) and Fran Dignazio (right) play Bocce at Bronte beach most afternoons

'Bocce Boys' by photojournalist Lorrie Graham

Part of *Sydneysiders*, an official event of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival, Museum of Sydney, until December 3  
Reproduced courtesy Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales; supporting sponsor KODAK and SBS

## PROJECT IN REGIONAL NSW

The Museums and Galleries Foundation of NSW (**mgf**) is a key agency primarily funded by the NSW Ministry for the Arts to provide services for museums, Aboriginal keeping places and cultural centres, galleries, contemporary art spaces and artist-run galleries.

In December 1999, I was appointed as the multicultural audience development specialist. This position is funded by the Australia Council for the Arts as are other Multicultural Audience Development Specialists (MADS) based at Tandanya-National Aboriginal Cultural Institute (SA), Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Multicultural Arts Victoria and Victorian College of the Arts, Immigration Museum (VIC) and Black Swan Theatre /Perth Theatre Company and Kulcha (WA). A recent meeting held at the Australia Council gave the opportunity for MADS to discuss progress of projects and findings from this initiative which will be shared with the arts sector.

In my position at **mgf** I will be working with museums and galleries particularly in regional areas to raise cultural awareness and promote cultural diversity within collections, exhibitions, public programs and increase the visitor rate by non-English speaking background (NESB) and Indigenous communities.

This kind of program encourages a greater recognition of NESB and Indigenous communities to be more 'visible' as part of Australia's cultural and social history, while it supports and assists the artistic and cultural development of these communities in regional areas.

Consultations and visits to regional areas in NSW will be an important part of

networking with communities and artists to understand better the barriers in cultural participation. Linking people of culturally diverse backgrounds at a regional level and encouraging closer working relationships with museums and galleries will hopefully increase familiarity and lead to collaborations and projects in the future at a local level.

Part of my brief is encouraging regional museums and galleries to build relationships with the ethnic media and provide an advisory service to help facilitate this process. I will develop resources to support these activities through cultural protocols, marketing and audience development in short- and long-term strategies.

Field visits and contacting key Indigenous and multicultural networks and organisations in regional areas has assisted in locating and giving recognition to heritage groups, volunteers and professionals from culturally diverse backgrounds involved in the museum and gallery sector. Cultural knowledge and information is a key area that requires strengthening and collaboration.

The remaining 2000 **mgf** program workshops will be held in Armidale, Goulburn, Bathurst and Port Macquarie. Interested people can request a more detailed program as they become available.

CHERYLE YIN-LO IS THE MULTICULTURAL AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES FOUNDATION OF NSW

For more information phone (02) 9358 1760 or email [mgfnsw@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mgfnsw@ozemail.com.au)  
See *Museum National* online at [www.museumsaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au) for more



## A MOVING EXPERIENCE

*The National Gallery of Victoria on Russell*

In the face of public disquiet over closure of the then Museum of Victoria for renovations, the National Gallery of Victoria committed itself to maintaining high profile access through touring exhibitions, public programs and a major temporary location at the State Library of Victoria on Russell Street, during renovations of the St Kilda Road site and development of Federation Square.

National Gallery of Victoria on Russell appears to have been a herculean effort. Not only has a small but broad range of significant painting, Asian and decorative art, antiquities and some sculpture travelled back to the original site of the gallery, but so have more contemporary amenities such as the café, shop, gallery society rooms and education programs, each articulated by elegant signage and wise and simple improvements to the building.

On entering Russell Street, the star of the relocation is the architecture. Generous 19th century spaces and handsome features — herringbone jarrah parquetry, wrought iron balcony, stone stairs, vaulted ceilings and pleasing proportions — form a welcome context for ancient through to contemporary art. Some things don't change. The light airy quality of Russell Street is in stark contrast to Sir Roy Ground's disorienting and somber bluestone gallery on St Kilda Road. The cheery texture of the Russell Street experience is enhanced by a feature not often associated with contemporary museum



### ... THE STAR OF THE RELOCATION IS THE ARCHITECTURE



buildings: noise. Here is architecture that resists intruding upon art and even encourages its drama, and yet the welcoming smell of coffee and sounds of conversation mark its threshold.

If the building implies yearning for a vanished golden museum age, this is quickly thwarted by the contemporary approach underlying its non-chronological hang. On Russell consists of three discrete exhibition spaces leading gracefully from one to the other. Commencing with the emblematic Victorian exhibition space, McCoy Hall (Victoria's original museum), where Australian painting, decorative arts, Asian art, antiquities and international

decorative arts are located, to the smaller yet equally dramatic McArthur Gallery (Victoria's original art gallery) of European art, to the intimate Murdoch Gallery exhibiting 20th century and contemporary, including further Australian art.

Due to space restrictions, not only have curators been forced to ruthlessly select, but collections flow and connect in serendipitous ways, notably the intelligent inclusion of Aboriginal art in the McCoy Hall and Murdoch Gallery. Particularly engaging is placement of Mathaman Marika next to Ian Fairweather, and Tony Tuckson with early Papunya works by Uta Uta Tjangala and Shorty

Lungkarda Tjungurrayi. Perhaps this heralds further collaboration between curatorial departments?

Rather than a glib version of the collection, the smaller exhibiting space dictates concise yet lyrical links that are difficult to achieve with the vast swathes of single media zones at St Kilda Road. Historic architecture also permits revisiting the dark red walls of 19th century museums, an effect that encourages new optical readings of familiar European painting, a welcome contrast

Above: 'Shearers playing for a bride', 1957 by Arthur Boyd (1920–1999), on display at the National Gallery of Victoria on Russell

Reproduced courtesy National Gallery of Victoria

Left: McArthur Gallery, the original home of the National Gallery of Victoria in 1861, now part of NGV on Russell

to the cold grey surfaces of St Kilda Road.

Perhaps this move has had a salutary effect upon curators. It certainly invites audiences to see old friends in unexpected ways and appreciate new connections whilst admiring the collection. Not that the NGV should move every few years, but this refreshing exercise for visitors may also have been good for the collection. Some might be less optimistic about leaving Russell Street and returning home.

NAOMI CASS IS CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

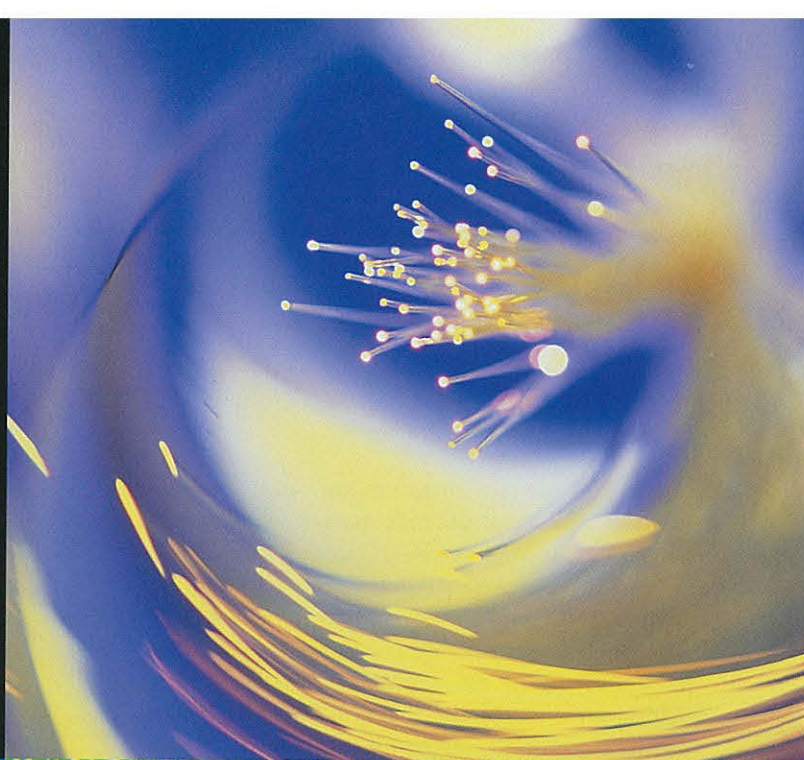
Read Frances Lindsay's thoughts on the centrality of multimedia at the NGV in the special technologies feature, page 23



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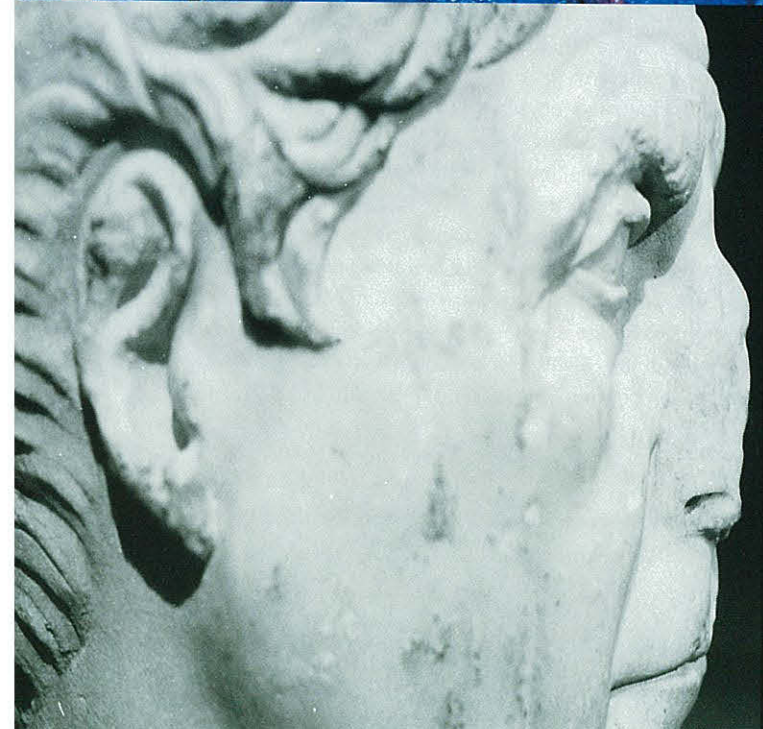
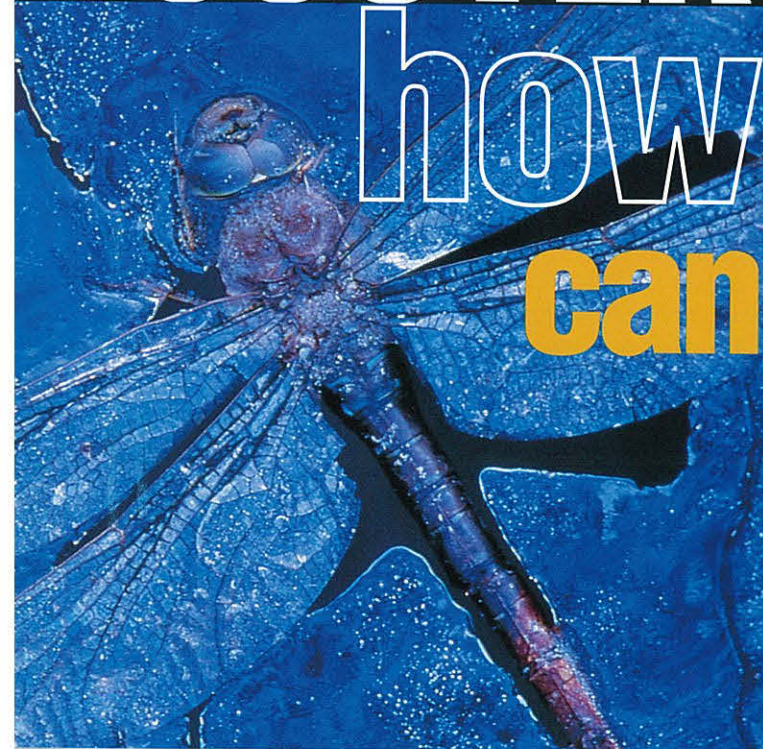


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## SHEDDING LIGHT

*South Australian Museum:  
Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery*

Allow me to get one thing off my chest. The new Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery at the South Australian Museum is too dark! Lighting levels in the two floors that comprise this impressive exhibition are a hindrance to the visitor experience. In some instances labels on horizontal perspex, in inexplicably small font, are unreadable in the available light. Even more troubling are cases where the back panel is brighter than the object itself, creating a silhouette effect that prevents the visitor from 'reading' the object.

That said, this is a beautiful exhibition. More than 3 000 objects on display focus on themes, technologies and regions across Australia. The gallery creators, while very aware of traditional objects, have 'peopled' the spaces through the use of the *Contemporary voice project* of filmed statements by Aboriginal people. In fact, the gallery approach fuses objects-in-cases with new technology. The flat screens works well, with excellent films, high quality audio and a minimum of sound spill.

The *Speaking land* touch screens are a coup. Rather than push the added layers and deeper information out into information booths, terminals are placed in the gallery itself. Touch screen interactives are easy to navigate, being organised along the same lines as the gallery itself. Surveys provides information on themes and technologies, while *Regions* focuses



DO THESE OBJECTS 'SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES'? POSSIBLY. EVALUATION WILL BE INTERESTING.

Official ceremony for the opening of the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery, South Australian Museum  
Courtesy SA Museum

on regional case studies. The added bonus here is the comfortable seating near the interactives.

The *Web of relatedness* is specially fine. Two good-sized screens with a showcase in between provide about 45 minutes of sequentially arranged material. In one segment, objects illuminate as they appear on the screens. I witnessed archival footage including a Walbiri fire ceremony, a funeral in Arnhem Land and a section on football. Like the gallery itself the visitor will be rewarded by return visits.

Apart from a couple of grinding stones, there is not much to touch or manipulate in the gallery. However, the exhibition developers have courageously placed canoes in the 'foyer' without guard rails or electronic security. On the day I visited I watched curious youngsters reach into the display and touch a fragile stringybark rim. Similarly, bark paintings are arranged along a 'corridor' upstairs, where protruding edges could be caught on loose clothing. These unintentional tactile experiences could be a problem.

But back to the objects! The large cases and wall spaces devoted to the superbly mounted spears, basketry, boomerangs and shields are designed to inspire awe in the visitor. Do these objects 'speak for themselves'? Possibly. Evaluation will be interesting. As with almost all the gallery there is little interpretation other than labels, signage and some subtle design elements. The contemporary voices, archival film and sequenced still images are the special wins in the interpretation stakes.

SAM can be justifiably proud of its new exhibition. Did I mention the lighting? Seriously, this should be re-examined.

DAVID JAY IS AN EDUCATION OFFICER WITH THE MELBOURNE MUSEUM

See *Museum National* online at [www.museumsaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au) for more reviews

## THE OPEN MUSEUM JOURNAL

presents

The theme is intended to draw out discussions on exhibitions and public programs that interpret histories that are difficult to present because they continue to have present day political and social repercussions. Contemporary museology has often expressed the need for museums to deal with complex political and social issues, arguing that museums must develop the function of critique and see themselves as a forum for debate. Yet many museums find it difficult to present programs that deal with the most unsavoury or difficult aspects of our past. Some issues are widely covered such as

<http://amol.org.au/omj>



omj

Australia's only online peer reviewed journal for museum professionals  
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS ONLINE <http://amol.org.au>



## LETTERS

### DISPUTE EVERY POINT

Dr Caroline Turner's review of my book, *Exhibiting contradiction: Essays on the art museum in the United States* (*Museum National*, February 2000), recently came into my hands. The review is not only ungenerous and uninformed, but it also takes me to task for not writing a different book. Moreover, Dr Turner gives your readers no sense of *Exhibiting contradictions'* actual contents, no mention of, or reference to, seven of the nine chapters (nothing about the chapter on casts in American art museums, the chapter on William Wilson Corcoran's failed national gallery, the chapter on the founding of the Parrish Art Museum, etc.) and no indication that the book was in some measure meant as an

intervention in ongoing debates in the United States regarding exhibition methods and approaches.

I could dispute every point Dr Turner raises, but given the limited space of a letter to the editor, I offer only one example. Dr Turner believes I mistakenly presume 'a hegemony of orthodox values which is already on the wane' in US art museums. What is her evidence for this waning? Given the hysterical attacks on *The West as America* exhibition (1991) and continuing attempts to censor art and suppress controversy, curators for the most part remain timid or fearful, especially since American art museums have reached the point where it is almost impossible to mount an exhibition without corporate support and, as we know, corporations avoid corporations like the plague. Consequently, the critical approaches encountered in the higher

reaches of academic art history have not to any great degree influenced recent exhibition practice.

Alan Wallach

Ralph H. Wark Professor of Art and Art History and Professor of American Studies Chair, Department of Art and Art History, The College of William and Mary

## CONTACT POINTS

### COLLABORATIONS

Museums Australia has ambitions to set up collaborations with cultural attachés in Canberra with thoughts to professional development exchanges and the promotion of different attachés' roles in mounting exhibitions in and out of Australia.

In Australia at the moment, for example, the exhibition *Albert Einstein: Man of the century* based on a selection of material from Einstein's personal papers housed at the Jewish National and University Library in Israel is on tour.

Currently at the Jewish Museum of Australia in Melbourne until August 24, it then travels to the Sydney Jewish Museum from September 3 to January 31, 2001 and hopefully will be at Questacon from around March to May, 2001.

For ideas and information about this and other collaborations contact the national office of Museums Australia on (02) 6208 5044. For more information on the exhibition *Albert Einstein* contact Noa Furman at the Embassy of Israel (02) 6273 1309 or the Friends of the Jewish Museum on (03) 9272 5511.



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PAUL COSTIGAN INTRODUCES OUR SPECIAL REPORT ON TECHNOLOGIES IN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES BY ASKING HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Anyone involved with museums and galleries over the last decade would have experienced the frequent predictions of how 'new technologies' were going to revolutionise museums and a wondrous digital environment would greet visitors from the moment they entered the foyer. These forecasts resulted in a proliferation of conferences, seminars and debates on subjects such as the aesthetic issues of digital arts, legalities of digitisation, the high costs of adopting electronic networks and the threat to audience numbers. With shrinking budgets museums and galleries have struggled to integrate aspects of the digital world into their operations. The question now is, with well over \$1 000 million of new buildings, additions and refurbishments over the last few years, how far have we really advanced?

The major museums and galleries now all have web sites and kiosks to enhance the information available for researchers, the general public and schools. Most larger regional museums and galleries have entered the digital world. There are also strong indications that the digital environment has greatly improved communications in remote and regional areas, although unfortunately many community museums and historical societies are yet to even obtain a computer.

For art museums, there is the extra layer of collecting, the storing and exhibiting digital artworks. Given this work has now been produced for more than a decade, how much of it has found its way into collections? How do new media arts stand up against other artforms? For regional galleries there are questions of costs, logistics and the scrutiny of local councils.

To this end Museums Australia has a key role to play in assisting with expertise and in gaining resources for the regional sector particularly when it comes to professional development activities. Museums Australia is talking to the Commonwealth Government about its role enhancing the work of the State Governments in increasing the resources available through the national office and its branches to improve access to the necessary technologies and to relevant training.

Surely the time has arrived for a concerted effort between Museums Australia and the Commonwealth to improve the resources available to all regional and community museums and galleries. The debate continues.

PAUL COSTIGAN IS THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA

#### SPECIAL REPORT

Matthew Connell explores the challenges of using information technology to interpret information technology.

He asks: can computers be seen as material culture like any other artefact?

## COMPUTERS

# CENTRESTAGE



... INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
DIFFERS LITTLE FROM OTHER FIELDS  
WHEN IT COMES TO SIGNIFICANCE  
AND INTERPRETATION ...



Debates around the role and effect of computing technology within museums tend to focus on the technology as a communication medium or management tool. At the Powerhouse Museum we consider information technology from another perspective — as material culture — where any artefact will somehow embody the values and beliefs of the culture that produced or used it and that by some process of interpretation we can discover those values and beliefs.

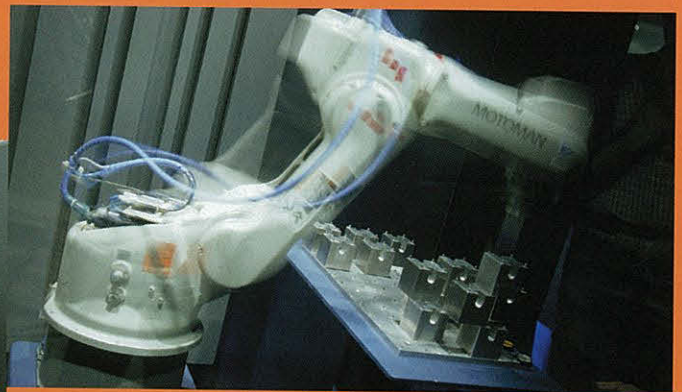
*Universal machine: computers and connections* is a new permanent exhibition that opened at the Powerhouse in 1999. It is dedicated to exploring the nature, role and meaning of information technology in our society, assisting visitors to unpack the meaning of 'information age' and 'information society' as well as to consider how technology reflects what we believe about ourselves.

The exhibition is arranged around a number of themes. Charles Babbage tells us of his desire for mechanical perfection and freedom from human error, Alan Turing ponders the nature of the human mind and devises the Universal Turing Machine. Computer applications are explored for their role in mediating the definitively human activities of language-based communication, social and environmental control, simulation and visualisation.

un-alluring but they also defy interpretation. To the uninitiated information technology devices say little about their function, use or time.

While we used labels, graphics, AV material to enhance interpretation of concepts associated with particular information technologies, interactive multimedia provides an extraordinary tool for assisting visitors to explore and understand often sophisticated concepts and ideas in a fun, humorous, exciting, adventurous way. The interactive as an immediate signifier of something exciting draws visitors into a section and hopefully provides them with a context for contemplating the artefact. (Note that the current status interactives have will only be maintained if multimedia developers maintain high standards.)

The second issue concerns the display of software — that entity, which is so hard to define in museum terms, but which is the soul of information technology. Providing access to software requires functioning hardware and power to keep it running, a particular problem for older applications. There is also the issue of 'usability' — an application or operating system is likely to be



very complex and require special training to operate and understand its output.

To resolve this problem, it is tempting to go down the path of just using multimedia to simulate programs in a simplified form. However, to fill this exhibition with what could be described as low quality reproductions would have been a mistake. Experience with other exhibitions has shown us that these simulations can easily mislead visitors into thinking that no expertise is required in certain fields of human endeavour, that basic computer skills are all that is required.

There are decisions to be made about where multimedia is appropriate and, in that respect, information technology differs little from other fields when it comes to significance and interpretation. While it was initially easy to confuse the content of the exhibition with the presentation of technologies, understanding how information technologies operate within our culture, understanding them as a reflection of ourselves, makes those decisions about how and when to use them easier.

**MATTHEW CONNELL IS CURATOR, COMPUTING AND MATHEMATICS, POWERHOUSE MUSEUM**

**Opposite: A surfer's paradise allows visitors to surf the web and create their own home page**

**Above left: A public program in which children are challenged to program the 'robot' TORK2U to make a peanut butter sandwich**

**Top: Isaac is a standard industrial robot with attitude: he not only demonstrates his speed, accuracy and tirelessness but has an extraordinary sense of rhythm**

Images courtesy Powerhouse Museum

We examine the human-computer interface, the contact boundary between our technology and us and, through artificial intelligence and robotics, look at our attempt to create life in our own image. To consider how we might have changed we look at the evolution of the computer user from the World War 2 scientist working in secret to today when our dependence and closeness to computing technology has turned us into cyborgs (part human part machine).

In developing this exhibition, we came up against numerous challenges but there are two big ones which illustrate different sides of the problem we confronted when using information technology to interpret information technology.

Computer hardware usually consists of a grey or beige box, a monitor, a keyboard and a mouse. Older computers had bigger boxes and no mouse. Not only are these boxes and attachments



*But at the same time the reader can hardly conceive my astonishment, to behold an island in the air, inhabited by men, who were able (as it should seem) to raise, or sink, or pit it onto progressive motion, as they pleased.*

Jonathan Swift,  
*A Voyage to Laputa*



### WHY HAVE A WEB SITE?

The Internet is a fascinating place. It can be described as being like a city — large, complex, full of beauty and learning, a fair smattering of garbage, and some danger. It's also a little like Swift's Laputa — a place almost inconceivable to those who have not experienced it. More and more there is an expectation that we will become part of this city that exists nowhere, but is everywhere.

So why should we? What would be the benefit to a small museum of being on the net?

In deciding to develop a web site it is important to think who the audience will be.

- Who will look at this web site?
- What will they want/need to see?
- What will they do as a result of connecting with the web site?

### A CALL TO ACTION

Like any marketing tool a web site needs a call to action. Visitors to our site can:

- tell others about the site and the museum
- plan a visit
- send us money!!!

- buy things which are on offer
- help us with a project
- develop a partnership.

#### Tip

Make sure you know what you want the web site to achieve. How does it fit into your promotional and development plans?

### BUILDING A WEB SITE

It's not difficult to build a web site if you know what you are doing. It's also not difficult to build a *good* web site, if you know what you are doing.

- Make the site quick loading.
- Divide the site into a number of pages which can be built to load separately.
- Simple graphics and smaller pictures will help the site to load faster.
- Start small and plan to build up the site as things develop.
- Make the site capable of being changed.
- Put a membership form up on the web.

#### Tip

Find someone who can develop a good web site, preferably on a volunteer basis.

### HOSTING A SITE

A web site has to live somewhere. Businesses know that it costs money. Find someone who will host the site for you (preferably for nothing). Some possibilities:

- Australian Museums On Line (AMOL)
- special interest groups for sites related to their areas of concern
- an enterprise sponsor
- local tourist information organisations/centres.



### LINKS

Links are important. They can take your site users to complementary destinations, and can also bring people to you.

When you are setting up your site think about which sites would create effective links. Look at who's out there, and who they are linked to. There are many sites which provide a catalogue of web sites relating to particular industries or interests.

### MAINTAIN YOUR SITE

A web site is a little like a magazine that never gets committed to paper. It can be changed, modified, refurbished, reborn, redone even

undone. The important thing is to know what you want the site to do for you and keep it fresh.

- Use it or lose it.
- Establish an interesting site and keep it that way.
- Update features regularly to bring important visitors back.
- Plan well ahead and solicit material in the form of images and feature articles.
- Monitor the popularity of different features on your site's pages using hit counters.
- Focus on providing more of the more popular features.
- Less popular items can be incorporated into other pages or **dropped altogether**.
- Create a first impression with your front page and entice a visitor to explore further.
- Use thumbnails depicting site features as a teaser.

### THE RESULTS?

We know that the web site will enhance the profile of our organisation, help us to connect with our membership, create a dynamic for more interaction with members. It's also a handy promotional tool. Most importantly the site can be used as a vehicle to create connections. It has made our museum larger by linking to other museums which are pursuing similar goals.

We have yet to

Photographs courtesy City of Greater Lithgow Mining Museum Inc

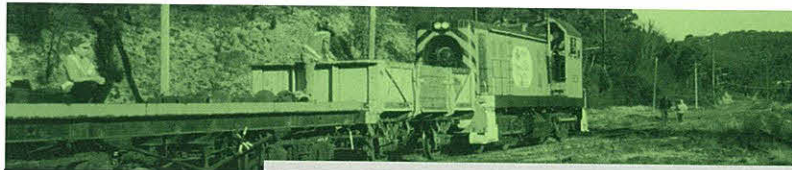


explore the full power of our site to draw ideas and people together, but then we know that we are able '... to raise, or sink, or pit it onto progressive motion, as ...' we please.

Most of all the site has helped engender a further sense of pride in our active members. It puts us up there — in the ether, in that city which exists nowhere, but is everywhere. The web site is another milestone in our maturing as an organisation. It puts us there with the big kids.

RAY CHRISTISON AND JOHN CLIFTON, CITY OF GREATER LITHGOW MINING MUSEUM INC

For a full version of 'Out in the ether' and more on the State Mine Heritage Park & Railway and the Sydney Electric Train Society see *Museum National* online at [www.museumsaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au)



STEPS TO BUILDING A WEBSITE

- 1 Identify the purpose of the web site — link it to your marketing plan
- 2 Find someone who has the experience and expertise to build a good web site
- 3 Carefully plan its layout and design
- 4 Build the site to be user friendly
- 5 Find someone who will host the site
- 6 Plan to maintain and manage the site to be fresh and exciting
- 7 Explore all the links you can
- 8 Enjoy your place on the web

**SYDNEY ELECTRIC TRAIN SOCIETY (SETS)**

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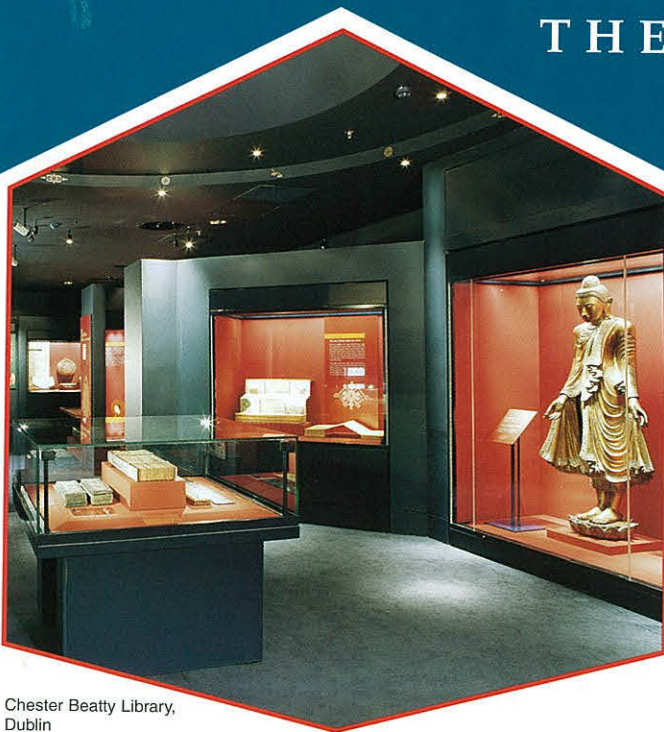
**Web site address**  
[www.ozemail.com.au/~utwww](http://www.ozemail.com.au/~utwww)

**STATE MINE HERITAGE PARK & RAILWAY**

The State Mine Heritage Park & Railway is a museum of mining and industry located in Lithgow, NSW. Our Mission is to represent the industrial history of the NSW Western Coalfields.

**Web site address**  
[www.railpage.org.au/statemine](http://www.railpage.org.au/statemine)

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# VIRTUAL PARTNERSHIPS = REAL BENEFITS

Why collaborate? Kirsten Freeman from the Performing Arts Museum and Clare Byrnes from the ABC demonstrate the benefits of mixing online and offline worlds



Everyone seems to have an opinion about how to make it in the new economy. Amidst the hyperbole and hearsay it is often difficult to work out what has any credence. While there's clearly no template for guaranteed success, a level of consensus has emerged around the value of strategic alliances. Partnerships between organisations with compatible skill matches and a shared vision are delivering benefits greater than the sum of their parts. The pairing up of content-rich Time Warner with the huge audience base of America On Line is just one case in point.

Arts organisations have long valued the benefits of partnerships. Beyond pooling limited resources and expanding audience reach, collaborations nurture creativity. The Performing Arts Museum, Victorian Arts Centre and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) have produced three online projects together over the past year. The relationship combined the strengths of each player with tangible results.

ABC Multimedia is an established leader in the production of online content. It is one of the most popular web sites in the country with over 4 million page accesses per week. The ABC web site includes a broad range of subject areas with a sub-section, The space, devoted to artistic and cultural content. The space includes a monthly online magazine, a gallery space, an event diary, online arts activities and reviews, and has provided the web development expertise and the outlet for the production and exhibition of these collaborative productions.

## THE NEW ECONOMY IS ONE THAT COMBINES THE BEST OF THE ONLINE AND OFFLINE WORLDS

The Performing Arts Museum's collection is unique and far-reaching. Ranging from the stunning Dame Nellie Melba gowns to Nick Cave's threadbare T-shirt, it documents Australian performance culture. Generous funding from the Victorian State Government allowed the museum to commence photographing and digitally imaging its collection in 1996. As the digitisation project gained momentum, online public access was the obvious next step. The ABC was able to provide the essential 'context' for the museum's 'content'. The resultant series of online exhibitions has taken the museum's collection to new audiences while perfectly complementing its offline activities.

Photographer Peter Milne has documented the Melbourne International Comedy Festival since its inception. The online exhibition *Fools' paradise* features Peter's insightful photographs, an essay on the development of Australian comedy by museum curator, Carolyn Laffan, and audio commentary by comedians Linda Gibson and Judith Lucy. Importantly, the exhibition was integrated with the Comedy Festival and launched as part of the 1999 event. It was promoted in the festival program and audiences



could access the virtual exhibition via terminals located in the foyer of the main festival venue. Regular radio promotions on ABC's Triple J reached an audience countrywide and provided a breadth of coverage unimaginable to any but the largest museum.

The next project, *Rocks naps*, had a slightly different genesis. It grew from *Ready, steady, go* a Performing Arts Museum exhibition funded by Arts Victoria to tour regional Victoria. Utilising the vast Laurie Richards Photographic Collection, the exhibition looked at the emergence of rock music in Australia in the late 1950s. The web site *Rocks naps*, while taking the real exhibition as its foundation, offers increased content and is interactive.



The latest collaboration *Soundcheck*, aims to reach a very different audience. Shellie Tonkin is a young Melbourne-based photographer who has made a name for herself documenting independent rock bands. She now counts the likes of You Am I, Something for Kate and The Living End as regular subjects. The exhibition *Please leave quietly: Images of Melbourne's independent music scene* ran at the Victorian Arts Centre over the 1999-2000 summer. Growing from the exhibition, but once again with a life beyond, is *Soundcheck*, the virtual experience presented by Triple J. The online exhibition includes more photographs, extended commentary by the exhibition's curator Angela Jooste, interviews from Richard Kingsmill's Oz Music Show, a Fantasy Band Name Competition and an opportunity for the audience to send in their own stories about the band scene.

With this project, the association with Triple J was critical in reaching the target audience. The Triple J web page boasts over 300 000 page accesses per week and complements the radio network.

Importantly, the real and the virtual exhibitions supported each other. Terminals in the exhibition space allowed visitors to tap into the extended offering of the virtual world. A live web-chat with Stephanie Ashworth from Something For Kate, Kit Warhurst from

Rocket Science and Shellie Tonkin, hosted by Tim Ross from Triple J's Merrick and Rosso, was run during the course of the exhibition.

Global business technology research company Gartner, predicts that the only business model that will survive in the new economy is one that combines the best of the online and offline worlds (*BRW*, June 2, 2000). The museum's real-world conceptual skills complemented the ABC's virtual-world expertise resulting in sites which are well researched, designed and constructed. While the sixty-four thousand dollar question 'does this translate into actual visitation?' remains, increased collection access, brand exposure and new audiences are certain.

KIRSTEN FREEMAN, FORMERLY PUBLIC PROGRAMS MANAGER, VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE, IS NOW MANAGER, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, FACULTY OF ART AND DESIGN, MONASH UNIVERSITY, AND CLARE BYRNES IS CREATIVE DIRECTOR, ABC MULTIMEDIA

See the online collaborations: *Fools' paradise* at [fools.abc.net.au](http://fools.abc.net.au); *Rocks naps* at [arts.abc.net.au/rocks naps](http://arts.abc.net.au/rocks naps); *Soundcheck* at [arts.abc.net.au/check](http://arts.abc.net.au/check)

The ABC and Cinemedia, Victoria's film and multimedia funding and development body, have established a Multimedia Production Accord to stimulate the development of new and innovative Australian multimedia content. For further information see <http://mm/cinemedia/accord/>

Left: Johnny O'Keefe, Melbourne Town Hall, November 1960  
Laurie Richards Photographic Collection

Opposite: Judith Lucy, King of the Road rehearsals,  
Melbourne Comedy Festival, 1996  
Photograph by Peter Milne

## Monash Gallery of Art



TranSglass. Seven items of glassware

23 August to 1 October 2000

**Reclaimed: Recycling in Contemporary British Craft and Design**

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# PLUG IT IN

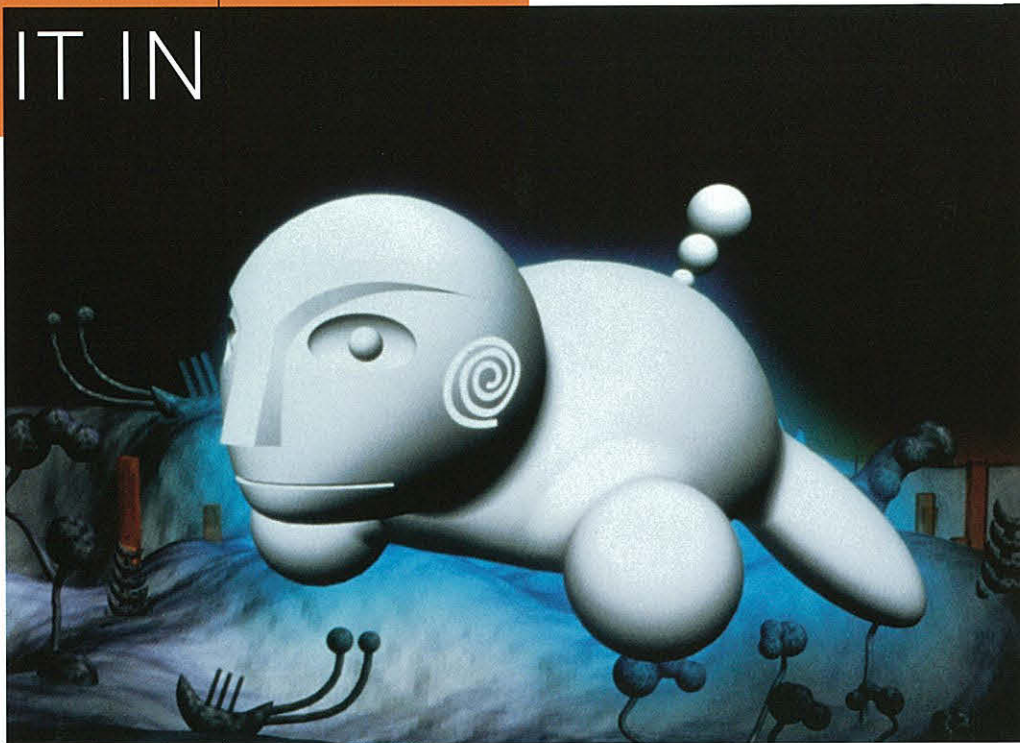
In 1999 Bendigo Art Gallery, one of Australia's oldest and largest regional galleries, hosted a transmedia\* exhibition titled **byte me: art + culture + technology**. In recent times, the gallery had developed a reputation for the quality of its temporary exhibition schedule, however this was the first time it ventured into this particular area of contemporary art practice. The process of organising an exhibition of this nature was challenging, but extremely rewarding.

**byte me** investigated the idea of what it means to live (in a physical and psychological sense) in a 'technological age'. Each artist in the exhibition (Linda Dement, Pat Hoffie, Troy Innocent, Jon McCormack, Patricia Piccinini, Josephine Starrs, Leon Cmielewski, James Verdon) was selected due to their unique approach to the theme. Responses ranged from technophilic to technophobic, and sub-themes included artificial life forms, artificial intelligence, the post-human body, perception of self within an environment and alternatives to traditional reality. All of the works were new or had evolved from previous works, many had not been seen before.

In the first instance when planning **byte me** it was necessary to access specific funding for transmedia artwork and in-kind support. Developing relationships with new and familiar organisations was a rewarding process and the gallery received generous support from the Australia Council, as well as funding from the Australian Film Commission and Cinemedia.

When discussing the experience of curating a transmedia exhibition it is impossible not to mention the actual logistics of placing the exhibition in the space. Many of the works were site specific and could not be completely realised by the artists prior to the exhibition. Before the equipment arrived at the space it was necessary to determine in excruciating and explicit detail exactly what was required, and then anticipate possible incompatibilities, such as equipment that was a few years old and therefore ancient in technological terms. Working with a professional group of artists was invaluable as they had intimate knowledge of their individual requirements and were also able to offer assistance with the work of others. The gallery staff developed new skills and drew on knowledge reserves not usually accessed during a standard installation. Executing the exhibition in a regional setting also called for careful planning, as most of the equipment was imported from either Melbourne or interstate. The cost of actually having items in the gallery was phenomenal and it was therefore necessary to limit unnecessary usage.

Transmedia art is characterised by its unique maintenance requirements, and the gallery had anticipated that there would be



'Iconica' (detail) by Troy Innocent, 1997  
Reproduced courtesy of the artist

EXECUTING THE  
EXHIBITION IN A  
REGIONAL SETTING  
ALSO CALLED FOR  
CAREFUL PLANNING,  
AS MOST OF THE  
EQUIPMENT WAS  
IMPORTED ...

frustrating glitches along the way. On the most basic level, most of the works had to be turned on and off each day, a fairly complex process when dealing with a disparate array of equipment. Yet other works remained on, such as Troy Innocent's *Iconica*, itself an inorganic entity remaining 'alive' and evolving over the exhibition period. As the curator I was called upon to develop skills specifically for each work and I learnt how to troubleshoot the basic problems that were encountered.

The rewards of **byte me** far outweighed the unique and constant demands of the process. The response of the general public to the exhibition was overwhelming and the coverage by various media agencies extremely satisfying. The opportunity to work with a motivated group of contemporary artists was inspirational and the gallery is already planning the next foray into the transmedia domain.

ANONDA BELL IS ACTING CURATOR, BENDIGO ART GALLERY

\*Transmedia, a term coined by Darren Tofts, is an alternative to digital or new media. It refers to work that has a number of different elements, mostly technology-based, not all of which are new or digital.



**A business view or two of the future of technologies in galleries and museums**

Photograph courtesy John Doolan



**John Doolan** is the managing director of KE Software, Melbourne, the leading supplier of collection management software to large museums, art galleries, herbaria and botanic gardens [jdoolan@ke.com.au](mailto:jdoolan@ke.com.au) [www.ke.com.au/](http://www.ke.com.au/)

- The adoption of digital technology within museums is still in its infancy.

- The digital experience will never replace a visit to a museum. Time spent on a visit is dedicated to the experience, unlike a digital visit which can be littered with distractions. As with all forms of entertainment, there is an irreplaceable feeling associated with seeing the 'real thing'.
- The digital environment is a new medium. After astonishment at the technology wears off, the entertainment factor will be largely driven by content and museums have content.
- Without even speculating what new developments are just over the horizon, many of the existing technologies have much to achieve before being considered practical. Resolutions will get higher. Bandwidth will get greater. Access will increase. The digital revolution is still young.

Photograph courtesy Phillip Jenkins

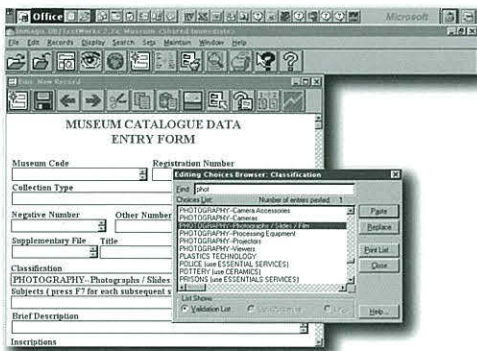


**Phillip Jenkins, PIVoD Technologies**  
[consultant@pivod.com](mailto:consultant@pivod.com)  
[www.pivod.com](http://www.pivod.com)

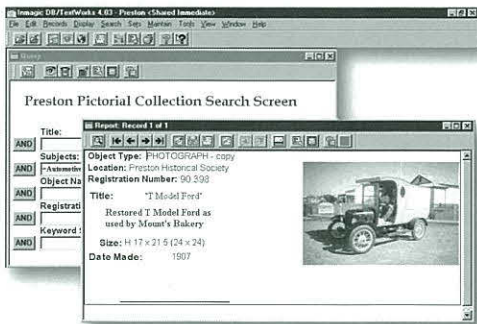
- Hits on web sites are one thing but nothing will ever replace the presence that can be created in a museum. The mixture of all the different mediums including the real display, graphics panels, environments, sound and light effects and all the visual mediums combine to create effects that will always be unique to museums.

- [The greater sense of competition for audiences because of the digital environment] is an opportunity for museums, not a threat. The opportunity is to use the technologies available to ensure that the message is conveyed, that all the information is available, that research can be carried out with far greater ease and accuracy.
- [Research, education and caring for objects] must not stop — the core responsibilities of museums have not changed — it is just the mediums by which it can be displayed and conveyed that have changed.

**For more of what business thinks of technologies in museums and galleries visit *Museum National* online at [www.museumaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumaustralia.org.au)**



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## MORE THAN POINT AND CLICK

Online interactive creative arts are a rapidly changing emerging field of theoretical research and artistic practice. The impact of online creative

art writing and practice has widespread implications for traditional artists, educators and museum curators alike. A virtual art gallery research project now underway recognises the significance of digital media and communications upon the creative arts. The Faculty of

Creative Arts at Wollongong University is well placed both in terms of human and technological resources to advance the field of virtual artistic theory and practice. This research project, the first of its kind in Australia, complements current research being undertaken by postgraduate students and staff across a range of visual arts, graphic design and new media disciplines.

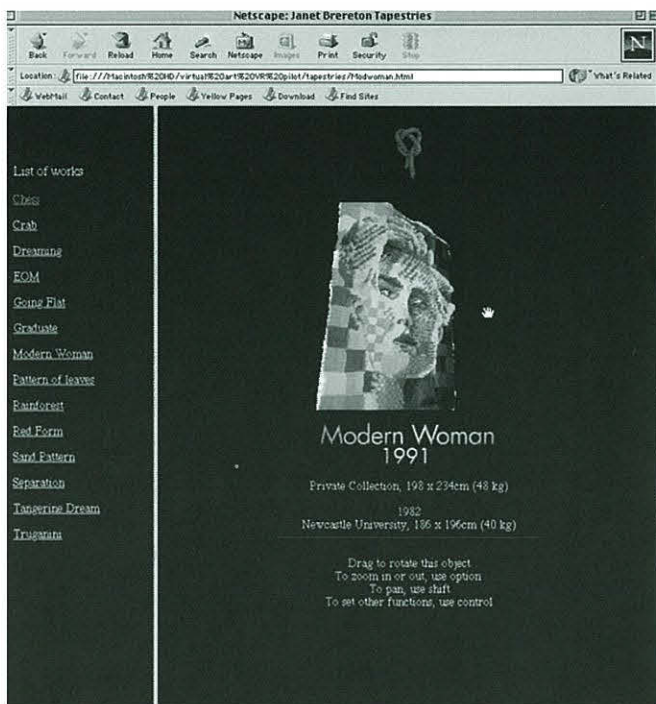
To date the vast majority of existing virtual art galleries have relied on conventional gallery metaphors (eg works hanging on white walls) for the display of digital artworks. This approach was partly driven by limited technological means available (bandwidth, user computer capabilities etc) and partly by cultural conventions of viewing/reading art in an art museum context. This 'point and click' method of experiencing digital art is however rather limited in scope and doesn't offer any real advancement or creative avenue for exploring the

potential of the web environment and digital medium.

The Virtual Art Gallery software builds on conventional methods of viewing and selecting works hanging on virtual walls. The new application will allow the easy construction of online VRML (virtual reality language) gallery sites as well as CD-Roms (available, hopefully, within 12 months). This project will feed directly into existing and new academic research and teaching programs within the educational and museum sectors as well offer domestic users and artists the opportunity to archive existing materials.

KURT BRERETON IS HEAD OF GRAPHIC DESIGN & NEW MEDIA, FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, KURT@UOW.EDU.AU

Left: Virtual tapestry can be interacted with by viewer by using the mouse to rotate and zoom into the artwork  
Image courtesy Kurt Brereton



## NETWORK DEVELOPMENT HELENA GULASH RECLAIMING CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Australian Indigenous Cultural Network (AICN) is an innovative and challenging initiative that has been established to support Indigenous Australian peoples to reclaim and to consolidate their cultural heritage. The AICN is using new technologies with an aim to empowering Indigenous peoples by increasing access to cultural materials held in public and private collections within Australia and overseas.

As many practitioners in the museum industry are aware, Indigenous Australians have long expressed the need for greater control over and access to their cultural materials. The *Previous Possessions, New Obligations* policy adopted by Museums

Australia recognised this fact. The use of new technologies can assist museums in the further implementation of this policy by allowing museums to share digital copies of their collections with Indigenous communities.

The major focus of the AICN is the development of a national network of regional Indigenous controlled cultural collections. Community groups can use the collections to consolidate, further develop and teach their cultural heritage. In the longer term, these collections can enhance the capacity of Indigenous Australians to achieve economic independence through a range of business enterprises.

The AICN is facilitating the production of a model digital archiving program that is culturally relevant to Indigenous requirements. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Pitjantjatjara Council in South Australia and the program is based upon the archiving software developed through the Ara Irititja Project.

New technologies present many challenges, as well as opportunities, to Indigenous Australians and the implications of these will be actively explored by the AICN. Some of the issues critical to Indigenous engagement with new technologies include copyright, appropriate representation, cultural and intellectual property rights and

access to training and resources.

New technologies are opening up possibilities for Indigenous Australians to ensure that their cultural heritage survives into the 21st century and beyond and to promote the richness of their cultures to the wider community in Australia and throughout the world. The AICN looks forward to working collaboratively with the museum sector to ensure that these possibilities become realities.

HELENA GULASH IS PROJECT MANAGER, AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS CULTURAL NETWORK



**CASE STUDY** DAVID WELLS

## IS 'NEW' BETTER THAN OLD?

The Newcastle Regional Museum was one of the first museums in Australia to have its entire collection electronically catalogued and digitally reproduced. In 1993 we rode the cutting edge of technology, at considerable cost to our slender budget, by purchasing 'large' and 'fast' computers, a video camera and a relational database to capture and store our collection. Seven years on where has this technology left the museum and its collection? Have our collections been enhanced or subjugated through this process?

The primary motivation for going digital was the then tantalising objective of being able to reach new and 'unseen' audiences — to project the museum's collection and programs to the distant, the influential and the curious. Additionally our survival in a regional context was always going to be much easier if we could establish ourselves as a collecting institution of consequence with the concomitant funding opportunities that that status brings.

Armed with these lofty ideals we feverishly documented the collection and



Newcastle Regional Museum  
filming the object  
Photographs courtesy Newcastle  
Regional Museum

### THE OBJECT ITSELF REMAINS THE DIRECT LINK WITH PAST TECHNOLOGIES, PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

filmed all 5 000 objects over about two years. The hardware, software and procedures were slow, cumbersome and unstable and there were many technical hiccups but we had a dedicated team, enough money and a manageable collection size. We achieved our goal late in 1993. At this time the larger institutions were just putting into practice their documentation programs so we were able to publicise our achievement to curious industry peers until we were inevitably overtaken by the leviathan museums.

The consequence of our efforts has been manifold. When we first put the collection on our rudimentary web site we received queries about our collection material from obscure specialist museums from all around the world. A more lasting benefit

has been with other Australian museums that have used the web presence of our collection to source display material for loan within their exhibitions. As a result we have now lent collection material to the Australian Museum, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, the South Australian Maritime Museum and the National Museum of Australia.

The digitisation of the collection did however allow us to more effectively service our in-house audience. Every museum receives requests to show more of its collection and we have consistently fielded queries from visitors on this topic. We view the gallery computer as a data source that does not pretend to take the place of the objects themselves. It is however a mechanism through which to provide much more detailed,

contextualised information about our collection and the stories about people, places and events associated with those objects.

The efficiencies gained within the management of the collection have also been profound. Finding objects on display or in store is made so much simpler through visual matching of the object to its photo.

Despite the obvious advantages of this technology I believe that it remains a tool through which to promote the work of museums and its collections rather than supplanting that work. We should continue to embrace change within this technology, use it to our advantage, but not see it as an end in itself. The object itself remains the direct link with past technologies, people and events. Digital enhancement simply assists us to view that past differently and in the process attract younger audiences to the work of museums.

DAVID WELLS IS CURATOR,  
NEWCASTLE REGIONAL MUSEUM



**SNAPSHOT**

## SWEET DREAMS

At the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery computer technology is used across a range of areas such as power point presentations to promote the gallery; virtual exhibition viewing for touring, media and education purposes as well as recording collection data information; publication of in-house flyers for updates of public programs.

In a recent exhibition entitled *Romantics* Adelaide artist Annabelle Collette was one of 12 artists presenting work of contemporary fibres and fabrics. Her installation *Sweet dreams are made of this* explores issues of beauty and sexuality using stylised female forms as a basis of expression. Her forms have a sculptural element and bridge the realms of art and craft.

Curator Liz Woods collaborated with 12 fibre art

practitioners to develop this strongly conceptual exhibition, the primary concern of which is the reinterpretation of the art object through language.

MATERIAL SOURCED FROM PERC  
TUCKER REGIONAL GALLERY

'Sweet dreams are made of this' by  
Annabelle Collette, 2000  
Photograph courtesy Perc Tucker  
Regional Gallery



## SNAPSHOT



## REAL VS VIRTUAL VISITS

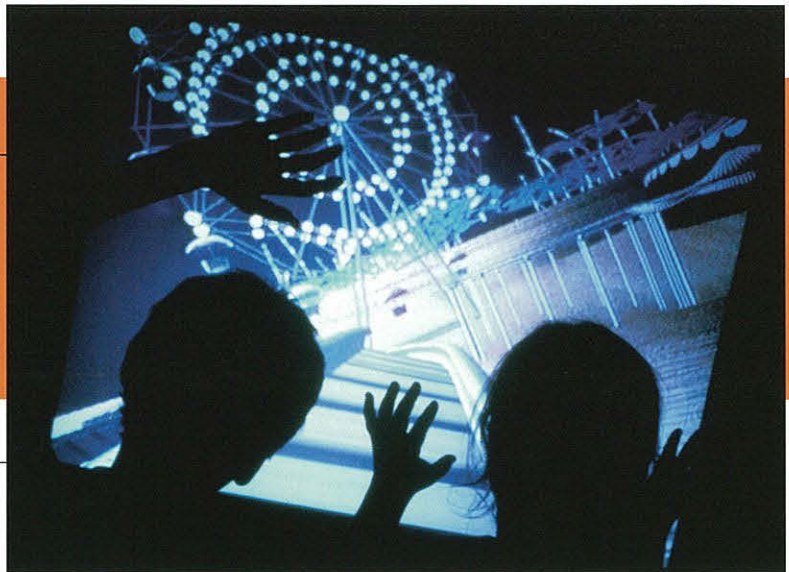
By Brenton Honeyman and Annie Ghisalberty

More and more science centres around the world are issuing an invitation for people of all ages to enter the fascinating world of science and technology through their computer.

Significant developments in web browsing software now make it possible for web users to experience far greater levels of 'interactivity' than the passive, page-turning experiences that have dominated the web in recent years. Today's web technologies enable the online visitor to interact with sophisticated animated sequences and simulations, navigate in three dimensional environments, control robotic devices on the other side of the planet, view a 360 degree panoramic snapshot of the surface of Mars, and monitor changes in the environment through a 'webcam' which continually captures and updates still or video images.

The issue of 'real' versus 'virtual' is causing many science centres to carefully consider the place of online activities and events. The traditional approach has been to develop visitor experiences based on 'actually being there during opening hours'. Whenever a visitor interacts with an exhibit, talks to an explainer, listens to a public lecture, watches a science demonstration show or participates in a hands-on activity session, the experience can only take place when the visitor is actually there at the time the experience is scheduled (same place, same time). On the other hand whenever a 'visitor' connects to a science centre web site and interacts with an online activity, the experience can take place remotely and is not restricted by opening hours or program schedules.

This in itself, however, does not provide sufficient reason for establishing an online presence. The purpose of science centres



Above left: Hanging around at Questacon: a 6-metre vertical slippery dip which allows you to experience the effect gravity has on your body

Above: Rollercoaster simulator ride: virtual reality meets actual science centre

Images courtesy Questacon, The National Science and Technology Centre

is more than getting a greater number of visitors through their actual or 'virtual' doors.

BRENTON HONEYMAN IS MANAGER, PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION AND ANNIE GHISALBERTI IS DIRECTOR OF QUESTACON, THE NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

## SCIENCE ON THE WEB

[www.cs.cmu.edu/~mwm/sci.html](http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~mwm/sci.html) for a useful directory of hands-on science centres worldwide. [www.sln.org](http://www.sln.org), Science Learning Network, has been developed by six science centres in the USA, each working with a school in their district to develop web-based learning resources and networking facilities for staff, teachers and students. [www.questacon.edu.au](http://www.questacon.edu.au) provides information about its programs and a preview (virtual tour) of its galleries. The popularity of this web site is due to Questacon's interest in encouraging online interactivity.

## SNAPSHOT BRENDAN LEE

## DIGITAL MANIPULATIONS

Technology has always been an important tool in the art making process. For me current technology opens up unexplored areas of society, which would not have been conceivable a generation ago. Collaborative projects with other artists don't have to take place in one location, let alone

the same land mass, making the process faster and less problematic. New technology once it has been mastered as an art form can reduce the time taken to get from an idea to a finished artwork. I enjoy the professional look and feel of the new art forms derived from the digital medium. New technology is a very attractive medium in that we as viewers are accustomed to slick advertising and screenbased production. Artists today can



use the new technology with very little expense and create works of equivalent quality in cultural value and appearance to those of other art forms.

'Hits' by Brendan Lee, 1999, in *Immersed: The contemporary body object*, Monash Gallery of Art, part of the Next Wave Festival, Melbourne, May-June 2000  
Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Monash Gallery of Art



**MULTIMEDIA IS HERE TO STAY**

*Multimedia technologies have become established as a new reliable communication tool with which museums and galleries can craft and transmit information about their cultural resources.*

*Governments have become increasingly interested in the success of multimedia projects — often seeing them as a valuable performance indicator for cultural institutions.*

The Multimedia Team, National Museums of Scotland, Specialist Consultancy, National Gallery of Victoria, June 2000

The National Gallery of Victoria is undergoing the most extensive redevelopment in its history with its St Kilda Road building, originally designed by Sir Roy Grounds in 1968, being transformed by the Milan-based architect, Mario Bellini, working with Melbourne architects, Metier 3. Meanwhile, the new NGV: *Australian Art* is being developed by Peter Davidson of LAB + Bates Smart at nearby Federation Square to accommodate the NGV's extensive collection of *Australian Art*.

The St Kilda Road redevelopment is scheduled for opening late 2002, while

Federation Square is scheduled to open in 2001.

Integral to both developments is the National Gallery of Victoria's multimedia strategy that aims to utilise new technology and multimedia to promote maximum accessibility to the NGV's collections, and to extend arts education to as wide an audience as possible both on- and off-site. To achieve this the NGV is engaged in digitising some 20 000 images as the first phase of making the 60 000 works in the collection available as a resource for multimedia programs and Internet research. Intrinsicly linked to this is a parallel major undertaking to create a database that will provide access to these images, together with text, sound and film clips, for the creation of programs of interpretative material that will add educational benefit and enjoyment for visitors.

Funding to achieve the first phase of the NGV's multimedia strategy has been provided through a grant from Multimedia Victoria, but full implementation will require an ongoing financial commitment from the NGV that will

necessitate high-level sponsorship.

There is no retreating from the fact that multimedia is here to stay and must be embraced enthusiastically and with confidence by museums in the pursuit of their mission. It will enable them to reach and engage new audiences, especially amongst the younger generation, and it will foster

regional and international partnerships on an unprecedented level.

FRANCES LINDSAY IS THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (AUSTRALIAN ART), NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

**For a full version of Frances Lindsay's views see *Museum National* online at [www.museumaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumaustralia.org.au)**

**THE NGV DELIVERS**

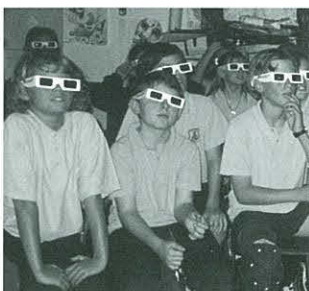
The NGV will employ a variety of approaches for the delivery of its multimedia programs:

- keynote displays at appropriate locations such as in foyers where large screens can provide directional and program information
- focal displays on small screens integrated into specific exhibits
- interactive terminals with touch-screen information in break-out spaces adjacent to galleries
- terminals for orientation, browsing and shopping in cafes and micro-galleries
- study terminals in a library environment.

The extensive redevelopment program provides the NGV with an opportunity for multimedia implementation that would not otherwise be possible, for, as many international art museums have found, it is more difficult to provide cabling and infrastructure to established buildings than to new ones. The aim is to utilise multimedia to enhance the visitor experience by providing interpretative information. At the touch of a finger multimedia can present levels of information, including comparative works, archival footage, technical details, conservation history, artist biographies, and so on.

**SNAPSHOT**

**ART ON THE MOVE**



*Geo-derma* is an exploration of the relationship between the body and landscape and

how technology has an impact upon our perceptions of both. The exhibition is a continuation of a three-year collaboration involving two visual artists, David Carson and Brian McLave who both use Internet communications, new imaging technologies and specifically 3D digital video, and musician physicist George Milward.

The artists filmed at Kalgoorlie Consolidated Goldmines (the Super Pit) integrating aspects of surveying processes and

medical scanning techniques into the 3D video production which tours as a component of *Geo-derma* along with photographic prints inspired by historical and contemporary medical imaging technologies and paintings reflecting the artists' interest in aspects of physics such as chaos theory.

*Geo-derma* opened at the Goldfield Arts Centre Gallery in 1998 (and has since been to Festival of Perth, been featured in *Pandaemonium* London Electronic Arts and

had a special screening at Australia House, London) and will tour to five regional venues in Western Australia during 2000.

*Geo-derma* is available for interstate venues from February 2001.

For more information contact Julie Thomas of Art on the Move, phone (08) 9227 7505.

**Material sourced from *Art on the Move***

Left: *Art on the Move* roadshow, Ravensthorpe District High School May 2000

Photograph courtesy Art on the Move



# SITES OF VIRTUAL DISPLAY

What do the characters of *The Wizard of Oz* and museums in a digital world have in common? Angelina Russo asks: are we, like Dorothy and her companions, being propelled forward by the rhetoric of wonder?

In the children's story, *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy and her companions, the Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Cowardly Lion, make their way to the mythological Emerald City propelled by the rhetoric of wonder and promise of mystical power supposedly embodied in the Wizard.

Using phantasmagoric Meliorean<sup>1</sup> devices, the Wizard procures promises of difficult and dangerous adventures in order to fulfill our heroes wishes. On their return, they discover fraudulent activities; the Wizard has been hiding behind his Baroque technological showing, an advanced exhibitionary device where mediating techniques have provided a powerful basis for the knowledge and power he has been assumed to hold.

The narrative is analogous with the dialectic between museum content and display technique. The Wizard in his Great Hall engages in deceptive, technological seduction, gaining credence for his privileged position. The museum has also enjoyed an unequivocal stronghold on the representation of communities, their stories, objects, events and spaces. This privileged position was undisputed until the advent of broadcast media. Mediated broadcast transformed the practices of museum display as the institutional voice was joined by commercial, corporate and consumer authorities.

The museum has diversified its holdings to attract and maintain audiences. One of the mechanisms for eliciting this wider audience has been a progressive shift from an educative/social basis, to an entertainment/tourism basis. This is evidenced in the focus on knowledge being 'fun' and the museum experience 'different' to broadcast media. While entertainment devices in museum display are not new, the use of digital technology to create 'virtual' experiences remains an unexplored potential.

The museum has adopted digital technology without a framework from which to view mediated interactivity and its relationship to exhibition content. I propose a series of 'sites of virtual display' from which to test media types against their relationship to exhibition content and design. The potential of each site of virtual display is expressed through the transformations in our experience of and relationship to museum display.



## Memory site

These sites transform the context of mediation and our memory of place as media ascribes 'new' memories to the display experience. Simultaneously, physical journeys attach us to reified memories (perhaps not even our own) of museum spaces. Interactivity ranges from passive devices such as video presentations to creative devices including activities which broaden our readings of display.

## Web site

The web site's potential lies in its ability to augment physical museum space through the display of collections within distributed databases. Adjunct material complement displays



## WHILE ENTERTAINMENT DEVICES IN MUSEUM DISPLAY ARE NOT NEW, THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE 'VIRTUAL' EXPERIENCES REMAINS AN UNEXPLORED POTENTIAL



'South Terrace' by Angelina Russo, (from photographs by Simon Whittington, 1983 and John Forrest, 1999) computer generated image, 1999

'South Terrace' is from an installation entitled 'post historic sounds' which brings together images, sounds, oral histories, maps and documents, creating a virtual display of a time and place occupied by fringe activities.

The installation was designed to embody the tensions between the 'substance of display' and the 'images of their representation'.

Image courtesy Angelina Russo

### **Immersive site**

Our role as passive neophyte, engaged in learning by attending the great orator, is transformed as we undertake spatial journeys of 'revelation' being tempted, torn and tormented, forced into engaging with content at the level of question rather than acceptance. The transcendence of the immersive site confronts tensions between the 'substance of display' and the 'images of their representations'.

### **Urban site**

Urban sites transform our relationship to physical spaces using exhibitionary devices such as buildings, streetscapes and archaeological objects connected in space and time through movement and interaction. Interactivity is creative and mediated questioning the relationship of exhibitionary apparatus against the museum's potential to contest site, identity, authority of narrative and ownership of object.

The potential of virtual experiences transforming museum display practices and transcending physical experiences mimics Dorothy's journey. She too questions the rhetoric of wonder; guided by experiences which transform her relationship with privileged powers.

As the museum is propelled toward the potentials of an entertainment/tourism base, we too will question the institution and its exhibitionary devices.

ANGELINA RUSSO IS A LECTURER IN INTERIOR DESIGN, LOUIS LAYBOURNE SMITH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

transforming our experience of the museum from visits to a physical space during a preconceived time frame to creative interaction with content, undertaken at our leisure, creating flexible relationships with the museum.

### **Virtual site**

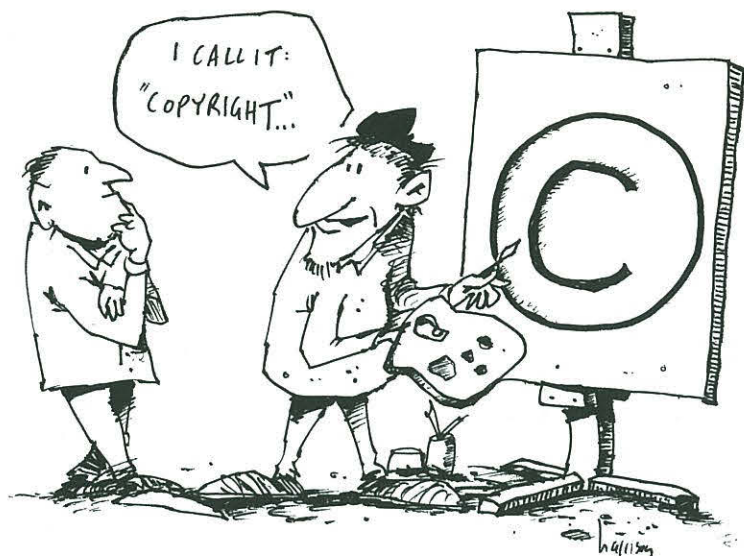
The potential of the virtual site lies in its transformation of the power/knowledge basis of the museum. Collections are drawn from communities, individuals and associations and displayed solely on the web. The display of fractured and fragmented collections transcends institutional interpretations of culture and identity creating displays visualized exclusively through a broadcast medium.

### **Footnotes**

1. Callas, P. (1996) In *Phantasmagoria: Pre-Cinema to Virtuality* (Eds Callas, P. and Watson, D.) Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, pp. 3-15.



## TECHNOLOGIES AND COPYRIGHT REFORM



Significant copyright reform is continuing in Australia. The two most relevant Bills for the museum sector are the Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Bill 1999 and the Copyright Amendment (Moral Rights) Bill 1999. Further Parliamentary debate on each measure was expected but, given the recent history of copyright reform, fast progress is far from certain especially in relation to moral rights.

A major question for the Digital Agenda Bill is the balance taken in any final version between the Bill as introduced in September 1999 and the changes to it recommended in an Advisory Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in December 1999.

The Bill as introduced would create a technologically neutral right of communication to the public, which would include making copyright material available online and replace the existing broadcasting and diffusion rights. For uses of copyright material such as fair

dealing, a 'reasonable portion' would be defined inclusively as the greater of 10% of the number of words in a digital literary or dramatic work or a single chapter of such a work. (Existing provisions cover 10% of the number of pages rather than words.) The lack of a statutory definition for a reasonable portion of artistic works would remain. The Bill would extend library and archives provisions and statutory licences for educational institutions; create an exception for temporary copies from handling digital works; create new enforcement measures; and create a scheme for liability for Internet intermediaries who may be taken to authorise infringements.

The Standing Committee recommended significant changes. Just as the Attorney-General's Department sought to do in the original Bill, the Committee was concerned to meet two competing public interests. These are said to be the interest in equitable remuneration for creators and publishers and the interest in

public access to copyright material. It is most contentious whether the existing print balance is appropriate to maintain in a digital environment. This would seem to depend on evolving uses of digital media: it is an empirical question that will continued to be debated. Whatever reforms are made now, however, may influence the digital uses that do evolve.

The Committee did not reach a consensus on this question. It suggested applying the same exceptions in both print and digital environments, but recommended a 'firewall' between them. Only limited exceptions would allow reproduction from hardcopy to digital form by anyone other than the copyright owner. The copyright owner would be the entity deciding to expose material to risks of digital misuse. First digitisation by others would be allowed only in certain instances, including fair dealing for criticism or review or reporting the news, preservation by institutions covered by the archives provisions (which can include

museums and galleries) and reproductions in libraries made to supply remote locations.

The Moral Rights Bill follows on from 1997 provisions which were withdrawn to allow greater industry consultation, particularly in relation to film. Moral rights are envisaged for authors of literary, dramatic and musical works and the makers of films created after the reforms come into operation. The Bill provides for a right of attribution for a work's author; a right to take action against false attribution; and a right of integrity or to object to derogatory treatment of a work. The general approach to exceptions is to provide for them statutorily on a standard of reasonableness in light of the purpose and context of the use of a work. As well, an author can consent to any act or omission that may infringe moral rights.

The Australian Copyright Council has a plain language information sheet which includes these proposed changes. See [www.copyright.org.au](http://www.copyright.org.au)

ANDREW KENYON IS A MEMBER OF THE FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, EDITOR OF *MEDIA AND ARTS LAW REVIEW*, AND A DIRECTOR OF THE ARTS LAW CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA

### → CONTRIBUTE

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## RESEARCHING ONLINE

(or how to achieve a 20 times growth in usage without increasing staff)



For over 20 years the Research Centre at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) has provided public access to its unique archival collections and to collection databases. But as the centre was located at the rear of the gallery building (a

haven for the 12 000 users in the know), few of the 800 000 annual visitors were aware it existed or used its facilities.

As a result of the AWM's major gallery development project, the refurbished Research Centre is now integrated with the galleries. It

offers two main facilities, an online gallery of electronic resources, and a reading room for researchers using the library and archives collections.

The online gallery was designed to enable visitors to find information about the war service of family members, including those 102 000 people who died and are included on the Memorial's Roll of Honour. Resources, such as biographical databases, have been developed from archival documents so names and details can be easily located online. Access is also provided to 200 000 images from the photograph collection. These record the Australian experience of war from the Sudan conflict to peacekeeping in Timor. Captions to the images are searchable by keywords including name, place, date, object and event.

A secondary purpose of the gallery is to provide access to items not currently on display.

Works by Sidney Nolan, Donald Friend, William Dargie and Stella Bowen are among the 5 000 images from the art collections now online. More works and collections will be added progressively.

The gallery relies primarily on self-help with volunteers to assist where necessary.

Post occupancy surveys estimate that over 30% of all visitors to the Memorial use the online gallery. People like the authoritative content and tell us they want more.

If time constraints prevent the public from fully exploring the online gallery while visiting the memorial, they can continue their research at home at [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)

ELIZABETH DRACOULIS IS MANAGER OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE, AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Left: The Research Centre, Australian War Memorial  
Photograph courtesy Australian War Memorial

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For further information, contact Marion Hansen, School of Australian and International Studies on telephone (03) 5227 1328, facsimile (03) 5227 2282 or E-mail [sais@deakin.edu.au](mailto:sais@deakin.edu.au)





CASE STUDY

# ANCIENT OLYMPIA

## IN ALL ITS GLORY

Through virtual reality ancient Olympia is brought to life in a new exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum, as Timothy Hart explains

To celebrate the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games the Powerhouse Museum and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture have developed an exhibition of antiquities from ancient Greece that brings together real objects with virtual reality techniques. The use of these new technologies greatly extends the experience for visitors bringing the site of ancient Olympia to life in a way not possible by 'conventional' exhibition techniques.

The exhibition *1000 years of the Olympic Games: Treasures from ancient Greece* presents masterpieces, mostly dating from the 8th century BC to the 3rd century AD. The culture of the games began centuries beforehand and a number of objects in the exhibition

illustrate competitions from a previous era such as bull-leaping and chariot racing during the 2nd millennium BC.

The exhibition also features two major virtual reality components and an extensive web site made possible by the generous support of Intel Corporation, major sponsor of the exhibition. The virtual reality components in the exhibition opened on July 19 and the web site will be available from September 1 (at [www.phm.gov.au/ancient\\_greek\\_olympics/](http://www.phm.gov.au/ancient_greek_olympics/)).

### Zeus as a 3D virtual statue

A digital model of a life-size bronze statue of the god Zeus found in the sea off Artemision in 1926 currently on display at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, will be



Laser scanning of the statue of Zeus at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, February 2000  
Copyright University of Melbourne Geomatics Dept 2000

presented in a 3D visualisation theatre known as a 'Wedge' developed at the Australian National University. The Wedge is derived from the Silicon

Graphics '3D Cave' and allows complex 3D objects to be manipulated in real time, using a combination of powerful computers, projectors and

SNAPSHOT RUTH CARROLL

### THE OLD AND THE NEW

*Walking through light* came out of an interest in the psycho-social, as well as physical, effects of electric and/or fluorescent lighting on the human skin and soul. How does it affect us, to not be touched by the sun, but by manufactured light? This series for the Platform space is site specific, an installation

in a public train subway which receives large amounts of human traffic each day.

The images are developed via digital manipulation from original colour shots taken in New York City's 42nd Street and Times Square subway networks, using flouro lights



and colour film, and 'blowing out' the colours to look garish and unnatural, the human figures are shadows cast, as though seen out of downcast eyes from a mind focused on the business of the day ahead.

*Walking through light* at Platform is an installation in a public space which utilises the available and familiar fluorescent lighting. This space was chosen to exhibit these images in this subway tunnel as the lighting, colour and imagery in the works reflect back their

surroundings, not in a literal sense, but in the sense that they are filled with fluorescent light, that passers-by give each other the fleeting glances they will give the artwork as they rush by to work. The intention is to stop a couple of them in their tracks to turn and look at their reflected selves (or my impression of them).

Left: 'Untitled green' from *Walking through light* by Ruth Carroll, Platform, Spencer Street Station, Melbourne, June 19-July 14  
Photograph courtesy of the artist





shutter glasses. The use of this technology to virtually bring a 'real object' into an exhibition will be a first in an Australian museum on this scale. The statue was laser scanned at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens by a team

from the University of Melbourne Geomatics Department in February this year.

This particular statue was chosen because it will never be allowed to travel outside the Hellenic Republic.

3D visualisation is the only way to allow visitors to experience its power and beauty beyond its home in Athens.

#### Virtual reconstruction of Ancient Olympia

Using a number of virtual reality technologies, the Powerhouse Museum in conjunction with the University of Melbourne Geomatics Department has created a 3D digital reconstruction of ancient Olympia, c. 200 BC. The recreation of the Olympic precinct, including temples and buildings (over 25) adorned with marble statues and votive offerings, was accomplished through extensive research into ancient Greek architecture using archaeological reports and ancient historical sources.

The imbedding of 360° photographic panoramas within the experience allows a 'then and now' view of the site on demand.

The success of the virtual reconstruction has been achieved by particular attention to detail which has resulted in a very accurate and realistic model, aging buildings, some of which were over 300 years old in 200 BC. Correcting the terrain model to its state 2 200 years ago has meant changing the course of rivers and the heights of the surrounding hills and carefully

reconstructing the lay of the land throughout the site for the time period selected.

#### An exhibition web site

An extensive web site gives access to both 3D models from the exhibition, and a wealth of object related information and photography. Highlights include: the two 3D experiences with extensive audio commentary, a photo-real panoramic tour of the physical exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum, sculptural details from the Temple of Zeus, a tour of the current site through the use of 30 360 degrees photographic panoramas, extensive educational resources including essays, teachers notes, project information and a genealogy of the gods all available as PDF files for download.

TIMOTHY HART IS THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

**1000 years of the Olympic Games: Treasures from ancient Greece, organised and lent by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens, developed by the Powerhouse Museum, as a contribution to the celebration of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Powerhouse Museum until November 15**

#### SNAPSHOT

### WALKING ON GOLD

In the final vault, Gold and Currency, of the exhibition *Built on gold: Victoria's gold journey and legacy 1852-1862* (at the Gold Treasury Museum in Melbourne), two flickering LED screens, one suspended in air and the other embedded in the transparent glass floor, silently advertise stories about gold and its fluctuating daily price. A carpet of gold ingots



throws up a subdued, ethereal glow, the only lighting in the space.

Theatrical evocation is an alternative approach in presenting history that directly engages the imagination and

senses and bypasses the need to intellectualise in order to 'experience' the past.

*Built on gold's* designers have capitalised on the powerful ambience of the bluestone vaults creating an exhibition that inverts the conventional exhibition expectation of static displays of objects. Instead of objects *Built on gold* uses soundscapes, lighting effects, and fleeting historical images collaged and projected onto glass screens to tell its

stories. The only object on display is the historic place itself in which the exhibition is experienced, the atmospheric gold vaults of the Old Treasury.

In this exhibition the viewer is placed at the centre and not as a detached entity looking in. This is an active, dynamic engagement with history.

MATERIAL SOURCED FROM GOLD TREASURY MUSEUM

Photograph courtesy Gold Treasury Museum



# MA in ACTION

## Museums Australia ASSOCIATION IN ACTION

### YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED

The future of the Heritage Collections Council (HCC) is being discussed by government and members of the HCC. Museums Australia is contributing to these discussions through our representatives (Sue-Anne Wallace and Andrew Reeves) and an observer position (held by Des Griffin). The Council of Australian Art Museum Directors (CAAMD) and the Council of Australian Museum Directors (CAMD) are also represented by two members each on the Council.

The first version of the HCC, the Heritage Collections Working Group (HCWG), was established in 1990 following promotion by the Council of Australian Museum Associations (CAMA), one of the predecessor organisations of Museums Australia. Its principal aim was to demonstrate the widely distributed nature of Australia's heritage collections and to seek a collective solution to the urgent problems of preservation and accessibility they faced. As we all know, while the collections are widely distributed, the means to care for them and to interpret them are not. The time frame for this work to be undertaken by the HCC was 2001, a symbolic date now hanging over it and its possible future.

The HCWG presented a model for funding that was accepted by the Cultural Ministers' Council in 1993; that is, funding would be provided by major national and state museums and art galleries and governments. The breakdown of that funding per annum is as follows:

<b>Commonwealth Government</b>	<b>\$300 000</b>
<b>State and Territory Governments</b>	<b>\$200 000</b>
<b>Major museums and art galleries</b>	<b>\$250 000</b>

In addressing its mission 'to promote excellence in the management, care and provision of access to Australia's heritage collections so that together they reflect Australia's cultural and natural diversity', the HCC has established two working groups, the On-Line Working Party and the Collection Management and Conservation Working Party. The former of these working parties is responsible for Australian Museum Online (AMOL) web site; the latter has most recently launched the seven-volume *Re-collections: Caring for collections across Australia*.

Museums Australia joins with CAMD and CAAMD in supporting the work of the HCC and in expressing concern that support for it may not be sustained after mid-2001.

Museums Australia is contributing to the debate on

the HCC through the Futures Working Group. But the debate does not rest with your representatives alone. Your voice is needed. Indeed many members of Museums Australia have already contributed by attending the AMOL discussion meetings. Make your director aware of the importance of the HCC to our national collections and the collecting institutions. Make your views known to the National Office. We need to ensure that arts ministers understand the achievements of the HCC and we must encourage governments at the Federal and State levels — and the member state and national museums and art galleries — to continue to support this initiative.

HCC has been an extraordinarily successful forum for our heritage collections because it has worked across state borders. Important issues such as identifying objects of significance, increasing accessibility through AMOL, providing key documents on conservation and collection management to all museums have been achieved because of the true partnership and collaboration between governments and museums in the national interest.

**Sue-Anne Wallace**  
President

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### DEAR MEMBERS

WATCH OUT!! We are gathering information about the people who work in the museums and gallery sector, so included in this issue of *Museum National* is a questionnaire. Please take the time to fill it out and return it to us in the Reply Paid envelope, and help us represent you more effectively.

Visit us @ [www.museumsaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au)



A MUST READ

**Introduction to museum evaluation**

edited by Minda Borun and Randi Korn, Washington, American Association of Museums Professional Practice Series, 1999

*If a visitor should, on leaving the galleries, take nothing with him but sore feet, a bad headache, and a general idea that the animal kingdom is a mighty maze without plan, I should be inclined to believe that this state of bodily and mental prostration is the visitor's and not the curator's fault.*

This quote from Mr Gunther, an 1880s Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum is used by Steven Griggs in a case study documented in *Introduction to museum evaluation*. My recent experience when the pressure is on leads me to view things from the other end of the Gunther scale: if visitors don't step inside the door of the museum, it must be the curator's fault. In the battleground where the fight for the leisure dollar takes place, curators, designers and exhibition development teams are now on the front line and none of us can afford to hide out in our bunkers in the Gunther position.

The critical place of evaluation in all stages of exhibition design and development is now being recognised, and this book offers an excellent introduction for those of us who are only beginning. It deals with the issues in very clear language, fulfilling its aim of appealing to museum staff who are not specifically trained to conduct evaluation or visitor studies. The different stages and purposes of evaluation — front end,

formative, summative and remedial — are detailed clearly and concisely. The definitions and examples are simple and easy to follow, particularly the chapters 'The Classification of Exhibit Evaluation: A Rationale for Remedial Evaluation' by Stephen Bitgood and Harris Shettel and 'Studying Your Visitors: Where to Begin' by Randi Korn.

*Introduction to museum evaluation* contains practical advice on how to design a questionnaire, ask questions etc. I admit I found myself skim-reading the chapters on analysing data; all that talk of percentages and spreadsheets made me dizzy. For me, the practical how to and case studies were the most useful. Reading this book made me realise how little we really know about our visitors and their reactions to our exhibitions — how much of our work tends to be hit and miss.

In 'Getting started in audience research', Marilyn Hood stresses that 'the time, energy, people power and money you invest in doing it right, on both large and small projects, pay off in valid, reliable information you can depend on when making your decisions'. I have no doubt what she says is true. Yet I think the problem for many readers will be the frustration of knowing what evaluation can achieve but not having the resources to do it properly.

As Stephen Griggs reminds us, evaluation can tell us why something fails but it cannot, except in very general terms, tell us what would succeed in its place. However, having recently completed some formative evaluation on our next project, I feel we can be confident that at the very least we will have more hits than misses with our visitors.

*Introduction to museum evaluation* is a must read for

all who are keen to find out more about what our visitors feel about the work we do.

MARIE BOLAND IS CURATOR, SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MARITIME MUSEUM, PORT ADELAIDE

A MIXED BAG ON 'VOLUNTEERISM'

**Good practice in the management of volunteers**

by Sinclair Goodlad and Stephanie McIvor, Routledge, London, 1998

Between 1994–96 the Nuffield Foundation in the UK funded the development of a volunteer interpreters scheme at London's Science Museum, in conjunction with the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine. The project was a pilot, intended to assess whether volunteers could be

used effectively to disseminate knowledge about science, and to develop models and materials that would assist other museums wanting to travel the same road. The partnership arose not just because the two institutions are round the corner from each other, but because the Imperial College had, since 1992, been experimenting with students as 'chaperones' or tutors for schoolchildren.

1994 is a long time ago. Nonetheless, it is still a bit surprising to discover that such a study was thought necessary. The Science Museum is, after all, one of the world's major museums and a leader in the intelligent application of interactive technology in communication between the museum and its visitors. It is strange to think the case for volunteer 'help' needed proving, when in Australia (not to mention the US), volunteer guides and

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University of Leicester

GRADUATE STUDIES





Volunteer Brian McNamara working with wet specimens at the National Museum of Australia

explainers have been a key feature of unquestioned value in museums for 20 years or more.

'We believe it will become increasingly necessary for museum professionals to delegate some of their work to non-professionals.' The values of the study are exemplified in this quote. Perhaps there has been an industrial relations issue delaying the integration of volunteers into UK museums. But nowhere does the book pick up that one of the strengths of volunteers is providing museums with a distinct and entirely separate package of skills (freshness, enthusiasm, layperson's perspective, links to the community), that are not so easy to obtain among paid, fulltime staff. Nor does the idea that volunteers have a 'professionalism' of their own feature in the study.

The book introduces 'volunteerism' in general and provides a rationale for volunteers in museums. It locates them in the context of museum operations, and discusses the tensions between research and communication, enjoyment and education, the 'contradiction between popularisation and scholarship' and the 'new' need to generate income. These are all pretty familiar

arguments, and the discussion is disappointingly superficial.

The main study was a well organised and methodically researched series of pilot programs, and the book is honest about the outcomes. Those with the Imperial College used students as 'teachers' both at the museum and in classroom visits. They were not successful, due to the difficulties of, for example, matching the school curriculum to the museum's exhibition agenda (a familiar problem to many museum educators), and the disappointment felt by teachers who had high but unmet expectations. The more successful pilots centred around recruiting and training volunteers for special events such as Science Week, or using volunteers to mingle with visitors and help them use the computer-based exhibits — again, a mixed success, owing to low visitor numbers leading to boredom and a high turnover in volunteers.

The book has useful appendices that show examples of volunteer recruitment forms, job descriptions, deployment procedures and other administrative templates. But its greatest strength is its bibliography, and the comprehensive references it cites.

In summary, this is not a 'must read' for museum professionals, but still a valuable contribution to those with an interest in the subject.

CLAIRE DUFFY IS DIRECTOR OF HER OWN CONSULTANCY FIRM, INCONTEXT PL, AND WAS THE INAUGURAL VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR AT THE MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES IN THE EARLY 1980S

**REVIEW** DESMOND KENNARD

## AN INSPIRATION

### *The man who made Beamish: An autobiography*

by Frank Atkinson, Gateshead UK, Northern Books, 1999

*The man who made Beamish* begins with a brief history of open air museums: Sweden's Hazelius, who started Skansen in Stockholm and Norway's Sandvig, who created a museum he called Maihaugen in Lillehammer. Obviously, Frank Atkinson feels that Beamish is entitled to a significant place in the history of open air museums.

My first impressions of the book were coloured by its coffee-table style and size. However, when I sat down to reflect on it, I realised Atkinson is prepared not only to relate his experiences as a museum director, but also to reveal how motivation and strategy brought him to his crowning glory as the director of Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum.

He was a person with a spirit of adventure who seized the opportunity to become involved with museums and to collect industrial artefacts, which few then acknowledged as important.

Readers will appreciate that Beamish is no normal museum, but an industrial archaeology site with many attributes. When I visited in 1977, I thought it was similar to Sovereign Hill, but more mixed: a mining area, a railway station, part of a market town with a row of terrace houses, a farm and Beamish hall housing the administration. At that stage the site was substantially unfinished, though with obvious potential. Tourists were nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 13, 'Why did Beamish succeed?' makes

fascinating reading. Here Atkinson undertakes a self-assessment, warts and all. He readily acknowledges those who assisted him. Despite administrative duties, he continued to be an imaginative and determined director, frankly acknowledging intrigue and administrative short cuts. There are few directors prepared to write in a similar fashion.

Atkinson is a major contributor to 20th century museology and this book is valuable inspiration. Much can be learned from his involvement with media, his appreciation of the marketing of museums and, above all, how he used his powers of persuasion to encourage the Beamish governing body to accept his recommendations.

Kenneth Hudson in the *Good museums guide* (1980) asserts: 'One of Britain's great and truly original museums, Beamish reflects the genius and devotion of its creator.' This reader is convinced that Frank Atkinson is indeed entitled to call his book *The man who made Beamish*.

DESMOND KENNARD IS A HERITAGE/MUSEUM CONSULTANT. AMONG A CAREER OF MANY SENIOR POSITIONS, HE WAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOVEREIGN HILL, BALLARAT

**REVIEW** MICHAEL PICKERING

## A USEFUL 'CONSCIENCE' READ

### *Making early histories in museums*

edited by Nick Merriman, London, Leicester University Press, 1999

This title says it all. The book covers issues, technologies and the periods of representation. European, particularly UK, early history



is, naturally, the centre of attention with articles on Romans, early Anglo-Saxons, 'Early Persons' (PC for Early Man) dioramas, and Iron Age villages. Several chapters appraise exhibitions in Britain.

*Making early histories* is a collection of ten articles (plus an intro) addressing the theories and methods of displaying archaeology in a museum context. The articles emerged from a conference held in 1995. The result is a tendency to superficiality and repetition.

Perhaps the book's real attraction is the empathy it generates. It's hard not to feel a common bond with museum people suffering the same problems you do. The various authors all identify inadequate funding, inadequate space, inadequate staffing, unfair criticisms, the need to cater to the 'buyers' market', and inadequate miscellaneous resources as a major obstacle to quality displays. They bemoan that they never get to do any research into the collections. They're all plagued by that post-modernist 'stuff' in which the researcher is made to feel guilty for imposing his/her culturally determined, obviously biased, interpretations.

If, after a frustrating week at work, you want reassurance that you're not alone, this book is for you.

Should you read it? Yes. It's a useful 'conscience' read, providing a sort of summary review of what is happening in (British) museums. Should you (an Australian reader) buy this book? No, most of us would probably be better off buying an essential reference book. But get your institution library to buy it (if the money's there).

DR MICHAEL PICKERING, HEAD CURATOR, INDIGENOUS CULTURES PROGRAM, MUSEUM VICTORIA

REVIEW PAUL TAÇON

## PACKED FULL OF IDEAS

### *Unpacking culture: Art and commodity in colonial and postcolonial worlds*

edited by Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999



Boomerang with engraved ceremonial scene made for sale about 1940, attributed to Davey Ryan, Flinders Ranges, SA, acquired by the Australian Museum in 1998 (E92370) Courtesy Paul S.C. Taçon/Australian Museum

*Unpacking culture* is a long-overdue volume, a 'must read' for all museum curators concerned with objects and material culture — a shining example of the best of postcolonial studies. Editors Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner are respectively museum director and professor of art history, an ideal pair for breaking down the boundaries between art, ethnographic object, commodity and craft.

With their extensive experience in the indigenous arts of North America and Africa the editors have a broad base of material culture studies. The book also contains case studies from Pacific Island nations and Asia, serving as a general guide to postcolonial material culture studies worldwide. It is a shame there are no Australian examples (something a number of us hope to address in a future volume), but its wealth of material is both fascinating and exciting. Analogies can

easily be drawn from any of the case studies to inform local work.

The book's rationale was sparked by Nelson Graburn's landmark volume *Ethnic and tourist arts: Cultural expressions from the fourth world* (1976). Here the topic of how to better interpret and classify ethnic arts in the modern world was explored in depth for the first time. A generation of ethnographers and curators was influenced by this remarkable work, but exactly how and in what ways? This is what Phillips and Steiner set out to explore with an outstanding collaborative introductory essay combined with 18 individual papers by art historians, indigenous peoples, ethnographers, museum curators and themselves. Finally, they commissioned an epilogue by Graburn himself.

Graburn's piece is particularly insightful, packed full of ideas, retrospective glances and intriguing personal history. Although situated at the end of the book, I couldn't help reading it first! It was fascinating to learn of the incredible journey that led to the publication of *Ethnic and tourist arts* and to be reminded that 'We now realise that practically all the objects in our ethnographic collections were acquired in politically complex, multicultural colonial situations.' Indeed, there are almost no pieces that were collected otherwise. Yet we often fool ourselves into thinking that much was somehow acquired in a pristine cultural vacuum, unaffected by the nature of the collecting encounter. Most, if not all, of what we find in museums today was obtained as a result of an intricate sociopolitical situation, with both sides participating as opportunists, decisionmakers

and actors responding to changing circumstance.

I also enjoyed Phillips' and Steiner's introduction, with gems such as 'No longer treatable as distinct and separate categories, the art-artefact-commodity triad must now be merged into a single domain where the categories are seen to inform one another rather than to compete in their claims for social primacy and cultural value.' It gives me new encouragement to advance my work on Indigenous Australian material from the south-east.

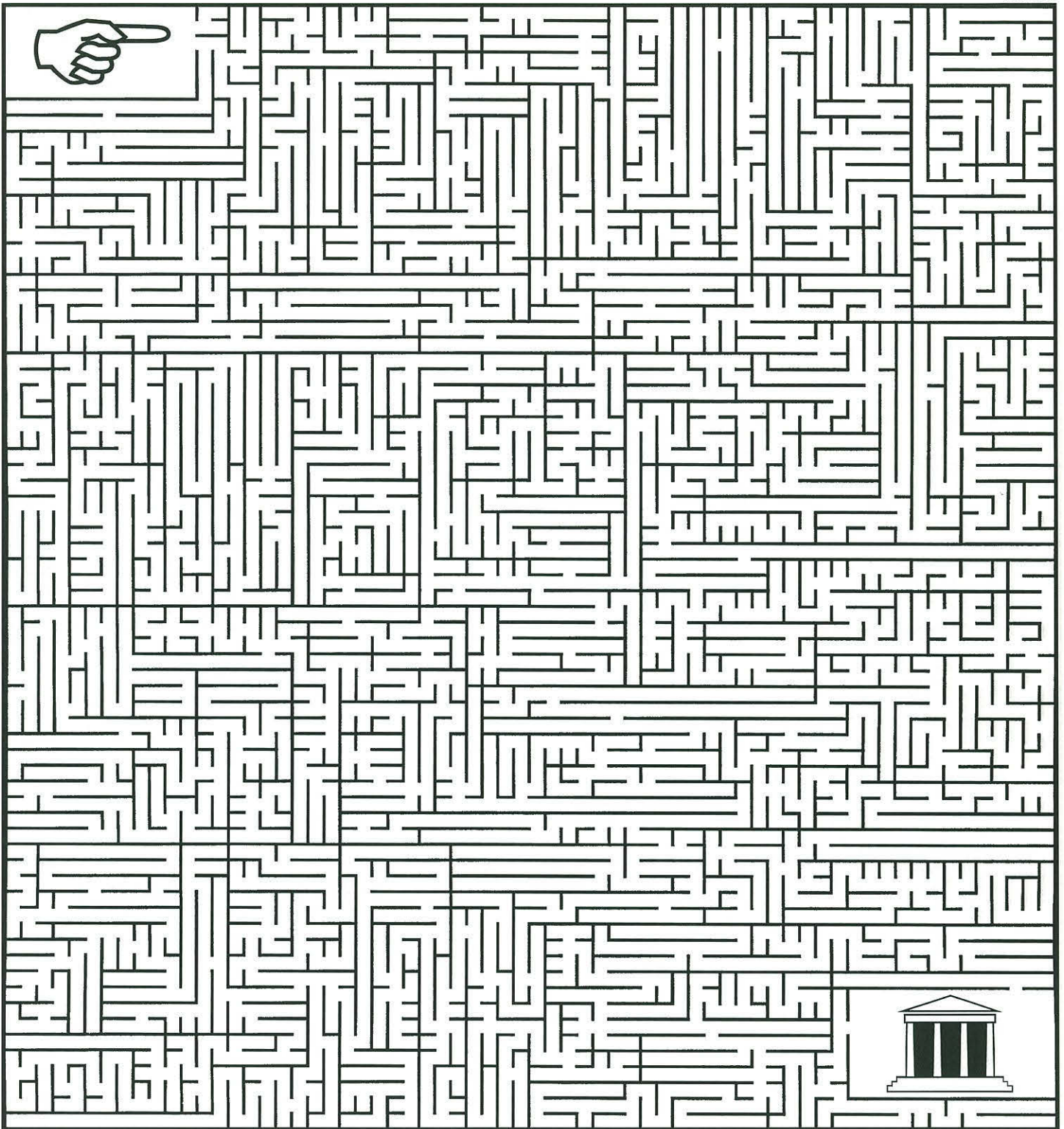
As a whole, *Unpacking culture* is extremely strong. Although half the papers were originally presented at a 1993 conference, the book is not a conference proceedings volume, with associated quality and patchiness problems. On the contrary, this is one of the most outstanding collections I have read in a long time.

The sixfold division of the chapters doesn't always work and section headings are not really indicative of content, but perhaps this is the crux of the problem Phillips and Steiner emphasise: that rigid boundaries and divisions between various material cultures do not validly exist. I highly recommend this wonderful book to anyone working with or collecting ethnic objects. You'll be both surprised and entertained!

DR PAUL TAÇON IS HEAD OF THE PEOPLE AND PLACE RESEARCH CENTRE, AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

See *Museum National* online at [www.museumsaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au) for more reviews





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### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

#### Maritime

The Maritime SIG is planning to hold its conference at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney, November 10–11, in tandem with a Batavia Dutch East Indies Festival. One day is planned for museum collections management and development issues, and the other for boats, ships and conservation, and 'philosophical discussion'. Contact Daina Fletcher: email [daina@anmm.gov.au](mailto:daina@anmm.gov.au)

#### Historians

The Historians' conference committee is planning a conference/meeting to coincide with the Museums Australia conference to be held in Canberra in April 2001. The theme is 'History after Howard'. Contact Viv Szekeres: fax (08) 8207 7591, email [vszekeres@history.sa.gov.au](mailto:vszekeres@history.sa.gov.au)

### CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

#### 14th Australian international education conference

August 8–11, Brisbane, Queensland  
Contact the secretariat: phone (07) 9373 2720, email [conference@idp.edu.au](mailto:conference@idp.edu.au)

#### Museums & Galleries Foundation of NSW 2000 program

August 11–13, Bathurst  
September 1–2, Port Macquarie  
Contact Mirah Lambert: phone (02) 9358 1760, email [mgfnsw@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mgfnsw@ozemail.com.au)

#### Local government community development 2000 conference: Challenges and opportunities

August 16–18, Kohuna Beach Resort, Mackay, Queensland  
Contact Mackay City Council: phone (07) 4968 4451, fax (07) 3250 1264 or email [ceo@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:ceo@mackay.qld.gov.au)

#### Beyond the screen: Capturing corporate and social memory

Australian Society of Archivists annual conference

August 17–19, Dallas Brooks Convention Centre, Melbourne  
Contact David Brown: phone (03) 9890 3530, email [archsyst@ozemail.com.au](mailto:archsyst@ozemail.com.au)

#### Small museums: Their role and their future

August 19–20, Redland Museum, Cleveland, Queensland  
Contact Tom Baird: phone (07) 3286 3494, fax (07) 3286 9579, email [museum@redland.net.au](mailto:museum@redland.net.au)

#### Summit 2000: National regional galleries conference

August 22–25, Mildura Arts Centre, Mildura  
Contact Ian Hamilton: phone (03) 5032 3734, email [ianh@mildura.vic.gov.au](mailto:ianh@mildura.vic.gov.au)

#### The National Trust into the new millennium

August 23–29, Alice Springs  
Contact Christine Debono: phone (02) 6247 6766, fax (02) 6249 1385, email [acnt@spirit.com.au](mailto:acnt@spirit.com.au)

#### Maintaining our culture: The treasures and wisdom conference

August 30–September 1, Mirambeena Resort, Darwin  
Contact Indigenous Conference Services Australia: phone (07) 4945 7122, email [icsa2@bigpond.net.au](mailto:icsa2@bigpond.net.au)

#### Habitus 2000: A sense of place conference

September 5–9, School of Architecture, Construction and Planning, Curtin University of Technology, WA  
Contact Promaco Conventions: phone (08) 9332 2900, fax (08) 9332 2911

#### Tradition and innovation: Advances in conservation

IIC 18th International Congress  
October 10–14, Melbourne  
Contact Julian Bickersteth: phone (02) 9417 3311, fax (02) 9417 3102, email [j.bickersteth@ibm.net.au](mailto:j.bickersteth@ibm.net.au)

#### Reality bites: Providing solutions

4th national remote regional museums conference  
October 18–20, Griffith, Queensland  
Contact Jo Seczowski: [joannaseczkowski@ausi.com](mailto:joannaseczkowski@ausi.com)

#### Creating waves: Regional arts, a powerful force

October 27–30, Esperance, Western Australia  
Contact Yvonne Holland: phone (08) 9481 0077, fax (08) 9481 0477, email [conference@cartswa.asn.au](mailto:conference@cartswa.asn.au)

#### Cyberhate: Bigotry and prejudice on the Internet

November 5–6, Sydney (venue to be announced)  
Contact Herbert & Valmae Freilich Foundation, Humanities Research Centre, ANU: phone (02) 6249 5527

#### Human rights, human wrongs: Bigotry, government and social change in Australia 1950–2000

November 10–12, Humanities Research Centre  
Contact: phone (02) 6249 5527

#### Museums Australia 2001 national conference

April 23–25, 2001, Canberra  
Preliminary planning is underway for this national conference. The topic is still under discussion and is most likely to focus on heritage collections in Australia's museums and galleries and their significance to the nation's culture and national identity.

#### First Australian regional galleries summit

April, 2001  
Contact Martin Thiele, Global Arts Project/Public Galleries Association of Victoria: phone (03) 9534 6508, email [gap@gap.net.au](mailto:gap@gap.net.au)

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

#### ICOM/MPR 2000

International Committee for Marketing & Public Relations  
September 17–22, Nippon Convention Center, Chiba (Tokyo), Japan  
Visit Chiba Convention Bureau at [www.sphere.ad.jp/ccb/](http://www.sphere.ad.jp/ccb/) or ICOM/MPR at [www.icom.org/mpr](http://www.icom.org/mpr)

#### 14th ICA conference: Archives of the information society in the new millennium

September 22–28, Spain  
Contact International Council on Archives: email [100640.54@compuserve.com](mailto:100640.54@compuserve.com), visit [www.archives.ca/ica](http://www.archives.ca/ica)

#### Twentieth century museum buildings: Conservation and collections

Fourth APT/AIC symposium on museums in historic buildings  
October 8–10, Philadelphia USA  
Contact Dr Thomas H Taylor Jr: fax +1 757 220 7787, email [ttaylor@widomaker.com](mailto:ttaylor@widomaker.com)

#### ICOM/CECA conference: Culture as commodity

October 29 to November 3, Christchurch, New Zealand  
Contact David Demant, Museum Victoria: email [ddemant@mov.vic.gov.au](mailto:ddemant@mov.vic.gov.au)  
Visit [www.conference.co.nz/ICOM](http://www.conference.co.nz/ICOM) or [www.mcdougall.org.nz/icomceca2000](http://www.mcdougall.org.nz/icomceca2000), phone 64 3 379 0390, fax 64 3 379 0490

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Historic interiors and gardens course

A six-week specialist course presented by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW  
August 1 to September 5, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney  
Contact: phone (02) 9518 6866

Visit Museums Australia's web site for updates and news at [www.museumsaustralia.org.au](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au)

**\* Deadline for entries to November's Noticeboard is October 1. Space is limited and inclusion isn't guaranteed. While due care is taken in compiling Noticeboard, notification of changes to details and programming remains the responsibility of organisations and contributors.**



## AND ANOTHER THING ...



**BE A SPORT ... BUY A QUILT**  
Quilts2000 is an officially endorsed fundraising project for the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. 650 quilts have been made and donated by over 2000 Australian quiltmakers. The collection is now for sale.

The quilts have been on display at venues around Australia during 2000 including the Australian Institute of Sport, Parliament House, Grafton Regional Gallery, Orange Regional Gallery and Fairfield City Museum and Gallery. The entire collection will be on show at Sydney Olympic Park during the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games, October 18–29.

For more information phone (02) 9499 3365 or see [www.Quilts2000.org.au](http://www.Quilts2000.org.au)

Left: At the launch of the Quilts2000 project February 1999 Donna Richie (left), Mary-Ann Danaher (Craft Editor, *Australian Women's Weekly*) and Margaret Wright (Chair, Quilts2000)  
Photograph courtesy Quilts2000



'Bondi pool', Sydney by Bianca Jokeikin, age 16  
Photograph reproduced courtesy Australian Museum

### MAKE YOUR MARK

What is a landmark? Is it an historical structure or building? Is it something that gives a sense of comfort, belonging, identity?

In a new exhibition at the Australian Museum 65 young people from six international cities and aged between 11 and 19 years respond photographically and verbally to defining their landmark. In *Landmarks for the 21st century* these 80 black and white photographic images form part of the Olympic Arts Festival.

*Landmarks for the 21st century*, August 11–October 29, Australian Museum Atrium



Carl Bento Australian Museum

### ADIEU ROB JOYNER

Rob Joyner, head of exhibitions at the Australian Museum, has taken a long planned early retirement after 22 years at the museum.

During those two decades Rob has presided over the delivery of over 200 individual exhibition projects ranging from semi-permanent gallery renewals to a wide variety of temporary exhibitions.

He now looks forward to more time travelling with his wife Vicki and looking after their small property in the Upper Hunter region of NSW.

### MUSICAL CHAIRS

The National Gallery of Australia has now finalised its management structure. Some new appointments are as follows:

- Dr Deborah Hart as senior curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture
- Elena Taylor as curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture
- Robert Bell as curator of Decorative Arts
- Dr Anthony White as curator of International Paintings and Sculpture, to begin this month, and
- Dr Jörg Zutter as head of International Art, to begin in December.

### → CONTRIBUTE

**And another thing ...** loves to know what's going on in museums and galleries. Send your contributions to the editor. Write, fax, email.

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# Going to Extremes

George Silk, photojournalist

12 August – 12 November



■ national gallery of **australia**  
[www.nga.gov.au](http://www.nga.gov.au)

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George Silk Gunhild Larhking, Swedish high jumper, Olympic Games, Melbourne 1956  
gelatin silver photograph collection of the artist © Time Inc



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