In June, after almost a decade of strategic thinking and campaigning, the University was awarded a $48 million Educational Investment Fund to redevelop the COFA infrastructure. Receiving the funding was the highlight of the year.

Over the next three years, the College will build state-of-the-art computer and digital imaging labs, painting and design studios, and multipurpose exhibition spaces that open onto Oxford Street. COFA will become one of the most discipline-specific and equipped creative institutions in the Southern Hemisphere. The lateral thinking of students and the public in the new COFA teaching and exhibiting spaces.

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Contents

From the Editor  
Nick Waterlow Remembered by Ian Howard & Alan Krell  
3K Radius What’s on around town  
The Next Chapter of the Ivan Dougherty Gallery  
Nick Waterlow’s Top Ten  
IDG Tributes to Nick Waterlow  
Reinstating the C Word Susan Cohn  
Aussie Arts in Birmingham  
Gum Trunks, Dogs and more  
The Fab Adventures of Bababa  
A Yellow House of One’s Own  
The Face Behind the Art Life  
The Storehouse of Video Art History  
Art & War  
The Halo Effect Video Art Wins the Blake  
Still Simpatico After All These Years  
The Art of Evolution  
2009 Annual Award Night Winners  

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All this in anticipation of a much larger gallery space opening up at the Oxford Street end of the campus by 2012. The impact upon COFA is both professional and personal. Nick had long been a champion for the redevelopment of our Paddington campus, the new art museum being the flagship of the development. We had worked on the design, sought funding, for longer than I care to remember and it all came together by mid 2009 with a start up in 2010 and completion by 2012. Nick and his work were on a role. And what a delightful future there was for this young 60+ year old. Vast and unique experience, a mastery of his curatorial trade, a national and international reputation to draw upon, ground, mature, yet ever provocative ideas, and finally at last a gallery setting of sufficient scale to do it all proud.

Of course Nick Waterlow’s legacy at COFA is broad and deep. His ideas and work, through the leadership position he held, and the countless art administration students he taught, will continue to be acutely effective for now and, I expect, remain in place for generations. Condolences and tributes we have received since Nick’s death have come from friends, artists, professionals in the field and students. Some knew him for decades, others only through a brief but always supportive encounter, all testifying to his deep belief in people and the power of art to demonstrate, exult and ennoble our individual and collective humanity.

For the time being, I impose limits upon my personal remorse by thinking of Nick’s partner, family members and close friends, knowing how impossible it must be for them. A relief eases through which I got on with the important work that now needs to be done, repeating to myself, “This is what Nick would have wanted. I am sure!” I know that such feelings and reactions are commonplace amongst staff and students at COFA, but I also suspect that as for me, the deep sadness returns.

Don’t Trust the Artist, was the IDG’s last. I would pay tribute to the distinguished contribution the Ivan Dougherty Gallery has made to the artistic and cultural life of Sydney and to the artistic and cultural life of Sydney and tribute to the distinguished contribution the Ivan Dougherty Gallery has made to the artistic and cultural life of Sydney and tribute to the distinguished contribution the Ivan Dougherty Gallery has made to the artistic and cultural life of Sydney and

Alan Kriel
FRIEND & COFA ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
Nick Waterlow was a very close and dear friend. He was also, of course, a colleague, an art curator and writer, and Director of the Ivan Dougherty Gallery (IDG). Nick - eccentric, mad dancer, lover of the English cricket team, bachelor of all Australian equivalent. Dear Nick, bon vivant, raconteur and wit.

Together with his radiant Chloe, doting mother of three, and their three children. I say ‘interview’ Nick. Silly me! With the cameras rolling, Nick, poker-faced, put me, the novice, in his place. That was the start of a beautiful friendship.

The Waterlow house in Kirribilli was lovely in a rambling way. From upstairs you could see the sea. There we would often watch cricket on TV – always barracking for England to win over Australia. Our shared passion continued up until his death, and often took the form of minor wagers with one or two people at COFA who must remain nameless. Nick also loved rugby, union of course, and was quite happy on occasions to cheer on the Australian team: no simple Oz basher, he. I remember once flying with him to Melbourne to see the Old Dart play a night game. What a fun time we had! He was such delightful company: eager, energetic, mischievous and funny, oh, always funny, qualities that sitting next to him on a long flight to visit Documenta at Kassel, took on new meanings: he was meticulous, waving things carefully around on his tray, putting ‘this’ alongside ‘that’. He also had the habit, inviting for some while for others. I count myself among the former, of cleaning up: he would immediately zero in on an unsuspecting broadbrum, grabbing it with a determination and a relish that was wonderful to behold. Pity the poor speck.

Nick loved swimming; and for a 68 year-old, he was in pretty good nick. At the family’s other home at Whale Beach, where I would sometimes spend weekends, nothing gave him more pleasure than wallowing down the road to the beach, going for a dip, and body-surfing. With his grey hair wet and stuck to his balding head, and his bather glued to his groin, he cut a mean figure. As he did when dancing with his filmmaker partner of the last ten years, Juliet Darling.

Nick listened attentively when you spoke, sometimes cocking his head slightly to one side and looking at you with what may best be described as a mixture of fascination and disbelief. He was, by nature, curious. He didn’t always smile – why should he?

When he did, however, and especially when he laughed, his eyes sparkled and his body jerked: it was a thoroughly physical affair, and it was contagious. Standing, Nick had this charming characteristic: bending his knees, ever so slightly, he would rock back and forth on his heels, ever so slightly. It is thus that I would like to remember him: part elder statesperson, part philosopher, all rolling into one.

Little did we know that the magazine would also pay homage to the life and work of Ivan Dougherty Gallery Director, Nick Waterlow. Nick’s tragic, untimely death has shaken all of us at COFA. As the Dean of a large art and design college, on occasions when things just happen. They belie reason and lay beyond our real and worst staff and students in a philosophic way, “Well, sometimes these things just happen.” But such terrible, terrible things as the death of Nick Waterlow and his daughter, Chloe, don’t “just happen”. They belie reason and lay beyond our real and worst staff and students in a philosophic way, “Well, sometimes these things just happen.” But such terrible, terrible things as the death of Nick Waterlow and his daughter, Chloe, don’t “just happen”. They belie reason and lay beyond our real and worst

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Photography, Identity and Play

In this group show, Eric Bridgeman (Australia) presents an audiovisual project by artist Craig Walsh, with designer Lawrence English, programmer/3D animator Steven Thomason and composer/sound designer Al Aldor. The exhibition showcases Eliasson’s eclectic projects by this contemporary Danish artist. The exhibition presents Eliasson’s site-specific art, including installations, large scale immersive environments, freestanding sculptures and projection mapping. Eliasson spent part of his childhood in Iceland. He sees the dramatic weather and spectacular landscape of that country as a source of inspiration which he translates into light-filled immersive environments such as walk-in kaleidoscopes.

MIND GAMES
Photography, Identity and Play

JANUARY 29–MARCH 6

In this group show, Eric Bridgeman (Australia) presents an audiovisual project by artist Craig Walsh, with designer Lawrence English, programmer/3D animator Steven Thomason and composer/sound designer Al Aldor. The exhibition showcases Eliasson’s eclectic projects by this contemporary Danish artist. The exhibition presents Eliasson’s site-specific art, including installations, large scale immersive environments, freestanding sculptures and projection mapping. Eliasson spent part of his childhood in Iceland. He sees the dramatic weather and spectacular landscape of that country as a source of inspiration which he translates into light-filled immersive environments such as walk-in kaleidoscopes.

CONSTRUCTED PAINTING

MARCH 2–13

Constructed Painting is a site specific painting and drawing project. Piaa Geyer, Rosanna Martinez, Francesca Martaga, Margaret Roberts respond to Kudm Gallery using line, colour and space. Material, who curated the show and is completing her PhD at COFA, presents objects and compositions that are intended as 3D paintings. Geyer uses coloured paints to construct grid like installations. Roberts uses site specific drawings to interact with what she calls ‘found architecture’. Martinez responds to site through movement as well as private collections.

FIONA TAN
Coming Home

MARCH 19–JUNE 12

Ogilivised by Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF), in partnership with the National Art School (NAS), Coming Home is a combination of two exhibitions by Amsterdam-based Australian artist Fiona Tan. Dismantling, at SCAF, is an audiovisual installation conceived specifically for the 2009 Venice Biennale. Tan presents her 2007 work, A Lapse of Memory, a large vitrine that appears to be moving and breathing. The artwork constantly changes as it feeds on an information rich digital diet which includes videos and sound files from the Museum’s own collection, other public collections as well as private collections. At NAS Gallery, Together, these stunning visual narratives consider the concept of narratives and stories, and space. Mataraga, who curated the exhibition, is a site of performance and painting.

ARTEFACT
H10515

UNTIL AUGUST

Artefact H10515 is a digital ‘life form’ that mutates and evolves in response to online input. Created by artist Craig Walsh, with programmer/3D animator Steven Thomason and composers/sound designer Lawrence English, Artefact H10515 is encased within a large vitrine and appears to be moving and breathing. The artwork constantly changes as it feeds on an information rich digital diet which includes videos and sound files from the Museum’s own collection, other public collections as well as private collections.

TATZU NISHI
War and Peace and in Between

UNTIL FEBRUARY 14

Japanese artist Tatsumo Nishi uses artistic interventions in public spaces under several假名 de plumes including Tatsumo Nishi, Tatsumo Ono and Tatsumo Bash. In Sydney, as Tatsumo Nish, he has transformed the AGNSW’s two bronze equestrian sculptures by Gilbert Bayse into surreal tableaux by constructing domestic spaces around them. In Nish’s War and Peace and in Between the verdigris covered head and shoulders of the 1923 sculpture, The Offerings of Peace, poke out of a coffee table, while next door the entire horse and rider of The Offerings of War appear to leap out of two double beds.

JEFF MINCHAM
Ceramics

UNTIL JANUARY 31

Ceramist Jeff Mincham is the latest Australian craftsperson to be honoured by the Living Treasures: Masters of Australian Craftsmanship exhibition and monographs. Mincham is known for his large scale vessels and for experimentation with surface textures and firing techniques. Curator Sandra Brown describes Mincham as “one of Australia’s iconic potters.” His work has been collected by major national public institutions including: The National Gallery of Australia, The National Gallery of Victoria and the Powerhouse Museum.

TAKE YOUR TIME
Olafur Eliasson

UNTIL APRIL 11

Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson is the first Australian survey of projects by this contemporary Danish artist. The exhibition showcases Eliasson’s eclectic projects from 1999 to the present, including installations, large scale immersive environments, freestanding sculpture, and projection mapping. Eliasson spent part of his childhood in Iceland. He sees the dramatic weather and spectacular landscape of that country as a source of inspiration which he translates into light-filled immersive environments such as walk-in kaleidoscopes.

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ARTGALLERYOFNSW
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ALP H MINCHAM

STEEL, COLOUR EFFECT ACRYLIC
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 2006.
COURTESY THE ARTIST.

JEFF M INCHAM

D RYL AK E, 2009,
EARTHENWARE, 25 x 40 CM (DIA).
OF THE ART SUPPORTING FOUNDATION TO THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART. © 2007 OLAFUR E LIASSON. PHOTO: PAUL ZIDLER. COURTESY OF OLAFUR E LIASSON.

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www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au

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In 2009, Micheala Gleave, won a Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship of $18,000 to further her studies overseas. Gleave also exhibited in Primavera 2009, the MCA’s annual prestigious showcase of Aussie artists under 35, alongside fellow COFA alumnus Wade Marynowsky.

MICHEALA GLEAVE, MASTER OF FINE ARTS, COFA UNSW, 2005.
After more than three decades, the Ivan Dougherty Gallery (IDG) closed its doors for the last time on November 28, 2009. It will re-emerge in a couple of years as COFA’s new state-of-the-art gallery, an important part of the campus redevelopment.

It seems as though the IDG has always been here. Before the Museum of Contemporary Art, and before the rise of ARIs, Sydney had the IDG. Since its inception in 1977, the gallery has hosted over 300 exhibitions displaying the work of some 1500 artists. In this time, the IDG developed an enviable reputation as one of Australia’s most serious independent exhibition spaces for contemporary art, design and new media.

In the words of Ken Reinhard, the first Dean of COFA, the IDG venue was designed as a resource for staff and students to “foreground aspects of practice from the College to the general public as well as to address art forms and ideas not necessarily part of existing gallery systems”. In many ways, the IDG paralleled the models of New York University’s Grey Art Gallery, the Royal College of Art Gallery London and the Ewing and George Patton Gallery at Melbourne University. In an interview just days before his tragic death, Nick Waterlow, IDG Director from 1991-2009, added that over its 30-year lifetime, the IDG “has become a vital space for experimentation, research and dialogue. It is an arena for asking questions often too difficult for other art or cultural institutions”.

A key element in the success of the IDG was its interdisciplinary, inter-institutional frameworks and links to other cultural organisations, whether it be major community festivals, such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, the Sydney Olympics or the Biennale of Sydney. Responsive and proactive programming generating exhibitions for national and international tours, or the hosting of significant touring exhibitions from other sources, also contributed to the IDG’s high profile within the Australian art world. The establishment of major research centres associated with COFA, such as the Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics (CCAP), the International Drawing Research Institute (IDRI) and Cicada Press, provided new energy focus and input for the gallery space. The IDG complemented these activities with extensive publications and public programs, such as conferences and symposia, that further extend community, national and international networks.

It was hard to pin Waterlow down on his favourite exhibitions at the gallery. As he pointed out, “There are so many key events and exhibitions at the IDG.” However when pressed, he admits he particularly enjoyed the future Turner Prize winner, Martin Creed and his band Owada when they performed at COFA as part of the 1998 Biennale of Sydney: Every Day. He also took great pleasure in the solo exhibition, The Legendary Lee Miller (1999), which revealed the unique strength of one artist’s pursuit and gained wide public and critical support.

Waterlow also cites the importance of the 1990 exhibition A Sense Of Place, curated by the previous IDG Director, Louise Peeler, in which the juxtaposition of the angst-ridden existentialism of Colin McCahon and Rosalie Gascoigne’s mischievous disruptions was “extraordinary”. High on Waterlow’s list was Papunya Tjupi: A New Beginning in 2007. COFA Global Professor Vivien Johnson curated this show to foreground new art from the Central Desert and to raise funds for art workshops and facilities to encourage further generations of indigenous artists based at Papunya. COFA’s Cicada Press was instrumental in the successful realisation of this project.

Larrakia In London, 2003, had strong personal associations for Waterlow. As an exhibition, it brought together the two hemispheres of the ex-pat Englishman’s life. It celebrated long-lasting personal and artistic relationships and their effects within Australian art and culture. However, Waterlow gave the highest praise to an exhibition from 1993, curated by lan Burn. Looking at seeing and reading brought together an exciting range of Australian and international artists, from Narelle Jubelin to Jasper Johns. Waterlow stated that the show was memorable “because of its sophisticated examination of how perception is altered by the processes of looking. The exhibition also encapsulated lan Burn’s own influences and ideas that have since permeated a generation of Australian artists. The exhibition was made more poignant in the true sense of the word by the untimely death of lan Burn during the exhibition”.

The long and dynamic existence of the IDG underlines the vital role universities can play in exploring and encouraging cultural production and research on the broadest possible front. With such a rich heritage to draw upon, it will be exciting to see just how the IDG is transformed into COFA’s new international standard exhibition space for design, new media, Indigenous, contemporary and historical art.

Craig Jewell
Nick Waterlow’s top 10 greatest hits from the IDG

looking at seeing and reading (1993)

was curated by Ian Burn. It brought together an extraordinary range of Australian and international artists from Narelle Jubelin to Jasper Johns. It was a sophisticated examination of how perception is altered by the processes of looking and a powerful reiteration and reinterpretation of the minimalist and post conceptualist concerns.

TOP: Peter Tyndall, A Person Looks at a Work of Art / someone looks at something (detail).

BETWEEN LEFT: Mel Ramsden, Secret Painting, 1967-68.

BETWEEN RIGHT: Ad Reinhardt, Untitled, 1960s.

was a personal journey for curator Nick Waterlow and a celebration of networks and connections consisting of works made from the 1960s to the 1990s, from agit-prop, street level eruptions and activism to the high art mediations of Whiteley and Nolan. The show revealed the radical positions of artists and how their vision effected developments in Australian art.
opposite top
Martin Sharp, The Magic Theatre,
october 1968.

opposite bottom

above
Spare Rib Office
(Marsha Rowe third from left),

below left
Spare Rib
No 1, July 1972, cover photo
by Angela Phillips.

below right
Spare Rib
No 2, August 1972, cover
by Louise Ferrier. Photo Bob Mazzer.
opposite Rolf Harris as Jake the Peg, 1965. Photo Tony Cordwell.


TOP RIGHT Philippe Mora, Da Corner, 1968.


Papunya Tjupi: A New Beginning (2007)

was an exciting inter-generational exhibition, revealing the heritage and energy of younger artists. A fundraiser for a new arts centre at Papunya, it was the result of an important ongoing collaboration between Papunya Tjupi and COFA offering artists professional development and the stimulation of working with print media through the support of Cicada Press.

Minnie Nelson, Sandhills and Bush Tomatoes at Kampurrarpa, 2007, acrylic on linen, 61 x 55cm. Photo Sue Blackburn.

Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra, Rain Dreaming with Lightning, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 183 x 153cm. Photo Sue Blackburn.
was curated by David Elliot, Artistic Director of the 2010 Biennale of Sydney. It focused on moving image and projected artworks and explored the spiritual aspects of time and ritual. It was designed as a taste of the type of connections and juxtapositions that will be in the 2010 exhibition and continued the strong connections between the IDG and the Biennale of Sydney.

**Opposite Above and Below**

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, *Conversation*, video installation, 5 videos, duration 12 minutes, 2005.

**Right**


**The Quick and the Dead**

(2009)
was curated by Jill Bennett, Director of CCAP, Felicity Fenner and Liam Kelly. This exhibition was a timely and tough examination of the deep trauma and ramifications of the postcolonial experience. Artists such as Willy Doherty, Destiny Deacon and William Kentridge re-presented and explored amongst other issues, the ‘troubles’ of Northern Ireland, apartheid, and the Stolen Generation. This show built on the 1998 international touring exhibition, Telling Tales, curated by Jill Bennett and Jackie Dunn that spoke of the role of trauma in everyday life.
was part of a suite of exhibitions generated the School of Design at COFA. This first exhibition, curated by Liz Williamson, explored the interconnections and crossovers between 15 international and Australian artists who work with the intersections of design, art and new craft. Very popular with the general public, this suite of exhibitions filled a significant absence within the Australian art world.
was curated by Associate Professor Paula Dawson and John Gage. Together they created an exciting history of the use of light illusion effects from classical times. The exhibition, which featured Dawson’s own invention, the world’s largest hologram (pictured), was an intriguing counterpoint to the ubiquitous embrace of the virtual world and other immersive devices.
was curated by Nick Waterlow and Annabel Pegus. The exhibition revealed and represented a historical moment in 1919, the Australian advent of non-objective abstraction, which was so radical for its contemporary audience that it was largely forgotten. A significant exercise in historical research and restitution, this exhibition toured Victoria and Queensland.
opposite
Roy de Maistre,
The boat sheds, in violet red key 1919, oil on wood, 32.5 cm x 20.5 cm, Private Collection.

above
Roy de Maistre,
Syncromy, Berry's Bay 1919, oil on plywood, 25.4 cm x 34.9 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, The Joseph Brown Collection. Presented through the NGV Foundation by Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004.

bottom left
Roy de Maistre,
Waterfront, Sydney Harbour 1918-1919, oil on canvas, 48.5 cm x 41.0 cm, Alan Boxer Collection, Canberra, Photo David Reid.

bottom right
Roland Wakelin,
On Ball's Head 1919, oil on board, 22.9 cm x 28.5 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, The Joseph Brown Collection. Presented through the NGV Foundation by Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004.
Liberation Feet (2008) was curated by Michael Esson, founder of the International Drawing Research Institute. The exhibition showed the breadth and energy of drawing practice in China and highlighted how artists have embraced liberation from their initial training, history and narrative. It featured artists who have mastered bravura illusionist techniques, as well as those who questioned the nature of mark-making, writing and reception.

OPPOSITE Luo Brothers, Family Name Primer, Manly Character Name Series, 1992-3, ink on paper, 88.5 x 59 cm. Courtesy Ray Hughes Gallery. Photo Sue Blackburn.


Into the Future

Over the next few years, the COFA campus will radically change. Pictured above are images of the new COFA. One is an architectural drawing of the new gallery and cafe, which will open on to Oxford Street in Paddington, and second is a sketch of the campus layout, featuring a central courtyard flanked by a 5-story teaching block and a 4-story lecture hall and administration block. The new campus will give students, staff, visiting artists and designers greater opportunities to work in creative capacities. It will also provide the public with a new, state-of-the-art exhibition venue.

Stay tuned for more information on the development. Or visit http://future.cofa.unsw.edu.au/

Body Language:

Art, sport and the cyber conversation (2000)

was curated by Felicity Fenner and comprised artists who questioned the body operating within entirely different frameworks to the ubiquity of the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The exhibition asked, what occurs inside and outside the body? The show juxtaposed Rosemary Laing’s elegant aerial works with the clunky and slightly ominous prosthetics of Stelarc, the literally elusive imagery of Paula Dawson and interactive new media works by John Hughes.

IDG at large (2010-11)

In 2010 and 2011, while the new COFA UNSW Gallery is being built, the Ivan Dougherty Gallery will organise a number of exhibitions in venues around Sydney. To find out more about these and other COFA exhibitions, please visit www.cofa.unsw.edu.au.

ABOVE Architect’s internal sketch of COFA’s new gallery and teaching area.

BELOW Architect’s impression of the new COFA entrance (including café and gallery) from Oxford Street by Architectus (converted into 3D image).


BOTTOM Artist’s impression of the new COFA entrance (including café and gallery) from Oxford Street by Architectus (converted into 3D image).

IDG at large (2010-11)

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Ivan Dougherty Gallery

STAFF TRIBUTES TO NICK WATERLOW

FELICITY FENNER

Senior Curator, IDG

Nick valued innovative and non-conformist approaches to curating, underpinned by knowledge and ideas. Curators were expected to come up with original proposals and Nick was our chief sounding board. He always invited input to all exhibition planning, frequently calling a “brainstorming” meeting to share ideas. When he wanted to talk one-on-one, we’d head to Berkelouw Books cafe or The Shop on the corner, their large communal tables stimulating the discussion beyond the familiar backdrop of Ivan Dougherty Gallery.

Close friendships were forged within the COFA community. He relished dinner invitations to Fae Brauer’s house when the jacaranda was in flower, and loved to watch the cricket on weekends with Alan Krell. The only time I saw him looking smug was just a few months ago when England won the Ashes and he collected winnings from regular COFA betting mates Denis Cooper and Michael Kempson. The COFA community’s fondness for Nick was reciprocated on many levels. Recently faced with the choice between attending the Harrovian dinner for the Australian alumni of his posh English school, he chose the former without a second thought.

By his consistent example, he encouraged us to the highest standards of personal and professional interaction. Our last assignment was to propose an exhibition. Nick accepted mine, ‘Terra Alterius: Land of Another’, for the IDG, despite my having no track record in the arts. In doing so, he gave me opportunity and trust of a rare order, and enormous support from himself and the IDG team. Since I’ve heard many such stories of how Nick gave pivotal encouragement, opportunities and support. Working at the IDG, not a day passed without laughter and the festivity. He rarely complained and was very loyal. He was my friend, mentor and confidante. I feel honored to have worked with such an intelligent, knowledgeable, bright, inspiring, insightful and humorous man during my working career. He always gave everybody a moment of his time. If you worked with him at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery you became part of a family.

I will miss him always, his coming into the gallery at the beginning of my working week to greet me, our conversations, his infectious laugh, all of the above and much more, I will treasure forever the moments we shared.

HARLEY FARMER

Curator, IDG

I first met Nick in 2000, as his student. He was erudite, considered, courteous and above all kind. My classmates and I had diverse educational backgrounds and our contributions were of various value. Whatever was put to the class, Nick took the best in it, polished it up and re-presented it for further discussion. By his consistent example, he encouraged us to the highest standards of personal and professional interaction. Our last assignment was to propose an exhibition. Nick accepted mine, ‘Terra Alterius: Land of Another’, for the IDG, despite my having no track record in the arts. In doing so, he gave me opportunity and trust of a rare order, and enormous support from himself and the IDG team. Since I’ve heard many such stories of how Nick gave pivotal encouragement, opportunities and support. Working at the IDG, not a day passed without laughter and the festivity. He rarely complained and was very loyal. He was my friend, mentor and confidante. I feel honored to have worked with such an intelligent, knowledgeable, bright, inspiring, insightful and humorous man during my working career. He always gave everybody a moment of his time. If you worked with him at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery you became part of a family.

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YVONNE DONALDSON

Administration Assistant, IDG

I began my working relationship with Nick almost 19 years ago when I became administrative and personal assistant to him in his role as Director of the Ivan Dougherty Gallery. He opened my eyes to art and his world within it. He had a particular way of doing things almost ‘old school’ and always ‘attention to detail’, which I liked. He involved me and made me feel important in my role within the gallery through exhibitions/ projects both in and out of the gallery, committees, writings and all other forms of correspondence, giving me added responsibilities, and using all my skills as a secretary. During this time I became very close to Nick, I found him to be gentle, warm, patient, funny, inquisitive and excitable. He loved celebration, tradition and festivity. He rarely complained and was very loyal. He was my friend, mentor and confidante. I feel honored to have worked with such an intelligent, knowledgeable, bright, inspiring, insightful and humorous man during my working career. He always gave everybody a moment of his time. If you worked with him at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery you became part of a family.

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ADRIAN DAVIES

Curatorial Designer, IDG

Our Father, Saint Nick
Santa with a cause
Gifting knowledge, wisdom and hilarity.
Like his mind he was always on the move.
Rolling upon the ball of his feet
Considering his reply
With a fascination to astound
While ears and eyes
Fulfilled their duties.
His passion always precipitating action
His laughter, equally infectious
This is how I will remember Nick
My colleague, friend and mentor
Like now, I will always miss him dearly.
Nick Waterlow, Thank you.

MARK GARETH FARMER

Senior Curator, IDG

I first met Nick in 2000, as his student. He was erudite, considered, courteous and above all kind. My classmates and I had diverse educational backgrounds and our contributions were of various value. Whatever was put to the class, Nick took the best in it, polished it up and re-presented it for further discussion. By his consistent example, he encouraged us to the highest standards of personal and professional interaction. Our last assignment was to propose an exhibition. Nick accepted mine, ‘Terra Alterius: Land of Another’, for the IDG, despite my having no track record in the arts. In doing so, he gave me opportunity and trust of a rare order, and enormous support from himself and the IDG team. Since I’ve heard many such stories of how Nick gave pivotal encouragement, opportunities and support. Working at the IDG, not a day passed without laughter and the festivity. He rarely complained and was very loyal. He was my friend, mentor and confidante. I feel honored to have worked with such an intelligent, knowledgeable, bright, inspiring, insightful and humorous man during my working career. He always gave everybody a moment of his time. If you worked with him at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery you became part of a family.

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MARGARET FARMER

Curator, IDG

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Ruby Pritchard, a current Bachelor of Design student at COFA, won the 2009 Rug Up competition. As part of the project, Pritchard’s design, Old and Funky, was manufactured by Designer Rugs. Rug Up is a collaboration between COFA, Designer Rugs and the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

RUBY PRITCHARD: BACHELOR OF DESIGN, COFA UNSW, 2009
Jeweller Susan Cohn is not afraid to use the C word. C is for craft. It’s not a word you hear much these days. Sometime in the 1990s, it became dirty: a derogatory or condescending term used to describe knitted toilet roll holders and projects done by children on rainy afternoons, but not the output of skilled professionals.

Finally worn down by the interminable art versus craft debate, which had been raging on a slow burn for decades, contemporary practitioners in the traditional craft areas of textiles, woodwork, ceramics, jewellery and silversmithing wilfully reinvented themselves. Most opted for the designer tag, a few plumped for artist. But not Cohn. While she can lay a legitimate claim to either label, having collaborated with iconic design company Alessi and exhibited with top fine art gallery Anna Schwartz for 20 years, Cohn remains a crafts-person, “My language is craft. Once you call it something else you take its power away.” Refusing to accept a marginal position in the cultural hierarchy, Cohn has dedicated her long and impressive career to the power of craft and the complexity of jewellery. She has been the director of Melbourne’s Workshop 3000 for nearly 30 years. There she produces her own work as well as training selected members of the next generation. Cohn has won numerous awards, been honoured with a National Gallery of Australia (NGA) touring retrospective exhibition and has had her work collected by major national and international public institutions including: the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the NGA, and most state galleries in Australia.

Not content to sit back and bask in the glow of a successful career, Cohn completed her PhD at COFA in 2009. Her thesis, Recoding Jewellery: Identity, Body, Survival, puts jewellery at the centre of contemporary culture, right where it belongs. Body adornment is an inherently human form of expression; the oldest known art form. Diamonds may be a girl’s best friend, but not just because of their sparkling dollar value. As Cohn explains, “Possessing a distinct set of codes, enlivened by its relationship to the body, jewellery is a way of thinking and connecting which is strongly embedded in the activities of managing identity that define cultures and epochs. In the process, the instinct for adornment becomes an integral means of survival.” Cohn understands that jewellery is a necessity, not a luxury.

Cohn is currently working on curating Unexpected Pleasures, a major group exhibition for the Design Museum in London. In this project, Cohn explores how the ancient practice of body adornment has evolved to accommodate the complicated social rituals of the 20th and 21st centuries. Works on show will range from ipods and fashion jewellery to one-off pieces made by well-known modernist artists and contemporary jewellers. Unexpected Pleasures is due to open in November 2011. After that, who knows? However, one thing is certain, Susan Cohn remains dedicated to the potential of her craft. As she says, “I will do jewellery until I die. I’ve only barely scratched the surface of it.”
Alexander Seton’s realistic marble carving of a hoodie won the 2009 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize worth $10,000.

ALEXANDER SETON  BACHELOR OF ART THEORETICAL, COFA UNSW 2005.

The iCinema Research Centre, together with industrial design consultants Tiller Design, took out a gold award in the 2009 International Design Excellence Awards competition, which is held annually by the Industrial Designers Society of America.
TROVE the Streets of Birmingham

Timing is everything. When Naomi Gall left Sydney and headed to the UK on a two-year working visa, she couldn’t have known that the world was about to slide into the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression.

After the requisite few months travelling Europe, Gall found herself unemployed in Birmingham. Despite having two degrees from COFA and two years experience writing and doing arts administration for COFA’s marketing department, her employment prospects looked grim. Jobs in general were few and far between and arts jobs in particular were scarce. Instead of cursing the fates, or the short sightedness of bankers, Gall decided to make her own luck. Along with curator Charlie Levine and artist David Miller, she founded an artist run initiative (ARI) called TROVE.

Unlike many ARIs, TROVE doesn’t have a permanent gallery space. Instead, Gall and her colleagues make the most of the economic downturn by taking over the city’s vacant spaces to host one-night only events. TROVE supports both local and international emerging artists who are encouraged to respond directly to the ARI’s unconventional venues; eclectic locations that range from the back of a van to an abandoned warehouse or a garden.

Frustrated by the lack of exposure for Australian artists in Birmingham, Gall invited fellow COFA grad Sam Smith to present his video work through TROVE. Smith is without a doubt a young Aussie artist worth watching. He fully embraces the potential of digital technology and the subject of his videos is often the artifice of movie-making itself and the possibilities film conventions offer for manipulating perceptions of time and space. His complex installations frequently combine moving image work with finely crafted large-scale sculptures.

In the seven short years of his impressive career, Smith has exhibited extensively throughout Australia as well as in Japan, China, Thailand, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Spain and New Zealand. Smith won the prestigious Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship 2007, which allowed him to spend six months in early 2009 undertaking a mentorship in New York with American artists Sandra Gibson and Luis Recorder. While there, he created two new artworks, one of which, Into the Void, debuted in his TROVE exhibition of the same name. Smith’s first UK show was a hit for both the artist and the ARI.

Local critic Elizabeth Short wrote, “Birmingham needs initiatives like TROVE who never fail to deliver, and Sam Smith’s show is the perfect example of this.”

Smith wasn’t able to travel to Birmingham for his show at TROVE and, even though he plans to travel to London following a solo exhibition at Artspace in March 2010, it’s unlikely that he and Gall will get to reminisce face to face, over the success of their joint venture, anytime soon. For despite having gained fulltime employment managing a commercial gallery, who were no doubt impressed by her initiative, Gall’s work visa runs out in March. She’ll be heading home to make something happen here. Timing really is everything, but Birmingham’s loss will be Sydney’s gain.

Tracey Clement
Incubate asked two Master of Arts students and Cicada Press veterans about the unique opportunities the course offers. Laura Gamio Raluy is an international student from Chile undertaking a double major in printmaking and painting. Mary van den Berk is a mature age painting major with a PhD in social work.

**Incubate**: What made you want to enrol in Cicada Press?

**Mary**: I relished the prospect of working with established artists to create editions of their works. Besides, there was a major incentive to acquire stunning work by established artists. Every time a student gives up their evening or weekend to edition a print we also end up with a beautiful signed print for our own personal collection.

**Incubate**: What aspects of the Cicada press experience have you found the most interesting?

**Mary**: The artists are fantastic role models and provide an otherwise inaccessible opportunity to see varying practices and techniques of mark making and process. The artists become students when they are in the print room. It is a very levelling and inspiring experience.

**Laura**: Working with Australasian artists and getting the chance to meet several women from Papunya Tjupi; learning about their art and Dreaming and most of all spending time with them.

**Incubate**: What was the biggest challenge involved in working with Cicada Press?

**Laura**: Keeping up to speed with what the visiting artists needed in order to work on their images.

**Mary**: Mastering the technical processes and keeping one’s hands clean when one had the “clean hands” role.

**Incubate**: In what ways has the experience of working with established artists affected your own art practice?

**Laura**: It has given me the chance to see that it is possible to take images beyond their original conception and cross boundaries.

**Incubate**: Who was your favourite artist to work with and why?

**Laura**: I can’t really say that I had a favourite artist considering they are all such different artists and great people. I enjoyed observing Michael Esson working on his plate... it was truly fascinating to see how detailed his drawings are, at the same time watching Euan McLeod create an image in a few minutes with just a couple of brushstrokes.

**Mary**: It is hard to pick a favourite as each artist came with a different approach and a willingness to share with students in a really informal way that was inspiring and engaging. Ian Grant, Elisabeth Cummings and Jasper Knight showed infinite patience as each of us bombarded them with questions about their practices. The Kiwis: Euan McLeod, Chris O’Doherty (aka Reg Mombassa) and Noel McKenna provided entertainment whilst working by taunting Michael Kempson who managed to both taunt them back and keep up an exemplary standard, supervising both students and established artists.

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Gum trunks, dogs and more

COFA’s Cicada Press was established in 2004 by its Director, Michael Kempson, Senior Lecturer and Printmaking Coordinator. The Cicada Press Workshop is an educationally focussed custom-printing model that enables students to work with some of Australia’s most respected painters. In the last five years they’ve produced prints with an impressive list of artists including:

- Adam Cullen
- Nicholas Harding
- Elisabeth Cummings
- Reg Mombassa
- Cherry Hood
- Michael Nelson
- Jagamara
- Euan Macleod
- John Coburn
- Michael Johnson
- John Peart
- David Fairbairn
- Suzanne Archer
- Peter Sharp
- Idris Murphy
- Guy Warren
- Ben Quilty
- James Gleeson

All COFA students, regardless of whether or not they’ve studied printmaking before, are invited to enrol in the class.
Every now and again something is made or performed that enters a kind of art school folklore. One example might be Adam Cullen’s infamous action in the 80s, when he chained a rotted pig’s head to his ankle and dragged it around campus for a day. Another more recent example was in 2008, when art collective Bababa International spent a week cooking curries beneath the floorboards of COFA’s Kudos Gallery. Visitors to their exhibition Possible Curries arrived to find Kudos empty, with just a ramp leading from the front door to the artist’s bunker kitchen. “Curiosity on the part of the visitor was rewarded,” the artists explain, as inquisitive audience members could nominate a time and a place to have a complimentary curry delivered to them the following day. Incredibly, Bababa delivered on their promise, pedalling more than a hundred curries by bicycle to people’s homes throughout Sydney. “By the end,” Bababa reflect, “we had participated in 150 bowels, and subsequently travelled through many sewerage pipes.”

Comprised of Tom Melick, Ivan Ruhle, Stephen Russell and Giles Thackaway, Bababa International is an enigmatic ensemble, customarily responding in a collective voice that is a curious mix of self-importance and self-deprecation. Their dialogue often seems scattered with self-made proverbs (“we somehow arrived at the conviction that in doing everything something will be done”) and quotes from ancient philosophers and 20th century writers (“our process might correlate with G.K Chesterton’s injunction, ‘you cannot grow a beard in a moment of passion’”).

Bababa International members began collaborating at COFA several years ago while studying in the departments of time-based art, photography, digital media and art theory. Despite — or rather because of — their different backgrounds, the collaboration clicked because “there seemed to be a curiosity in what all the different particles might equate to, when they are allowed to interact in relation to a project or idea.” This result has been the development of a conceptually rigorous practice that draws on a vast variety of media. Bababa members suggest that they are “eager to explore the strange and elusive alchemy whereby ideas become events.” Their signature approach to art-making is laced with a certain alchemy, and a conscientious engagement with alternative audiences and spaces. Earlier this year, during their three-month studio residency at Firstdraft, the artists hosted a free breakfast at their studio every Saturday. Here, Bababa International dished out porridge, pancakes and boiled eggs to guests who had either heard of the artist’s latest project or stumbled across the small wooden ‘breakfast’ sign stuck in the dirt outside their studio door. “Food is useful for thinking how space is informed by the activity in it,” say the artists, “since it is our stomachs that show us that most spaces need to be filled with a range of different combinations, each contributing to how the overall system functions.”

For their Firstdraft exhibition, Soap City, the collective invited their audience not to eat, but to wash. Spread across two venues, Bababa used the gallery to manufacture, exhibit and distribute cakes of soap with maps of the local area meticulously carved into their surface. Following these ‘soap maps’ led visitors to a second location: a nearby rooftop with a showering unit and water tower, fashioned out of an old wine barrel. While the name Bababa International is derived from “an airport that no one seems to have arrived at or departed from,” the collective is taking off in numerous directions. It is currently completing a video documentary on a migrant domestic-worker community, initiated earlier this year while exhibiting at the Para/Site Contemporary Art Space in Hong Kong. This show involved running a DIY nail salon from the gallery, offering manicures and pedicures to the public by “one of four amateur nail technicians.”

Up next, the artists are creating a new installation for the Tiny Stadiums Festival in Sydney, and have plans to “attach a moving restaurant to the side of a building” for the 2010 Next Wave Festival in Melbourne. So are four heads better than one? “Yes, although it can go both ways,” Bababa say. “As the Roman stoic philosopher Seneca the Younger thought, ‘every sin is the result of a collaboration’.”

Dominique Angelson
In 2009, COFA’s Associate Dean (Academic) Graham Forsyth was honoured with an Australian Learning and Teaching Council award which acknowledges that he is one of the nation’s top university teachers.

The Art Gallery Society of NSW awarded Alexander Seton a prize of $5,000 for his 2009 entry in Sculpture by the Sea, On Hold_Lawnmower.


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Sydney has a rich exhibition history, which has been made even wealthier by the exhibition culture generated by the Artist Run Initiative Community. Artist Run Initiatives, or ARIs for short, are a confederation of artists groups that are involved in not-for-profit artistic activities. ARIs are the spaces that mushroom up and disappear just as quickly; they are ever changing, constantly developing and forever evolving. Artist Run Initiatives are the beginnings in many ways. They are the first exhibition spaces historically and the grass roots for innovation and development. From the Angry Penguins in the 1930s to The Yellow House of the 1970s, ARIs have had a significant impact on the arts by creating new opportunities for exhibition and exchange. The Yellow House, located on the edge of the Kings Cross strip from 1970-1973, was the first modern example of an ARI. It was a pulsating living community of artists, where the walls were the canvases and the bedrooms were the galleries. Started by artist Martin Sharp, The Yellow House itself was a piece of conceptual multi-media art and offered artists and audiences a 24-hour venue to experience pop art.

Firstdraft is Sydney’s longest running ARI. It became incorporated as a non-profit artist-managed organisation in 1985, and is a venue where many artists have been given their first opportunity to exhibit. Recently it was given a three-year caretaker’s lease on an unused council-owned depot in Riley Street in Woolloomooloo as part of the City of Sydney’s new Accommodation Grant Scheme. The two-level depot will be home to artist studios, workshops and markets and will act as an extension of the already existing gallery space in Chalmers Street, Redfern.

The intention is for the Firstdraft depot to run along similar lines as the FraserStudios model, and most likely the depot’s opening will coincide with the closure of FraserStudios in September 2010. An initiative between Frasers Property, the City of Sydney Council and the arts organisation, Queen Street Studios, FraserStudios is an exhibition venue, artists studio space and performance workshop all rolled into one venue located on the old Kent Brewery site on Broadway.

For the past couple of years, the City of Sydney Council has been helping to place not-for-profit organisations, including 14 arts related groups, into unused council buildings through the Accommodation Grants Scheme, but earlier in the decade the Council wasn’t so accommodating. Back in December of 2000, a collective of artists turned a rundown and abandoned old locksmith shop into an art gallery called Squatspace. The venue was short-lived being evicted by the Council in July 2001, but in its short six-month lifetime it played host to a number of exhibitions and events, including Arlene TextaQueen’s major TextaNudes gallery show, and the Squatfest film nights. No matter what form they take, from Council subsidised venues and illegal squats to a ‘happening’ space from the 1970s, ARIs contribute to the Sydney arts scene through many varied and interesting ways. Taking various shapes, ARIs provide a level of experimentation and innovation you’re not likely to find in other, more traditional exhibition venues.

Amy Griffiths
Readership steadily grew from hundreds to thousands of hits a week. Finally, having somehow connected Frost to the site, magazine editors offered him work and the ABC asked if he’d like to create a television program. He made two series of The Art Life and four one-off television specials in less than two years. He is now in the early stages of developing a third series of the program having finished writing a book that critically analyses the work of 56 contemporary Australian video artists and their place in our culture.

Frost’s career has always oscillated between writing about film and writing about art. He is fascinated by the way people make, show and deploy imagery. Film and video art culture enthralled him as early as age 15 when he used the money made at McDonalds to buy his first Super 8 camera. “The first Sony Portapak was made in ’67 and I was born in ’62 so it’s taken that long for both of us to get into the mainstream,” he jokes.

After about three years of hard-core unemployment, in 1997, friends suggested that Frost join a magazine called Australian Art Collector. “By then I had this weird skill set where I could manage people (having had a crummy part-time job supervising a tele-sales force) and I could work for online projects. I had been an artist and could write about art. Working for a publisher was the best job I ever had.”

Frost left the magazine in 2000 to join a website called Scape, but “that lasted 18 months before going bust with $44 million down the drain, and all of us turfed-out on a Tuesday afternoon.” A change of lifestyle was clearly needed so Frost moved with his wife for a trial period of six-months to the NSW central coast. They are still at Pearl Beach nearly seven years later. That’s where life as a blogger/television personality continues but with no chance of an inflated ego.

“It’s not like you’re on Home and Away,” he laughs. “You learn to deal with the experience of people saying: ‘Oh yeah, I missed that program. When was it on? Sorry about that!’ … That’s the real world for you.”

Andrew Frost (writer, art critic, journalist, part-time lecturer and PhD candidate at COFA) has never followed a coherent career plan. Led by his creative instincts, initially as an artist making films, he felt little concern for professional or financial security.

“I just followed what I liked and somehow it all coalesced into something fantastic,” he explains. “You know how they say ‘You never really get the job you apply for; it’s the one they give you that’s the great job?’ That’s exactly what happened. I feel incredibly lucky.”

The job of presenting The Art Life, on ABC1, spun from an irreverent blog of the same name launched by Frost and a group of anonymous writers in 2004. It quickly gained notoriety for its outspoken views, vigorous support of artists and galleries, and healthy disdain for the established art critics of the old media. “It was hot sh*t for about three or four years,” Frost says. “We were getting loads of emails and there were articles in the Herald asking, ‘Who are these guys?’ We’d go to openings and people would ask me: ‘Are you ‘the art life’ blogger?’ I’d say: ‘No, but I’ve heard about it, we must stop these people. It’s an outrage.’ We’d toy with the idea of revealing ourselves but never did.”


The Face Behind The Art Life

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Mind Games
Photography, Identity and Play
ERIC BRIDGEMAN, THE JACKSON TWINS, SUK KUHN, OH TOSHI TAKEUCHI

GALLERY 1+2
29 JANUARY – 6 MARCH
TUESDAY TO FRIDAY
12.00-7.00PM
SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
10.00AM-6.00PM

Image © Eric Bridgeman
Lik Lik Mary Muffat 2008 (detail)

Current COFA Bachelor of Fine Art student, Hugh Marchant won the 2009 National Youth Self Portrait Prize. The time-based art major took home the $10,000 prize with a deliberately degraded moving image piece.


Above: Hugh Marchant, Hugh, High Definition Video Still (converted into 3D image), 2010.
The Storehouse of History

Much of Australia’s experimental video art has been lost, ignored or remains unknown and undocumented. It is not acknowledged in any official teaching curriculum or international art history book so perhaps it is dead and should just be forgotten? Certainly not according to the Head of COFA’s School of Media Arts, Professor Ross Harley, and senior lecturer John Gillies, who have been awarded an Australian Research Council grant to develop an online video art project as part of a major national research initiative. This project is being conducted in association with renowned media artist and historian Stephen Jones.

“If video art is forgotten, all those tapes on the shelf will just crumble to dust,” Harley explains. “There’s so much material worth finding, keeping and making known to the public. This project will help us to understand the rich creative history of the video art culture and then make informed decisions about art practice in the future.”

The task to track down and comment upon the work of hundreds of media artists from the 1960s to the present day will now be undertaken with the Museum of Contemporary Art and dLux Media Arts as key partners. The online website will provide commentary and criticism while affording access to rarely seen digital versions of original experimental Australian work.

As Harley explains, “This project is really about working with the partner organisations to examine Australian video art practice more carefully, to understand its history, and to represent that to the public in a scholarly way. That hasn’t been done before. We’re trying to find material that’s disappeared from our view and our memory while putting Australian video culture into context with what’s been happening elsewhere in the world.”

Harley and Gillies are educators and artists who have themselves made important contributions to the practice. They had become increasingly disturbed by the lack of publicly available information about a culture that flourished in this country from the 1960s as an avant-garde or oppositional challenge to the mainstream art world.

“In the early days, video artists defined the medium, and the practice was quite distinct from other forms of art,” Harley says. “You used to see video art at festivals but there’s no longer any need for that because video and screen-based artwork is shown in most galleries by artists who use it as one of many mediums. It has become so abundant, and the tools are so easily acquired, that it has been incorporated into the mainstream of contemporary art practice.”

Does that matter? What does it mean when an artform moves from being on the margins to being completely incorporated into the mainstream? Has it won all its battles or has it lost them and are there lessons to be learned from that process? These are questions to be considered throughout the archival research project.

Aneded Dean

It is already clear that Australian artists have been engaged in experimental video art practice from the outset: “We’ve got a lot of important figures who have made really significant work here that deserves to be well-known,” Harley says. “We all need to understand the foundations, the ground on which we walk, because that helps us to better appreciate where we stand today,” he says.
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The winner for the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (ADFAS) Award 2009 is Phoebe Boyle.

Phoebe Boyle: Bachelor of Fine Arts, COA UNSW, second year student.
In late 2009, COFA graduate Shaun Gladwell travelled to Afghanistan as an official Australian war artist. Aussie artists have been commissioned to record the impact of war since WWI. Gladwell joins a long list of respected artists including: Arthur Streeton, Donald Friend, Nora Heysen, William Dobell, and fellow COFA grads Wendy Sharpe and Lyndell Brown and Charles Green.
In September this year Angelica Mesiti took out the Blake Prize for her mesmerising work, *Rapture (silent anthem)*, a slow motion video studying the contorting faces of a crowd of entranced youth. Making much of the fact that it was the first time a video work had won the $20,000 prize for religious and spiritual art, *The Sydney Morning Herald* declared, ‘How videos killed the painting stars at the Blake Prize’. “That was pretty (roll your eyes) funny,” Mesiti says of the headline. “Nothing like a shocking one-liner 80s pop reference to tick all the boxes in one go. It’s a pretty interesting indication of how video art is still seen as some kind of quirky practice by the mainstream”.

Mesiti concedes that when she first began experimenting with video a decade ago there was “some feeling of radicality in the medium that perhaps I was attracted to”. Nevertheless, it’s a medium that captured her imagination long before that. Growing up in the north-western suburbs of Sydney, Mesiti credits television with inspiring her earliest interest in art, citing specifically, “The ABC Sunday afternoon arts programs, European animations, ballet and contemporary dance, my Grandfather’s VHS dubs of Giuseppe Verde operas, then Hollywood musicals, and of course, music videos. VHS was the latest technology and we could record anything we wanted to watch over and over and over again”.

Interestingly, it was Mesiti’s love of classical and contemporary dance that initially carved her career path, taking her to London to study on a scholarship after high school. Returning to Sydney, she completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honors at COFA, and after teaching casually at the College for many years, she has recently returned to undertake a Masters in Fine Arts. It was through her experimentations with time-based media that the artist began to marry her dual fascinations with dance and video. She explains, “I really liked the ‘liveness’ of the shooting process - perhaps it reminded me of performing in some way. It can be improvisational and ‘in the moment’... there’s a feeling of distilling time that can happen... I’m reading Yvonne Rainer’s autobiography at the moment and I like the way she describes her use of the camera as taking over from the choreographer”.

It’s with a sophisticated knowledge of digital technologies and a deftly tuned eye for the subtleties of movement that Mesiti created her award-winning video *Rapture*. It was exhibited first in 2009 as a finalist in the Helen Lempriere Traveling Art Scholarship exhibition, and then in the 58th Blake Prize. Shot in high definition video by the artist and cinematographer Bonnie Elliot, the footage was taken at the Big Day Out festival from a custom-made hideaway underneath the main stage.

Although the artist says that the project was conceived and realised relatively quickly, she points out, “I had a very clear idea of how I wanted it to look. I spent quite a lot of time researching cameras that could shoot at the frame rate, and in the budget I was after... I worked out from the playlist, which would be the best stage and bands to shoot considering the time of day and position of the sun. The aim was to shoot the faces backlit to capture the halo effect”.

Just prior to this work, the artist made the ambitious video, *The Line of Load and Death of Charlie Day*, which was exhibited at Artpace and selected for a touring video festival of Europe as well as the d/Lux/Media Arts dTour 08-09 of regional Australia. Further afield, Mesiti undertook a three-month residency at the UNSW studio at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, where she will return next year to shoot a new work based on some local Parisienne folk musicians. Early in 2010, she will also hold a solo exhibition in Sydney and exhibit work in Melbourne’s Experimenta.

Despite the demanding pace of her solo art practice, Mesiti continues to work collaboratively as a member of The Kingpins, an art collective she formed at COFA in 2001 with Techa Noble, Emma Price and Katie Price. The artist says, “it’s not easy but fortunately the girls are pretty amazing and we all make allowances for the individual lives we have to lead outside the collaboration. I was away for a couple of Kingpin’s shows this year and was able to do the editing and send discs and upload files from where I was. That’s the beauty of working in video I guess - it’s a highly transportable medium”.

Dominique Angeloro
Still Simpatico After All These Years

Exhibitions of Abstraction and Pop Art have featured across Sydney galleries and beyond this year with shows including recent work by Ken Reinhard (with overlapping shows in Oct/Nov at the Robin Gibson Gallery and the Peter Pinson Gallery) and Col Jordan (in WA Oct/Nov at Mosseenson Galleries, Subiaco and in early 2009 at the Peter Pinson Gallery).

The friendship of three previous members of the College of Fine Art’s staff – former Dean and Director, Emeritus Professor Ken Reinhard and Emeritus Professors Col Jordan and Peter Pinson – stretches back a long way, as does their joint time stoking the engine that drove a new art school from its inception to COFA.

This exhibition proved significant on many levels and “it summed up the formalist tendencies of the second half for the 60s in a way that The Field (shown at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1968) did on a much larger ‘encyclopaedic’ scale,” as Pinson remarks. Yet if flatness was the defining feature of ‘the field’ then, Jordan points out that it was an entirely different art world from the one we know today. The opportunities to see work were much more limited and the role of the Contemporary Art Society’s annual exhibition was vital in providing a chance to see work that had not found a space in the small number of galleries that existed; and the importance of prizes was not just as a source of occasional income but again as means of showcasing work.

At just shy of 40 years old, Reinhard and Jordan found themselves, in late 1974, working on realising a new art school which ultimately became the College of Fine Arts; to be joined in 1977 by Pinson. Both Jordan and Pinson reiterate the singular role played by Reinhard in the formation and evolution of COFA. Pinson describes it from the start as a “lively and dramatic approach to artists education – embracing emerging media and contemporary thinking, and including a gallery, which was not a customary facility for art schools at the time.” The Big Bang Show that launched the Ivan Dougherty Gallery was a mid-career show of Elwyn Lynn curated by Pinson.

Speaking about his own art, Pinson said there is “diversity in my practice over time, but for the last five years it has settled into an interest in flatness, semi-abstractness and pattern and colour.” With an intimate knowledge, both as a practitioner and as a scholar, Pinson brings a unique gallery to Sydney, focusing predominately on work from the 60s and 70s, and shows the work of both Reinhard and Jordan.

In terms of the changes to his practice, Reinhard comments that it has been directed by “certain elements that I plucked out of things that I was doing and continued to make work from”, and the work has “become more colourful with digital printing” – but his ‘WYSIWYG’ (what you see is what you get) approach remains in his layering of referents, past and present. All three have continued close contact. Pinson commented that the “interesting thing about continuing meetings has been the ‘inter-penetrations: the intimate knowledge of recent times as well as the tides that we’ll never see again.” Ken Reinhard feels that, despite this long association, “we haven’t influenced each other’s work” and that “Col and I tolerate each other far better than almost anyone else tolerates us”. There’s little doubt that the anecdotes and stories that come to light when Col Jordan’s memoirs are published will make interesting reading.

Isobel Johnston
Jordana Maisie won an ANZ and Art & Australia Contemporary Art Award which supports emerging artists by publishing an image of their work on the back cover of the magazine. Maisie was featured in the 2009 Spring issue.


Karl Logge & Tessa Rapaport were awarded a Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists in 2009 which will allow them to travel to Berlin and Paris. The Freedman Foundation is a private philanthropic organisation which provides funding to the visual arts, music, medicine and science.


The following is an excerpt of Chapter Eight, Wild Beasts and Town Prominent: Le Sensible’s Rousseauian Dream of Darwin’s Evolution, by Peter Brosan.

**Curating Evolution:**

Buffon, Lamarck, Guiver and Saint-Hilaire at the Jardin des Plantes and Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle

“I don’t know if you’re like me,” Henri Rousseau told the critic Aranse Alexandre, “but when I go into the glass houses and I see the strange plants of exotic lands, it seems to me that I enter into a dream.” The glass houses that Rousseau frequented were those in the Jardin zoologique d’acclimatation and the Jardin des Plantes world. The contributors analyse the visual expression of a Darwinian bicentennial. The contributors analyse the visual expression of a Darwinian bicentennial, The Art of Evolution. Inspired by the Charles Darwin bicentennial, The Art of Evolution presents a collection of essays by international scholars renowned for their groundbreaking work on Darwin. The book, edited by COFA Senior Lecturer, Frae Brauer, together with Associate Professor, Barbara Larson, from the University of West Florida, not only includes a discussion of the popular imagery that immediately followed the publication of On the Origin of Species, but also traces the impact on Darwin’s ideas on visual culture over time and throughout the history of Surrealism. The book, edited by COFA Senior Lecturer, Frae Brauer, together with Associate Professor, Barbara Larson, from the University of West Florida, not only includes a discussion of the popular imagery that immediately followed the publication of On the Origin of Species, but also traces the impact of the popular imagery that immediately followed the publication of On the Origin of Species, but also traces the impact on Darwin’s ideas on visual culture over time and throughout the history of Surrealism.

During his fifty years as Keeper, Buffon had enlarged the Jardin des Plantes with trees and plants acquired from French expeditions to Africa, America, China, India and South-East Asia. He also converted it into a research centre with a Cabinet d’Histoire Naturelle. From 1749, he had written his 36 volume, Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière in which he argued, much to the horror of the Catholic church, that the age of the earth was 75,000 years and that Noah’s Ark could never have happened. Under similar climatic conditions, he deduced that fundamentally similar species would spontaneously generate on any planet. In his fifteenth volume, Buffon even speculated upon the similarities between humans and apes and the evolutionary origin of analogous species from common ancestral types. Not only were his theories seminal to the most generation of Naturalists but also to Darwin. After crediting Aristotle with foreshadowing the concept of “natural selection”, in his foreword to the sixth edition of The Origin of Species Darwin stated that “the first author who in modern times has treated it in a scientific spirit was Buffon.”

A symbol of the scientific Republic, in June 1793 the Jardin du Roi was reconstituted by decree of the First Republic Convention as Antoine-Louis Barye flocked to the Jardin des Plantes and Muséum national d’histoire naturelle. He was attracted hoards of artists, most notably in terms of Modernist curating when Frémiet and Rousseau began drawing there. In the Descent of Man: “The conclusion that man is the creature of science; that he has been formed by the necessity and desire of progress; that he has been formed by the necessity and desire of progress.” While it was through Lamarckism that evolution was curried when such artists animaliers as Antoine-Louis Barye flocked to the Jardin des Plantes and Muséum national d’histoire naturelle, it was through Neo-Lamarckism in terms of a fusion of Darwin and Lamarck that evolution was curried when Frémiet and Rousseau began drawing there. These shifts in curating evolution are conveyed by their artwork.
The College of Fine Arts would like to congratulate all the COFA Annual Award Night winners from 2009.

The COFA Annual Award winners of 2009 (converted into 3D image), Photo Chris Gleisner, 2009.