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Special Edition

Gallery and Museum Education

Edited by Purnima Ruanglertbutr

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JACE Special Edition Journal of Artistic & Creative Education

Museum and Gallery Education: Purpose, Pedagogy and Practice

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Gallery and Museum Education:
Purpose, Pedagogy and Practice

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CONTENTS

Editorial: Gallery and museum education: Purpose, pedagogy and practice 3
Purnima Ruanglertbutr

Beginning the conversation: Australian art museum education pedagogy and practice 14
Christine E. Healey and Narelle Lemon

The role of museum education in developing new learning communities in regional Victoria 36
Rhonda Chrisanthou

Building cross-cultural connections: The Warburton Arts Project and the 2011 Chinese tour of *Tu Di – Shen Ti / Our Land Our Body* 66
Laura Fisher and Gay McDonald

***8x8:* Using artmaking to teach collaboration in student outreach programs** 84
Nisa Mackie and Nicole Austin

Art & Design programs in an inter-disciplinary context: Exploring the benefits with examples from the Australian Museum 110
Jane Johnston

Expect the unexpected: The role of the library in encouraging wonder and curiosity about History 144
Emma Reilly

Materials-based teaching in museums: The experiences of educational programs at Sydney University Museums 166
Craig Barker

The Art of English: An interdisciplinary approach to supporting English and Literature curricula at the National Gallery of Victoria 194
Purnima Ruanglertbutr and Susie May

Evaluating the integration of digital cameras in gallery learning 232
Narelle Lemon

Acknowledgements 262

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Purnima Ruanglertbutr is an independent curator, writer, educator, arts manager and researcher into art and museum education. In particular, her research focuses on her interests in museum education pedagogy, teacher-artist issues, inclusive art education, contemporary curatorial models, and the relationship between visual art and literacy. She is co-researcher and lecturer within Melbourne Graduate School of Education's Department of Artistic and Creative Education, where she administers the 'Teacher as Artmaker Project' and lectures the Master of Education subject 'Teaching and Artistic Practice'. She is also an English Language Educator at Cambridge International College, Melbourne. Ms Ruanglertbutr has taught at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and has co-conducted Professional Development programs for English and Art teachers and education programs at the NGV. She was Education Officer at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne for the Basil Sellers Art Prize (2012), where she published a variety of education resources for students of English, English as a Second Language (ESL), Art, and delivered inter-disciplinary programs for primary school to tertiary students, including refugees, newly arrived migrants and international students. Through her museum programs, she advocated accessible arts education, social inclusion and cultural diversity in learning. She has also produced inter-disciplinary education resources to support University students' museum learning, for the Potter's Academic Programs unit. Ms Ruanglertbutr was manager of the 2013 Art Association of Australia and New Zealand conference, Inter-discipline, during which she convened a panel on 'Inter-disciplinarity in Art Museums', which featured various presentations by museum professionals across Australia and New Zealand. She has represented many emerging and established artists and arts practitioners through her projects and has managed arts events in Australia and internationally. Ms Ruanglertbutr's arts related writing and research have been published in numerous journals and magazines in Australia, Canada and Thailand.

Ms Ruanglertbutr holds a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Honours) from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Teaching (Secondary - Art, English, ESL) from that same university. She also completed a Master of Art Administration from the University of New South Wales, Australia.

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EDITORIAL:

GALLERY AND MUSEUM EDUCATION: PURPOSE, PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

Purnima Ruanglertbutr
The University of Melbourne, Australia

This special edition of the *Journal of Artistic and Creative Education* (JACE) brings together authors from across Australia discussing issues central to the ongoing development and importance of education within museums. What are the distinctive characteristics and significance of museum education? How does learning occur in museums and what does it look like? Who is engaged in museum education and where does it take place? What are some of the benefits of museum education? This edition explores these broad questions through nine articles that individually address the role of museum learning as providing a transformative experience in a rich, 'hands-on' and diverse environment. The authors present a wide array of case studies and examples from their institutions and their research, providing practical and invigorating discussions on the purpose, pedagogy and practice of museum education.

At a time when there are significant cuts being made to education budgets in Australia, thereby often limiting excursions to museums and other cultural sites, it seems timely to publish a special edition that sheds light on the power of learning in museums and to make a case for museum learning. Moreover, museums are already producing effective learning experiences that are highly appreciated by their users, and these deserve to be celebrated. This celebration will hopefully lead to increased appreciation and understanding of the educational possibilities in museums and galleries, of why professionals have chosen to work in particular ways, and the outcomes of their work.

In broad terms, museum education is a specialised field that is dedicated to developing and supporting the role of museums as public institutions. Its general purpose is to enhance visitors' ability to understand and appreciate a museum's collection. Museum educators are specialists who work to ensure museums fulfill their educational mission by promoting the process of individual and group discovery through the planning and implementation of rich learning experiences, and evaluating their effect and impact. They work to provide meaningful and lifelong learning experiences for a diverse public. Lifelong learning encompasses various forms of education and training including formal, such as the school system from primary to tertiary level, or informal learning such as free adult education, informal search and training, which could be undertaken individually or in a group setting. Common to all forms of training and education however, is the provision of instructional strategies or interpretation devices that enable learners to develop the ability to search for information and develop knowledge actively and independently. Within the purpose of

lifelong learning, cultural institutions such as museums and libraries offer a broad choice of education, public programs and professional expertise for those in the search for information, exploration and understanding. Some of the following articles will demonstrate how libraries and museums are working to supplement curriculum, classroom work and textbooks.

Unique to this special edition are the authors themselves – a combination of art education academics and museum educators. Whilst most academic journals usually publish articles by scholars in their relevant disciplines, this special edition of JACE aims to bring forth the voices of the practitioners as well – museum educators across a range of art and cultural institutions in Australia. Much has been published about the pedagogy, practice and purpose of museum educators and museum education. However it has seldom been the case to hear from the educators themselves, who most intimately experience the breadth and complexity of the profession. Their contribution to this edition is important – not only has it provided them with an opportunity to share and evaluate processes regarding the development, delivery and rationale of their education programs, but it has also afforded interested readers rare insights into the working processes and professionalism of museum educators. In turn, readers will appreciate the common threads of reflective practice emerging from the manuscripts, and the different ways that they have theoretically ground the work of their programming.

Collectively, the authors in this edition emphasise museum education as sites of critical pedagogical practice, presenting explorations of how museum educators teach and how audiences could learn from the work carried out by specialist museum staff. As a result, the case studies featured in this edition are situated in the context of constructivist and experiential/performative views of education involving active minds and bodies, and pedagogic styles that emphasise participatory and performative modes of meaningful learning. Constructivism recognises the importance of individual meaning making and makes it a fundamental aspect of pedagogic practice. However, the articles also refer to the purpose of the museum as a whole. In particular, they allude to the role of museums in promoting positive social behaviour and transforming lives through education, which has been a focus of museum professionals for over a century (Garcia, 2012).

Such focus has been largely instigated by the transformation of museums' philosophies and practices, which have seen them occupy a more significant and social role. As Hooper-Greenhill notes, the "cultural turn"

(2007, p. 2) has been instrumental in making societies more aware of the significance of representation and the power of symbols to carry meaning, to signal identity and to invoke social and cultural alignments. Moreover, interpretation processes as a practice is commonly acknowledged in the realm of social relationships, implying that cultural imagery cannot be perceived as neutral, making subjectivity, meaning, identity and consumption all central to learning (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). This paradigm shift has paved the way for innovative practices in museum education in the endeavour to promote creativity, build personalised learning and empower all audiences to be successful. Consequentially, museum environments and their education projects are rich and unpredictable – they are described by the authors as sites of display, spectacle and collaborations that can arouse curiosity and wonder; inspire new ideas to a changing audience; and dissolve barriers to participation and understanding. As these articles demonstrate, museum education amalgamates the theoretical/conceptual with the sensorial/material. Visitors themselves become engaged with the materiality of art objects, and the nature, pace and range of bodily movement coupled with the exhibitionary strategies, technologies, and interpretation devices used by museum professionals, influences the nature of learning.

Christine Healey and Narelle Lemon's article, *Beginning the conversation: Australian art museum education pedagogy and practice*, makes a significant contribution to discourse in the Australian context surrounding the evaluation of the role of the art museum educator and the impact of the educator's pedagogical decisions upon visitor experience. Healey and Lemon begin by first framing for us the nature of art museum education as a profession – how the profession has been evaluated historically and has transformed in alignment with shifts in museum administrations' focus upon collections towards the people and communities they serve. They then provide an example of this 'in action' using a first-person narrative account by Healey, Education Manager from the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, Australia. The authors argue for the advantages of "reflection on action" towards a museum educator's own exploration of their teaching and learning practice, and in encouraging museum educators to share their practices and the "balancing act" they perform. Healey and Lemon's work helps us consider the knowledge, skills and attitudes museum educators identify as critical to their work.

What role does art museum education serve in regional towns and cities? Rhonda Chrisanthou, museum educator at the Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) in northern Victoria, Australia, examines how learning programs,

(eg. public programming at SAM), develop learning communities including non-traditional audiences such as migrants and refugees. Embedded in this discussion lies the issue of financial support from government, which regional museums are contingent upon, towards delivering a greater diversity of programs and services that will increase audiences' access to a museums' collection, special exhibitions and resources. In her article, *The role of museum education in developing new learning communities in regional Victoria*, Chrisanthou unpacks the benefits of art museum education in regional areas, including: supporting community education, literacy skills and lifelong learning, shaping and celebrating cultural identity, intercultural learning and personal learning, encouraging participation in public life, providing outreach programs to remote areas, and creating opportunities for cultural tourism and regional growth. Using SAM's innovative learning programs as examples, Chrisanthou reinforces the importance of stories and creative interpretation in enabling museums to make stronger connections with visitors and local community. This article helps us understand characteristics central to museum learning as key to audience development, including the physical museum context for inquiry and dialogue, object-based and experiential learning, educational guides and activities, informal learning and constructivist learning among others.

Museum audiences are made up of diverse individuals and exhibition settings are hardly identical. This is particularly the case in the context of touring exhibitions, such as *Tu Di Shen Ti / Our Land Our Body*, which serve to inspire audiences regionally, nationally and internationally, not only through the unique display of the exhibition, but also through the dissemination of educational material. The visitors' "prior knowledge" – that is, all visitors' experiences, possible connections, memories, together with their culture, influences the meanings they will inevitably attribute to exhibit components and whole exhibit themes, rendering it vital for museum professionals to exercise strategies that will create meaningfulness in the cultural present. In their article, *Building Cross-Cultural Connections: The Warburton Arts Project and the 2011 Chinese Tour of 'Tu Di - Shen Ti / Our Land Our Body*,' Laura Fisher and Gay McDonald discuss the ways in which Aboriginal art from remote locations are typically presented in fine art contexts. First exhibited in the Warburton Arts Project, an art centre located in the Ngaanyatjarra lands in Western Australia, the exhibition, curated by Gary Proctor, toured seven museums in Eastern China. The authors examine the novel curatorial strategies and educational material distributed to visitors and compares the innovative installation strategies that were used in the exhibition's display at the Shanghai Art Museum. This article raises

questions about the importance of adapting and adopting exhibitionary strategies that help minimise barriers to cultural understanding and that promotes meaningfulness in the cultural present. Readers will appreciate the various components of a display that reverberates the educative power of exhibitions in art museums, especially in cross-cultural contexts.

What is the social role and impact of museums in relation to engagement with concepts of social exclusion and inclusion? The concept of social exclusion is complex and shifting and has generally been used to describe increases in social inequality in Western societies (Sandell, 2003). Nisa Mackie and Nicole Austin broadly address this question in their article, *8x8: Using artmaking to teach collaboration in student outreach programs*, through the detailing of the various stages of a multi-partner education outreach project that took place outside of the museum walls. The authors discuss the aims, outcomes and strategies implemented by the Sydney-based partners towards getting high school and tertiary students to learn about collaboration in its various forms. These partners included the Biennale of Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Importantly, this article sheds light on the ways in which arts organisations can work together to increase the range of opportunities for youth and student participation and exposure to cultural experiences. They also consider how arts organisations work towards the sustainability of programs, as well as highlighting the advantages of doing so.

While every museum is different, all can find ways of maximising their social impact. But in what ways can museums foster social and cultural change? They certainly embrace their capacity for social service, functioning in the service of society. They facilitate questioning, debate and critical thinking, with the aim of transforming attitudes, conceptions and behaviours – that is, by providing learning experiences. Jane Johnston, Education Officer at the Australian Museum, in her article *Art & Design programs in an inter-disciplinary context,* describes the inter-disciplinary nature of programs at the Australian Museum and how these work in support of the Museum's mission to inspire exploration of nature and culture. The Museum's art and design programs are examined in relation to their aims of developing knowledge and skills in art or design, and understanding of Indigenous Australian culture and the natural world, and how they foster the potential for change in attitudes and behaviours to the benefit of Indigenous Australia and the natural world. This article presents a significant contribution to the understanding of how national museums can engage with contemporary issues and offer experiences that meet public needs. The pro-

gram elements are considered in light of the applicability of constructivism as a learning theory and in the context of international museum practice.

Libraries are also learning organisations that support formal and informal education in a society of lifelong learning. In her article, *Expect the Unexpected: The role of the library in encouraging wonder and curiosity about History*, Emma Reilly, Education Programs Coordinator at the State Library of Victoria, Australia, describes the teaching strategies used to develop wonder and curiosity using the *Little Boxes* school program as a case study. Reilly demonstrates the power of an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning at the Library to increase intellectual engagement and foster deep understanding through the development of a hands-on, minds-on and curiosity-based disposition. The article sheds light on various thinking routines and tools, such as Visible Thinking, that have been used to promote the development of history skills, concepts and sense of belonging in learning in the Library. Crucially, this article raises key ideas and issues about developing student knowledge regarding the Library's vast historical collection, and considers means employed to increase access to collections, facilities and services for students who would otherwise not be provided this opportunity.

Learning in museums can be fun and interactive as visitors explore art from around the world and throughout history. Sydney University Museums, Australia has actively pursued a pedagogical philosophy of making much of its collection available for visitors to handle and touch through object handling sessions, tactile displays and interactive programs. Craig Barker, Manager of Education and Public Programs for Sydney University Museums, analyses the importance of kinesthetic learning or "hands-on" history using the education program at University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum, Macleay Museum and University Art Gallery as case studies in his article, *Materials-based teaching in museums: The experiences of educational programs at Sydney University Museums*. Barker describes how the handling of a variety of collection material aligns with the Museums' broader educational models of archaeological and historical teaching through interpretative-based analysis of material culture. The benefits of tactile learning experiences are analysed in the context of museums with collections of archaeological and ethnographic material, natural history specimens, historical scientific collections and visual arts.

Interdisciplinary learning comes naturally in a museum setting, perhaps more so than in many formal classrooms where discipline specific

curriculum standards are emphasised. By focusing on collaborative learning processes not only between teachers and students but also between the students themselves, the *process* of knowledge generation, where learners are active rather than passive, is emphasised. In their article, *The Art of English: an inter-disciplinary approach to supporting English and Literature curricula at the National Gallery of Victoria*, Purnima Ruanglertbutr and Susie May illuminate how the English and Literature curriculum in Australia can be enriched by collectively looking at, describing and writing about works of art in a museum environment. Using the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia as a case study, the authors demonstrate how inquiry-based learning activities in the Gallery are designed to improve students' skills in the area of visual literacy, creative writing – particularly poetry – and interpretation of literary texts. Importantly, the article highlights how museum education programs serve to support school curriculum, broaden perspectives, improve knowledge of a particular subject and competence in specific skills; aims that are characteristic of museum education programs overall.

With museum educators having greater accountability for their programs, it has become increasingly important to evaluate the relationship between museums and their visitors. Changing definitions of learning, the pressure to justify programs and activities, and larger community-based roles have prompted a need in museum education professionals to understand visitor motivations and behaviour, as well as to keep up-to-date with contemporary learning strategies, including providing technology-rich environments. As the articles will demonstrate, interactive and innovative programs are now widespread in museums, whereby learning opportunities that include emotional, aesthetic and interactive experiences have replaced 'teaching'. Similarly, creative evaluation methods are gaining popularity, seeking to gauge children's responses to their museum experiences in sensory ways.

Using the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia as a case study, Narelle Lemon questions how museum educators and school teachers can understand what young people often experience during a museum-led program using student-generated visual narratives, in other words using digital photographs accompanied with individual reflection. Titled the *Ways of Seeing* project, Lemon's action research reveals how digital cameras can be incorporated into gallery learning experiences in order to support student engagement with art and art spaces; and to build understanding about how young people engage with galleries. This article, *Evaluating the integration of digital cameras in gallery learning*, is interspersed with the voices and reflections of students, gallery educators,

school teachers and parents, who were invited to capture their visit to the gallery for a school excursion, on handheld digital cameras. Findings reveal young people as capable photographers; the importance of acknowledging student voice within galleries; and the value of digital cameras for gallery education in terms of reflection, exploration, responding, and inquiry-based learning.

These are articles that open doors to issues of great interest and importance to educators in the arts and also to museum professionals. Collectively they paint a portrait of a range of activities of display, interpretation and evaluation, highlighting the ways in which museums construct views, present stories and produce resources for learning. These interpretative processes involving the attribution of meaning make up much of the work of museums and could be described as the constitution of the 'curriculum' of the museum. Demonstrably, much analysis of learning in museums focuses on pedagogic methods, but there are also important questions to be asked about content, namely what it is museums set out to 'teach.' While education and learning have been prioritised in many museums, there is no single view as to what this might mean. The scope of articles in this edition emphasises how individuals can understand the words 'learning' and 'education' in very different ways. These views, systems and styles of course, will vary within and between countries, and are underpinned by different theories of learning and teaching. However, it is through this variance in understanding that we can appreciate the diverse perceptions of the purpose, processes and outcomes of education in museums and the educative power of museums, which is what this special edition sets out to achieve. This, and also to encourage reflective practice among practitioners, to influence and inform practice, and to provide a forum in which the theoretical and abstract, the practical and professional are brought together.

I wish to express my gratitude to the authors for contributing to this special edition, their patience and above all, their enthusiasm for museum and gallery education.

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BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION:

AUSTRALIAN ART MUSEUM EDUCATION PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

In the field of art museum education little research, although beginning to emerge, focuses on the role of the art museum educator in the Australian context. This paper critically situates contemporary art museum educator pedagogies, providing context to the uneven, broad and intricate field of art museum education in Australia, specifically in Melbourne, Victoria. It further offers a critical analysis of a case study that provides insight into one museum educator's practice and interaction with her affiliated museum, an artist and a school. The paper begins discourse for the Australian context to evaluate the role of the art museum educator and the impact of the educator's pedagogical decisions upon visitor experience.

INTRODUCTION

Very little research in the Australian context focuses on the role of art museum educators and what they do, including their pedagogical decisions, interactions with students, teachers and education institutions. The art museum educators' role involves a balancing act, as they are expected to align educational goals with general museum practices. To maintain relevance to school audiences, museum educators must understand how students learn in order to ensure that all education programs offered are congruent to the curriculum goals of both state and national education departments (Bedford, 2009; Franco, 2010; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Additionally, relevance is maintained by catering to the requirements of individual visiting teachers. On the other hand, museum educators are also subject to the vision and mission of their employing museum, comprising unique organisational histories and workplace cultures. They must promote the museum according to the individual museum's organizational philosophies, strategies and idiosyncrasies (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Bedford, 2009). The multiplicity of these responsibilities is complex, requiring an extraordinary degree of diplomacy, as museum educators enact the expectations of both museum education and the organizational philosophies.

This paper presents the complexity of being an educator in an art museum context today. In two distinct sections, the paper firstly describes how the profession has been evaluated historically and how, more recently, the mission and focus of museum administration is shifting away from the collection towards the people and communities they serve. The authors argue that limited research has been undertaken to date relating to art museum education, and advocates the benefits involved when museum educators begin sharing their practices and describe the "balancing act" they perform in Australia. Following this, a case study is presented in the form of a personal reflection that utilises the voice of this paper's co-author, Christine Healey, art museum educator from the Heide Museum of Modern Art (Heide). This account is enhanced by the voices of the participating teacher and students from Templestowe Heights Primary School, collected from first-hand observation and reflective narratives. It is intended that this narrative will contribute to the discussion and development associated to the pedagogy of museum education, and the exciting ways in which the educator's role can assist prospective audiences to experience the art museum in a more meaningful manner.

ART MUSEUM EDUCATION AS A PROFESSION

Museum education as a community of practice has tended towards the why and what rather than how of the histories and pedagogies of practice (Griffin, 2011). From observation, major studies have been published that largely account the former. Consequently, museum educators in the recent past have appeared not to share the development of their practice with each other, but have been more likely to engage in conversations with each other that focus on sharing the successes and benefits for participants and students as well as a focus on the objects they discuss rather than the pedagogy behind their approach.

In this paper we refer to "museum education" as the presentation of objects and concepts, as well as discussions that an educator facilitates between themselves, students and teachers within the museum. This suggests we see a "museum educator" as being the staff and volunteers who present and facilitate education programs often in alignment with formal curriculum, to students and teachers who visit the museum.

In America, the role of museum education came under intense scrutiny when the Getty Center for Education in the Arts commissioned Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education and Art, and Stephen Dobbs, Professor of Creative Arts, to undertake research with a goal to "secure the perceptions of museum directors and museum educators regarding the role, the needs, and the possibilities of art museum education" (1987, p. 78). The culminating report, *The Uncertain Profession: Observations on the State of Museum Education in Twenty American Art Museums* (1986) found many directors and educators to have conflicting perspectives about the aims of education and the museum educator's role within the museum. Art museum educators' positions were usually filled by applicants with formal qualifications in art history or museum studies rather than education, which placed the focus of teaching on the subject, rather than on pedagogy (Dobbs & Eisner, 1986). The authors also reported there was no clear career trajectory for museum educators. This impacted upon museum educator self-perceptions, as the research participants in the study were felt to have low status and little political clout within the overall museum hierarchy. Eisner and Dobbs believed this made the emerging profession as 'uncertain' with no clear past or direction.

Dobbs and Eisner (1987) concluded these conditions derived from the distinct lack of museum education research undertaken and that if university courses were offered in museum education pedagogy, they would provide a rich theoretical basis to underpin practice. They championed the possibility of reconnecting educators across museum institutions through visiting fellowships, in order for educators to share their practice and experience the professional environment of other museums. Eisner and Dobbs were hopeful many benefits would follow this renewed vision. These included: professionalization of the field, improved morale, and better attitudes and relationships of museum educators across the sector and within museums. Dobbs and Eisner also envisaged that this would improve what had been found to be a poor working relationship between museum educators and classroom-teachers. This is particularly important as museum education audiences comprise of schools and thus teachers who seek assistance in the exploration of curriculum areas with students. Making informed decisions is especially important as to what and when to access museum resources, artifacts, and exhibitions as a teacher. Furthermore, they believed it capable of generating opportunities for collegiate activities in order to better integrate museum programs with school curricula. Similar sentiments are echoed in Griffin's (2011) study of museum education in Australian contexts.

Responses to Dobbs and Eisner's report, *The Uncertain Profession* (1986) from museum educators themselves were varied. Stapp (1987) proclaimed that a panel of museum educators was established to refute Dobbs and Eisner's claims, given they claim to have felt a lack of understanding of the internal conflicts and pressures operating within museums. Concern was expressed too, that museum educators were not credited for their tact and diplomacy whilst working in extraordinary environments and that they are most adept at managing competing and conflicting demands with multiple stakeholders. More recently, Ebitz (2005) supported this stance as he questioned the status of the educator's role and recognized that during the 1980s many of Dobbs and Eisner's suggestions were already underway. *The Uncertain Profession* has cast a long shadow upon the way museum educators identify themselves and has become shorthand for a critique of professional identity, which is still being referred to in contemporary writing on this topic. Certainly, Dobbs and Eisner's research could act as an impetus to prompt increased research in Australia on the role of the art museum educator, in order to extend localised understanding of how the profession is enacted and positioned within the art museum today.

AUSTRALIAN ART MUSEUM EDUCATION TODAY

While a general body of theory about gallery education does exist, the dominant historical discourses in the field fail to present any kind of uniformity in terms of the rudimentary aims of gallery education, other than getting the audience to “connect” or “engage” with the artworks. How these aims are achieved varies from gallery to gallery and educator to educator (Bedford, 2009, p. 29).

Frequently, museum education research is considered more broadly to include science, zoological and history museums. Hence, the study and research of the history and evolution of Australian museum education practice can often result as a disordered activity, when it comes to focusing solely on art museums and galleries (Griffin, 2011). Rather than examining the unique conditions particular to each museum discipline, such as art or science, the museum education profession has been widely generalized.

The comprehensive National Museum Australia’s 2011 report, *Understanding Museums: Australian Museums and Museology* reviews and describes the recent history and current situation in Australia regarding museums including a brief section on museum education. According to Griffin’s overview of the purpose, history and issues, education has always been central to the purpose of museums and that “programs in museums tend to be student driven rather than object driven” (2011, p. 1). Griffin maintains that “museums have always positioned themselves as educational institutions, and yet the role of education staff has developed erratically and variably” (2011, p. 5). Griffin further raises concern regarding staff qualifications, acknowledging that thirty years ago it was the norm for teachers to be appointed in a museum by each state’s education departments. Today, South Australia remains the only Australian state to continue with this procedure. The remaining vestige of this system is that museums (in the state of Victoria) tend only to employ education staffs that possess teaching qualifications. The Catholic Education Office in the state of Victoria however, continues to employ a small number of teachers, who are positioned to deliver education programs in notable Victorian museums.

Furthermore, Griffin (2011) asserts that education staffs are often the only “voice” in the museum equipped to speak on behalf of visiting students, particularly in relation to the way visitors interpret and experience the museum’s collection and displays. She also adds that educators are perfectly

positioned as interpretive specialists within the museum, developing programs and engaging in such discussions during exhibition planning stages. Hooper-Greenhill further supports this view, stating "the education officer should be fully integrated [and] involved in the management planning and decisions" (1992, p. 77). In the context of Australian museum education practice, Griffin (2011) asserts that museum education practice and pedagogies are driven more so by process rather than by curricula outcomes or learning from didactic presentations, with a focus on understanding how students learn. She adds that museum educators do devise programs and museum experiences with these educative objectives in mind.

Additionally, recent research conducted in Australian museums considers the experience of the child visitor within education programs. The three-year project, "Children's museum experiences: Identifying powerful mediators of learning," (Anderson, Piscitelli, Weier, Everett and Tayler, 2002) sought to explain how young children are experiencing and interpreting museums through regular visitation. Anderson et al. (2002) found that when children could relate to museum objects and narratives within the context of their own life experiences, the visit was more enjoyable and memorable. For museum educators, this reinforces the importance of constructivist teaching methods to assist students with their learning in the museum and build upon what they already know as a foundation for increasing their understanding of the museum objects and concepts introduced. More significantly, such research advocates considerations of students' cognitive needs to members of "exhibition and design" management departments.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

This paper presents a self-study that utilises reflection and narrative inquiry to which lived experiences of being an art museum educator in Australia are explored. The narrative shares the pedagogical decisions made to support learners who visit the museum, and analyses the decisions that the educator makes in order to provide students with meaningful and engaging interactions with the art museum space. This self-study is guided by the following question: What are the core values expressed in museum education programming at a) an organisational level, and b) by the museum educators?

To engage in a process of self-study and reflection is significant to develop

understanding. In our role as educators we learn, teach and use reflective and metacognitive processes (Wilson & Clarke, 2004). It is Schön's (1983) notion of "reflection on action" and "reflection in action" that set the foundations for teacher reflection and the sense of framing and reframing, whereby "the self might be engaged in (as well as learn through) the reflective process" (Loughran, 2006, p. 43). Reflective practice can be both intellectual and affective (Stockhausen and Kawashima, 2002, p.119), and "has the potential to facilitate transformed practice" (2002, p. 118). Reflective inquiry should lead to continuous professional development (Alger, 2006). This space is where we as authors position the importance of self-study. Self-study through reflective practice is the thoughtful, systematic, critical, exploration of the complexity of one's own learning and teaching practice (Dinkelman, 2003; Samaras & Freese, 2006). We live, tell, retell, and relive our life stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) as we negotiate ourselves within and across various contexts. As Clandinin (1997) reinforces, it is through the act of reflecting and telling stories that as teachers, we come to understand our selves.

One way to encapsulate the essence of the museum education and the role of the museum educator, is to develop such understanding through self-reflections and descriptions of how the research participant perceive themselves or constructs their professional identities within their everyday environment and in the museum. By undertaking research and collecting data within the researcher's own workplace, the researcher is able to build a picture that includes the contextual subtleties of time, space and place into the constructed realities provided by the participants (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). It provides an additional means to build interesting and descriptive text to support the research participant's explanations. The following first-person narrative paints a picture of the complexity involved in the museum education profession, and also sheds light upon how this aim can be achieved.

CASE AND DISCUSSION

I became a museum educator because I am excited about the capacity of art to build happier communities and its ability to foster community through the power of conversation and learning through art. The learners who participate in my learning experiences at Heide form the centre of my teaching practice. This audience includes students, teachers, education volunteers and the artists who participate in the programs I devise. As such, I perceive my teaching practice as a collaborative process, which can be akin to

what Wenger (1998) describes as a community of practice, involving one "to work in conjunction with others." This is especially relevant to the arts (Bamford, 2006).

Common to Heide's education programs are one to two hour school visits to the museum. Students and their teachers partake in a facilitated tour led by a trained education volunteer and often participate in an art-making workshop. During these visits, students are engaged in deep and rich conversations relating to careful observations of works of art. Students are guided through a visual analysis of the artworks. Museum educators carefully select information about artworks and artists to support students' personal interpretations. The museum educator might apply pedagogical strategies such as the Visual Thinking Strategies, asking students questions such as "what's going on in this picture?" and "what do you see that makes you say that?" to elicit responses and encourage students to provide a rationale for their observations. Ultimately, the motive of this pedagogy is to facilitate students' excitement about art on their own accord and to demonstrate that we value their voice and contribution to the dialogue. We "teach" them how to navigate complex art museum environments. This shared goal for educators at Heide results in meaningful discussions of our values as museum educators, particularly during staff debriefings where we share the successes experienced and the challenges faced. From this evolves a sense of shared practice, support structures and community.

Teachers bring their students to Heide for many reasons. For some, a major goal of a visit might be to familiarise students, particularly very young students, with the gallery environment and might be as simple as helping them understand why they cannot touch works of art in the museum to foster *museum literacy*. This involves fostering understanding through experience; the ways in which students may in the future develop familiarity with the museum environment and draw upon the knowledge held by the museum about its collections and appropriate modes of behavior (Stapp, 1980). Artworks are usually on public display in museums, and as visitors, we are trusted not to damage them by touching and to behave in a particular way. For older students, discussions are tailored at more sophisticated levels, with conversations based on themes raised by the artist through the use of metaphor and symbolism. Many schools choose to access Heide's online pre-visit and post-visit education resources before or after their visit. For many students, a school excursion to the gallery forms their first visit to an art museum. Hence, as museum educators, we feel both privileged and honored to be part of these students' rite of passage to the world of art.

Figure 1. Templestowe Heights Primary school students describing the processes and ideas behind their own artworks. Copyright 2012 by Heide Museum of Modern Art. Reproduced with permission.

The focus of my discussion extends beyond the usual short visits; a learning experience that enables school participants to engage more deeply in their museum experience. The project included designing opportunities for students to work with an artist and for the museum to work with a teacher. The primary participant was Templestowe Heights Primary school, whose students, teachers and parents provided ethical permission to share the stories of their learning in the museum. The school's art teacher, Sofia, had been a regular visitor to Heide, and was seeking ways to integrate museum excursions in her teaching and to advocate visits within her school.

In 2012 the exhibition, *Louise Saxton: Sanctuary* took place in Heide's project space, a gallery reserved for emerging artists. Although much information was provided by the Heide curators about the artists and artworks beforehand, it wasn't until I viewed the works that I was enthused by their potential to engage students. Furthermore, the exhibition space, comprising of artworks on the walls and a cabinet, could accommodate a large group of students, enabling them to wander freely both independently and to gather as a group. The exhibition design and display of artworks can make an exhibition welcoming to students if there are large spaces for groups of students to view artworks or if they are displayed behind glass, high on plinths or behind barriers. This offers a positive experience for students—and the educator—as students may roam through a gallery without

constant reminders not to touch and move away from the artworks. It also allows space for other museum visitors to access the gallery during the same time as the school groups.

Curated by Heide's director, Jason Smith, the exhibition proved popular among visitors to the museum. The exhibition featured fragile works of art made from reclaimed needlework, including embroidery and lace from everyday textiles such as doilies and tablecloths that had been cut away from its original napery. These were pinned onto bridal tulle in the form of birds and animals, referencing natural history paintings from the 17th to 20th centuries. The artwork was personally significant to the schoolteacher, Sofia, who owned embroidery that had been handed down from previous generations. This enabled Sofia to model personal responses to works of art among the students, which resulted in intimate interpretations of the artworks.

Another vital part of administering the "Sanctuary Project" involved selecting an artist who could develop rapport with the children. Louise was keen to work with children, having had experience at a local pre-school centre. As a Melbourne-based artist, Louise generously invited Sofia and me to her studio. The project benefitted Sofia's professional development, empowering her to develop greater understanding of Louise's arts practice; this was achieved by connecting an art teacher with a professional artist's studio practice. The themes explored in Louise's artworks were relevant to the school curriculum and was guided by the Australian Curriculum in Victoria document (Assessment Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014). These included:

- the arts domains of 'Exploring and responding' and 'Creating and making' as guided by state level curriculum documentation;
- developing an appreciation and knowledge of local history;
- nature and science;
- sustainability and the environment; and
- critical and creative thinking.

Sofia selected fifty-two students from Grades 4-6 and three colleagues to assist with the supervision of the project. Heide commissioned the not-for-profit youth organisation, SYN Media, to produce a film that would function both as an education resource and also as documentation of the

event. Six education volunteers offered their assistance. The students were divided into two groups and a timetable was devised, whereby students were allocated times in the various activities, namely, making the artworks in the Sidney Myer Education Centre, and time in the gallery spaces for facilitated discussions about the artworks and the history of Heide.

Louise and I met the students as they arrived in the gallery. I asked them to look very carefully and quietly at the artworks. After allowing the students time to wander freely in the small gallery space, they grouped together in the middle of the gallery, where I questioned what they had observed about the artworks. The students raised ideas about nature and the environment, communicating their own opinions and ideas about the artworks. They were most interested in the materials and processes of art production. They thought of questions to ask the artist, and it was at this point that Louise was introduced. Louise elaborated upon the ideas informing her work. They discussed sanctuaries being safe places for animals and plants and the role of museums as custodians of objects and ideas.

Figure 2. Students engaging with the artist, Louise Saxton in Heide gallery. Copyright 2012 by Heide Museum of Modern Art. Reproduced with permission.

Together with Louise, the students were invited to make their own artworks in the education centre, offering opportunities to synthesise responses. Louise modelled the process of making the prints and cutting shapes to assemble a collage.

As the project manager, I collaborate with artists who have varied experiences working with children. Some artists have little or no experience working with children and seek guidance. Others may have a laissez-faire approach and wanted to access more 'creating and making' materials. The skills required in artmaking are that of problem solving with materials, which can be challenging for students to implement from idea generation,

Figure 3. Louise explains the art-making process to students, preparing them to make their own artworks. Copyright 2012 by Heide Museum of Modern Art. Reproduced with permission.

development to the final product. Some artists work with a procedural approach, communicating steps for students to follow. From my observation, this approach tends to be less "chaotic" in the classroom, and, it can be argued, less creative. However, as a museum educator, my role is to accommodate and support the preferred working style of the artist.

Key results of the Sanctuary Project were the beautiful printed collages that the students produced. The students were able to create as many collages as they wished during the allotted timeframe; this saw some students

Figure 4. Student collage. Copyright 2012 by Heide Museum of Modern Art. Reproduced with permission.

working intensely on one image while other students worked at a quicker pace to create as many as they could. The students were able to adapt the task to suit their own interests and, from observation, found it to be an enjoyable process. The activity provided the students with time to relate and consider what they had seen in the exhibition and to personally interact with the artist.

Louise and I were invited to view the students' works in Templestowe Heights Primary school that were produced as a result of the Sanctuary Project. It was evident that Sofia's enthusiasm permeated the entire school; the students' works were displayed around the entire campus and all school members were involved in creating birds of different types. Furthermore, Sofia decided to exhibit the students' artworks at a small local gallery and reviewed the project in the gallery magazine.

The Sanctuary Project proved rewarding for all participants involved and this was indicated by increased participation and involvement in responding to the art works. For students the experience was positive, building on their understanding of art museums as places that raise issues in regards to societal concerns and as places for recreation and life-long learning. The schoolteacher embraced the opportunity to engage with a professional artist and their arts practice in a personal way, reconnecting the teacher to professional artists and contemporary art practice, which empowered engagement with their students. For the artist, it was an exciting opportunity to contribute to the community, and enabled them to consider the reception of their art practice by a school audience. For the education volunteers, it was motivating to work with students and an exhibiting artist during a full day. This permitted their extended participation in rich discussions with students about their own responses to artworks, and also enabled volunteers to share their excitement toward the art museum experience.

The Sanctuary Project is a prime example of a museum educator's advocacy for education within the art museum. The project demonstrated the power of students' experiences in galleries and the value of personally collaborating with professional artists. This process required me to work with other museum staff, particularly curators, to discuss and refine the development plans for the program – such administrative aspects may appear unacknowledged as part of the daily routine operations in museum education. In this regard, having the project documented on film was valuable in capturing the processes involved in its preparation and delivery. In order to evaluate the successes of the project, it was necessary to find time to engage in professional reflection. This prompted much of the findings above, after the conclusion of the program. Moreover, through continued contact with Sofia during and after the project, I progressively realized how significant this art museum experience was for her and how this impacted positively upon her enthusiasm for teaching in the classroom and reinvigorated her personal art practice.

This experience prompted further discussion of future collaborations with Louise and Sofia, who have both remained in contact since the program. I have continued to work with Louise on several arts projects at Heide. Moreover, Sofia plans to regularly involve her other groups of students in Heide's programs, focusing on arts and sustainability. Inspired by Heide's iconic "heart and kitchen gardens", Sofia is working with students towards creating an artist's garden at her school, comprising of sculptures made by the students, amid herbs and vegetables. She hopes that one day, the school might have their own "heart garden."

CONCLUSION

Museum educators of the 21st century are required to balance the demands of a range of stakeholders, many of whom have contrasting interests. For example, there exists the need to balance the requirements of the museum's workplace culture with the challenges faced by museum educators, which may often go unnoticed among management (Dobbs & Eisner, 1986). As such, art museum educators are constantly required to demonstrate flexibility in their approach to programming and pedagogies. Dobbs and Eisner may refer to the profession as being an "uncertain one," however we can also argue that instability may arise from the demands of the practice itself and not of the profession. While education pedagogies situate the student at the centre of learning, within the art museum context, the artworks and curatorial discourse are often broadly regarded as priorities (Rice, 2003). This can often instill a sense of conflict within the museum educator, as they attempt to meet the diverse needs of visiting teachers, students, education departments, curriculum management bodies, artists and other stakeholders. Integral to this process is the need for museum educators to explore, inquire and question meaning-making processes and representations of the world we live in, which largely drive a museum educators' pedagogical decisions.

In order for art museum education to maintain relevance to the communities we serve, education must become increasingly valued across the broader strategies and mission of the museum. This can occur through further investigation, documentation and analysis of how the educator's role is positioned within the museum; how it is performed and received by the students and teachers who form the centre of an educator's teaching pedagogies.

This paper, featuring a case study of the Sanctuary Project at Heide, examined the multiple roles that an art museum educator manifests in an Australian museum. It revealed the complex negotiations that exist between art museum educators and their stakeholders, from the perspective of a facilitator and co-learner. External and internal stakeholders were integral to the successful learning program, including the schoolteacher, students, parents, artist, education volunteers, filmmakers, art museum director, curators and other museum professionals. All these participants were not only involved in the organisation and logistics of the exhibition and program, but also contributed their approach to the realization of learning. Pedagogical decisions to stimulate inquiry and questioning are placed at the heart of one's professional interactions, from consideration of the art works, artist and art museum space, to the curriculum guidelines that are mandated from the state's Education Department to guide a teacher's learning and teaching activities. The responses from project participants, although not specifically unpacked in this paper, demonstrate the emotive power of working with authentic art objects within an art museum—this itself is an intricate and complex part of being an art museum educator and that is often not acknowledged nor shared publically.

The paper illuminated an intimate perspective of the complex "business" involved in art museum education. The authors anticipate that this will encourage other museum educators to share their experiences in order to communicate the variety of lived experiences and to extend future discussions and development of museum education.

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"The Sanctuary Project" video can be accessed at:
http://vimeo.com/56719565

THE ROLE OF MUSEUM EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING NEW LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN REGIONAL VICTORIA

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Rhonda Chrisanthou is a visual arts educator working at Shepparton Art Museum in regional Victoria, Australia. With postgraduate qualifications in Museum Studies, Education and the Arts, she draws strongly upon her teaching experience and interest in Australian art and culture to support visual arts learning in the museum context. Developing and delivering a broad range of public programs that support historical and contemporary art exhibitions, Ms Chrisanthou's involvement in museum education includes interpretation, forums, and developing education resources and 'art-making' for an increasingly diverse range of local and regional audiences in Victoria.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines arts learning in a museum environment and considers the role of visual art education in an Australian regional context using the Shepparton Art Museum's (SAM) learning programs as a case study. Alongside growth and recognition of the art museum's role and collection, education at SAM provides greater equity to the arts through education and public programming. In addition to contemporary and historical art exhibitions and publishing programs, this article will highlight education platforms that support arts literacy, engagement and access to the arts for local schools and other learning communities. It is concluded that both of these areas of museum practice endeavour to provide a range of learning platforms or visitor experiences for regional audiences.

INTRODUCTION

"To be forums rather than temples, museums must go beyond merely exhibiting and providing information about objects" (Donley, 1993, p. 2). Museums, even art museums connote priceless art works and artefacts, rarified objects and highly specialised collection displays. Today however, audiences seek more than appreciation of objects in art museums and galleries. To remain relevant, museums need be participatory and democratic to attract diverse audiences. This article will consider ways in which physical spaces engage visitors in becoming increasingly participatory through tours and other facilitated events such as forums, artist talks, art workshops and extended learning programs. As Nina Simon notes in *The Participatory Museum* (2010), staff members are uniquely capable of making objects personal, active, provocative, or relational by asking visitors to engage with them in different ways. Public collections also need to build social capital by being responsive to pressing social and environmental issues such as migration and sustainability, social justice and Indigenous rights (Kelly, 2006, p. 2). To provide greater equity in the arts, Kelly suggests that, museums, their missions, their civic, social responsibilities and their means of engagement with communities must constantly transform in response to social and economic imperatives at local, national and global levels. In addition, museums and programs need to be both sustainable and demonstrate impact and value within their local communities to both maintain and attract further funding and support (Kelly, 2006, p. 8). Home to a culturally diverse population that includes refugee, Aboriginal and migrant communities, Shepparton provides myriad opportunities and challenges in engaging new and emerging audiences.

In Australia collections, especially art and heritage collections of national significance are often situated in capital cities. However, regional galleries in Victoria have significant and sizable collections of Australian art of their own or on permanent loan from state government collections. The state of Victoria is considered a "cradle for regional galleries in Australia" (Rich, in Griffin & Paroissien, 2011, p. 1), bringing local audiences, items of significance and understanding of the past and the present (Griffin & Paroissien, 2011). Regional art museums are characterised by collections of artworks that are both of national and local significance. They contribute to a sense of personal and community identity, and often rely on the assistance of volunteers. In addition to historical collections, in recent years Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) has undergone considerable change

through physical renewal, rebranding, promotions, and changing strategic and collection policies. This is reflected in diverse public programming and an emphasis on presenting and collecting contemporary art, as well as ceramics, including international and Indigenous ceramics. According to Griffin & Paroissien (2011), a number of regional art museums comprise of active collection policies in the contemporary arena, and acquire works of equal significance to those being collected by main capital city art institutions. In addition to collections, what has been identified as crucial components to visitor involvement in regional galleries includes operational funding; exhibitions; conservation and professional staff (Griffin & Paroissien, 2011). While there are often economic restraints to growth and the development of art collections and audiences, state and national government agencies including the Australia Council provides a range of Australian government grants supportive of art museums. Funding for touring exhibitions to regional museums is available in some continuing Australian government programs of assistance, such as through Visions of Australia and the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program. These grants and others have been significant to increasing museums' involvement with their regional audiences, including school audiences.

Widely recognised as having one of the best collections of Australian ceramics and an international ceramic award, the Shepparton Art Museum is yet a small, regional art museum in northern Victoria, Australia. Alongside its historical collection of Australian art and ceramics, SAM has a relatively new and fast growing collection of contemporary paintings and works on paper by Australian artists. In supporting visual arts practice in Australia, SAM curates exhibitions by emerging artists and delivers two national ceramic awards, the *Indigenous Ceramic Art Award*, (ICAA) and the *Sidney Myer Fund Australian Art Award* (SMFACA). In recent years, the ongoing development and profile of SAM has provided regional communities including education sectors the opportunity to view high calibre in-house exhibitions and to participate in a wide range of public programs. Assisted through the Sidney Myer Fund, the Sir Andrew Fairley and Lady Fairley Foundation, Margaret Lawrence Bequest and other philanthropic organisations, SAM receives ongoing support from local government and government agencies, Greater Shepparton City Council, and Relationships Australia, as well as operational funding through Arts Victoria. Since 2011, extended school programs have been funded from both Arts Victoria's Extended School Residency program and triennial funding 2012–2014 from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Looking to address areas of need as well as providing new opportunities to ac-

cess quality arts education in the region, public programing has built upon museum collections, displays, interpretative tools and resources, the professional skills of staff as well as that of visiting artists, curators and scholars. Despite limitations of space and resources, many targeted programs are inclusive of local communities that include newly arrived migrants, young families and children, Aboriginal artists and women. SAM often invites participation and collaboration with local primary and secondary schools, ceramic artists and the tertiary sector from both the Multicultural and Koorie Education departments at Goulburn Ovens Technical And Further Education (GOTAFE). In 2011, SAM's education staff delivered a highly successful arts residency program with Numurkah Primary School, *Little Treasures: Exploring Ourselves Through Clay*. These and other public programs have fostered repeat visitation and has built upon the museum's capacity to develop new audiences.

This article examines several of SAM's special exhibitions and its educational programs that have both achieved diversification and an increase in visitor attendance. It argues for education as a core service in regional art museums, whereby education connotes lifelong learning, expanding beyond providing visits by students in school groups. These include children's programs and family visits as well as the professional development of teachers. Of particular focus to the discussion, is the integration of interdisciplinary based learning and teaching – a constructivist, student-centred pedagogy, where "students are engaged in meaning making, not least through weaving different modes of thinking from two or more disciplines. At the same time, the focus inevitably swings towards a more student-centred model of teaching and learning" (Blake, Sterling and Kagawa, 2009, p. 13). An example of such a program, is the 2013 internationally exclusive exhibition at SAM, the *Golden Age of Colour Prints: Ukiyo-e from the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, which offered the Museum the opportunity to deliver a culturally enriching learning experience for local communities and visitors alike. This exhibition presented regional and metropolitan audiences with an opportunity to view rare Japanese woodblock prints; the exhibition instigated an exceptional display of Australian studio ceramics from the Museum's permanent collection and enabled education staff at the Museum to work closely with local communities to deliver cultural activities, events, tours and resources to a range of visitors. Working with a number of local schools and teachers to support strong visitation to the art museum, the exhibition provided access and insight into the cultural and social significance of ukiyo-e woodblock printmaking in eighteenth century Japan. It also facilitated understanding of the influence of Japanese art, aesthetics

and culture and supported Japanese language and arts based curricula in a number of regional schools.

In addition to school visits to the exhibition and art workshops at the art museum, the article will also describe examples of school partnerships initiated by education staff, which supported outreach programs in schools. Funded through the Victorian state government's Strategic Partnership Program (SPP), the art museum was able to build upon its arts expertise, resources and relationships with schools to deliver several programs that would normally be inaccessible to students in rural and regional areas. This included an eight-week ceramics workshop program, *Things of Earth and Fire* with St Mel's Primary School in Shepparton, and a literacy-based art program based upon the Linda Park's novel, *A Single Shard* (2001), which was embedded into the school curriculum through the collaboration of classroom and art teachers at Numurkah Primary School. Both programs are directly linked to the new national Australian curriculum initiatives, in particular, the cross-curriculum priorities as outlined in the Australian Curriculum. The learning programs highlighted aspects of Asian arts and culture and the significant influence of Asian ceramics on Australian studio ceramics. Museum visits enabled students to observe artworks that linked Australian and Asian art forms and traditions. Although quite different in their approach, both programs responded to the local needs of school communities in supporting students' visual literacy through experiential learning with arts practice. Experiential learning is core to the literature about museums and learning. Falk and Dierking characterize the museum experience as "the ability for an individual to experience real things, and under the best of circumstances, within real, meaningfully designed physical context" (Falk and Dierking, p. 196).

Workshops at the school and visits to the art museum, introduced eight classes of Years five and six students to Japanese influences in ceramics and printmaking. In the classroom, students considered the function of tea bowls, rituals and ceremony in context of the aesthetics of calligraphy, colour woodblock printmaking, wabi sabi and raku.

By illustrating the nature of education programs at SAM and visitors' participation in public programming and displays, readers will gain insight into the importance of museum education in developing new learning communities, community education, life-long learning, social inclusion and cohesion and active participation in the visual arts.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF ART MUSEUM PROGRAMMING AT SHEPPARTON ART MUSEUM

Shepparton Art Gallery was established in 1936 through civic endeavours and the support of state and local governments. SAM's cultural role and identity is closely linked to the growth and development of the Shire of Shepparton into a prosperous agricultural centre with substantial ethnic diversity. With 65 languages other than English spoken by local residents and a large Aboriginal community, Greater Shepparton is not only culturally diverse but caters for significant numbers of recent arrivals through refugee and skilled migration programs. Despite Shepparton's prosperity and growth, the shire has substantial levels of social and economic disadvantage, accompanying low levels of literacy and engagement in formal learning. Bringing students on excursions to the art gallery can be culturally and socially challenging for teachers and students. However, public programming and exhibitions have had a significant impact on the development of diverse learning communities that increasingly value the breadth and depth of exhibitions, programs and partnerships made available through increases in education based and operational funding from government and philanthropic organisations over the last decade. Since 2000, there has also been substantial investment in rebuilding cultural amenities through Federation funding and other regional development initiatives supported by both state and local government.

Through the support of Arts Victoria, Greater Shepparton City Council and additional state government funding, the capacity of Shepparton Art Museum to deliver art education programs to schools and the local community has developed recently and quickly. With the appointment of an education officer and the construction of new gallery spaces that comprised a workshop room and a range of exhibition spaces, the art gallery had increasingly aimed at working with schools and communities to promote access and equity to arts learning. This was evident with the appointment of community and curriculum based education staff in 2007, which brought forth community and cultural development programs with practicing artists. The Australian Afghani embroidery exhibition, *Sewing All The Way Home* was a notable outcome of community-based exhibition programming in 2008. The ongoing collaboration of education staff through public programming, recognizes the importance of trained and professional expertise of staff in facilitating dialogue, as is the provision of appropriate physical and contextual spaces for hosting dialogues and interacting with audiences (Bacon, Korza & Williams, 2002, p. 2). With substantial refurbishment in

2011, the gallery re-opened in February 2012 as SAM. The new spaces, featuring museum standard climate control, lighting, and curatorial displays of the collection with a strong focus on contemporary art spaces, and both international and in-house exhibitions, further signalled the development of new audiences. Furthermore, Museum education had similarly looked to extend and engage with diverse audiences through both school based and community based programs. As *how* museums serve diverse audiences are also influenced by the stories and pedagogies that are included in museum programming (Delin, 2002; Sandell, 2002; Young, 2002).

The physical Museum context

With a range of historical and contemporary exhibitions and art spaces as key resources, museum learning or education at SAM is varied and delivered in many ways: in guided tours and activities for school groups; education resources for teachers; floor talks and previews and in targeted and extended workshop programs with professional artists, museum staff and members of the community. Learning in the museum also encompasses the design, installation of the collection and curated exhibitions, of interpretative texts that include didactic labels and descriptive panels and a sizeable publishing program delivered behind-the-scenes by collection, marketing and curatorial staff. As Falk and Dierking argue, high levels of involvement in the physical surroundings of the museum are associated with increased learning; "given that museums...have consistently been found to generate positive feelings and high levels of interaction with aspects of the physical setting, we have argued that they must also facilitate learning" (2000, p. 63). Of considerable importance, is the range and quality of the exhibition spaces and displays in creating memorable learning experiences. Furthermore, as Elizabeth Vallance (2004) states, visitor experiences also form part of the learning that takes place, as students and other audiences navigate through material and subject matter and interact with each other in different ways. In other words, the role of museum-based learning is a social process involving "both the individuals within a visitor's group and the people encountered outside that group directly, which often affect learning" (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 189).

Object-based and experiential learning

Teaching in an art gallery or museum provides a unique but also highly personalised public space for learning. Working with original and often valuable artworks as resources, students are increasingly attentive and re-

spond readily to cues that invite interpretation. Learning through objects has particular benefits. "It is interactive, can encourage the imagination, and stimulate a lifelong passion for discovery" (Museums Association, 2005, p. 19). It has been suggested that working with objects "puts a different focus on students' work; looking at the objects and trying to understand who made them, why they were made, what rituals they were part of and the historical context . . . it enables them to build out from the specific" (Candlin, in Davis, 2001, para. 12). Students learn through "senses, especially sight, hearing and touch . . . [objects] develop our feelings as well as our powers of perception, analysis and ethical awareness, imagination and creativity (Anderson, 1999, pp. 8–9). School tours invite students to explore historical, aesthetic and cultural concepts that are conveyed through textual or visual analysis. Despite non-verbal cues, art works or objects cannot be seen as "open books." Responding to aesthetic or visual texts is enhanced by involvement of a trained educator who facilitates students to read or unpack the formal features or qualities of an artwork. Similarly, historical information is gleaned rather than relayed through analysis of thematic, stylistic or generic features of artworks and displays.

Educational tools and activities

Contextualising artwork also builds upon the personal responses of audiences who inevitably bring their own experiences and knowledge into play. As with all visitors, school students of all ages seek contexts, comparisons, correlations and explanation to assist interpretation. Subsequently, collection displays and labels, exhibition programing and design, as well as guided tours and talks are interpretative tools and are regarded as core 'educational' business. At SAM, the material aspects and demands of collection management, exhibition development and design, object display and more recently, publications are developed in-house by curatorial and collection staff. With two education based staff, or one full-time equivalent, the education program at SAM includes the many social aspects of public programming. This entails a variety of workshop programs in the museum and workshop room, floor talks, seminar programs for a range of developing audiences that includes targeted exhibition previews for teachers and more recently, for students completing the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). To complement exhibition programming, SAM often employs specialised art tutors whom might also be an exhibiting artist, to not only deliver a floor talk but also a workshop. This provides participants with direct experience of, or insight into an artist's thinking and practice.

The Museum is becoming more civically engaged with a range of communities and has drawn upon both long-standing and new relationships. Developing learning communities require that it responds to the social as well as educational needs of visual art communities of Shepparton. This includes fostering access to exhibition spaces for local artists, Friends of the art museum and schools. Inviting participation in public programs extends to the annual VCE school-based art exhibition, recently expanded into a primary and secondary school exhibition, entitled *The Art Room*. In 2013, it encompassed a wider range of schools from the Goulburn Valley region of Victoria and has received strong support from within the community as well as the schools sector. Increases in school participation and visitation over the several years have been aided through the commitment of a team of volunteer guides, the range and quality of exhibition programs, access to curriculum resources and activities as well as professional development programs for teachers.

Figure 1. Volunteer guide Helen Hinks talks with Year 3 and 4 Japanese language students from St Josephs, Benalla, about Kabuki actors in ukiyo-e prints from eighteenth century, Japan. Copyright 2013 by Shepparton Art Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Such educational guides and activities can help visitors find points of departure for inquiry and dialogue (Bacon, Korza & Williams, 2002, p. 2). Sociologist Daniel Yankelovich, cites the characteristics of dialogue that make it vital in learning and democracy:

> Dialogue is distinguished from simple discussion . . . dialogue encourages participants to *suspend judgment* and allow assumptions and preconceptions to be brought out into the open, in order to foster understanding and break down obstacles. It attempts to create *equality* among participants . . . It encourages *empathy* by inviting *multiple perspectives* to the table and supporting their expression, thus facilitating a greater understanding of others' viewpoints. Through these and other means, it seeks to build a climate of trust and safety, without which genuine dialogue cannot occur (cited in Bacon et al. 2002, p. 2).

While still in various stages of development, the Museum's school programs are collectively titled, *Visual Art Learning Links*. Since the re-launch of the art gallery as SAM in February 2012, an emphasis on curated exhibitions developed internally by museum staff and guest curators, has generated new content and art spaces that have the potential to develop educational as well as social links. Numerous school visits to exhibitions during 2012–2013 have been aided by guided school tours with education staff. In addition, tours comprise of a range of approaches and activities that complement exhibition displays. They include: clay and art making sessions with practicing artists and educators in the museum's workshop; school partnership projects that are supported by art based incursions at school, and importantly, 'museum learning' as a distinct and valued component of education programs instigated by teachers, and importantly by school principals. School-based learning programs and *Visual Art Learning Links* are funded through triennial funding initiatives through the Victorian education department's Strategic Partnership Program.

Development of literacy skills through constructivist learning

With increasing demand for educational tours and resources, provided free to local and regionally based schools and community groups, informal as well as applied learning opportunities have developed substantially. In retracing the steps that focused particular attention on engaging school groups, in 2010 the art gallery introduced a new learning tool for students, who were often first time visitors. After trialing a number of themed trails

and tours through the collection, the "Art Passport" offered participants a personalized learning experience. As an adjunct to guided tours, it was designed for use by upper primary and lower secondary school students by encouraging young visitors to self-guide, record responses and evaluate their museum experience, enabling user-friendly and independent learning. In the context of curriculum learning, the Art Passport supported student participation in the Arts learning domain and those of Civics and Personal Learning. It provided a simple but effective link to the VELS curriculum frameworks – now known as the AusVELS, the Victorian state's interpretation of the Australian Curriculum – through the domains of learning, and supported literacy and numeracy initiatives, one of the key priorities of state education at the time. Supporting cultural literacy and museum literacy by enabling positive and memorable experiences, one of the roles of the Museum is to improve both literacy and participation in education through the arts. Visual literacy and museum literacy, both of which when applied to genuine learning experiences can aide creative problem solving, critical thinking and evidential reasoning in academic disciplines (Iowa State University Museums, para. 1). As a complex cultural and social activity, art based literacy initiatives such the UK based Articulate program at the National Gallery of London in 2008-9 underpin and define literacy as:

> An integral part of life, and important to the personal growth of young people and their development as democratic citizens. Museums and galleries can play a vital role in the development and support of literacy, both in terms of formal education provision and lifelong learning (Dodd & Jones, 2009, p. 1).

Importantly, for the Shepparton Art Museum, students are recognised as stakeholders in their own cultural lives. Initiatives, such as The Art Passport recognise that students are "citizens" with the right to access art knowledge, share experiences and to be actively involved in interpretation. Equipping students with literacy skills, prepares students to better understand the mediated world around them, and be involved in the description, analysis and interpretation of concepts and messages with confidence. Increasingly, exhibitions and the collection offer a contemporary, historic, or global context, as well as generate contrasts and comparisons that increase understanding around an issue (Bacon, Korza & Williams, 2002, p. 2) and that invite civic dialogue. Inviting alternative interpretations is one way of opening up the museum to diverse audiences. As Roberts suggests:

> One solution to reaching a diverse population has been to hand over interpretative process to visitors, so that they may discover for themselves the meanings that speak to them. By providing guides to questioning and looking, visitors are empowered to look for themselves from their own particular vantage point (Roberts, 2004, p. 223).

Such means of learning in the Museum echoes a constructivist approach to education; Hein (1995) expresses constructivism as the most appropriate approach given the diversity of museum visitors. He reinforces that "learners construct knowledge as they learn; they don't simply add new facts to what is known, but constantly reorganise and create both understanding and the ability to learn as they interact with the world" (p. 76). Hence, as Hein (1995) puts it, the focus of learning in the museum should be on the learner, not on the subject to be learnt. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill also adopts this position; she characterises the museum educators' role as providing:

> experiences that invite visitors to make meaning through deploying and extending their existing interpretative strategies and repertoires; using their prior knowledge and their preferred learning styles, and testing their hypotheses against those of others, usually experts. The task is to produce opportunities for visitors to use what they know already to build new knowledge and new confidence in themselves as learners and social agents (pp. 2000, 139–140).

Since its introduction, the Art Passport has seen over 3,500 students utilise it, some returning on repeat school visits, and for some, on weekends and holidays with their families. The Art Passport not only facilitates enjoyment of the museum by family and social groups, it connects the art gallery to both individuals and schools by personalising and integrating knowledge through learning in the public arena.

Individual objects or collection-based and special exhibitions as a cultural and social resource

Although the Museum has had substantial increases in school visitation from all education sectors, the need to provide a range of learning experiences that support arts and cross-curriculum learning initiatives for both primary and secondary schools has been at the forefront of recent school incursions and activities at SAM. The role the art museum has in leading

learning in arts education begins with the recognition that for local schools and communities, the collection and displays are a significant cultural and social resource. Seen as a supporter of classroom outcomes, Robert Sullivan explains that:

> Schools have articulated real educational needs, and museums have proposed real solutions. If a museum has a collection or an exhibition that can make a concept in the curriculum more vivid, if a teacher can integrate what the museum has to offer into a curriculum package, the museum program becomes essential (cited in Garcia, 2012, p. 51).

With the assistance of state government funding, SAM provides a variety of learning opportunities for teachers through resource kits, learning activities, education previews, artist presentations and art making workshops. With the rollout of computers and iPads to many students, secondary school teachers have indicated a strong demand for access to on-line resources. As numerous factors including long distances, makes travel problematic for rural and regional schools and teachers beyond Shepparton, SAM is developing online galleries and further resources for schools that can be readily accessed by students, teachers and the wider public. Currently, education resource kits on selected exhibitions enable teachers to access resources prior to visiting the museum; the resource kits facilitate understanding and appreciation in viewing artworks and displays, and support post-visit activities for students.

Informal learning

In addition to providing curriculum resources and activities, SAM's role in developing education at the Museum also involves *informal learning* experiences. Museums are considered to be socially based learning environments and offer visitors a number of ways to engage informally in directing their own learning experiences through free-choice (Falk, 2004; Falk & Dierking, 2002; Hein, 1998; Hein & Alexander, 1998). Free-choice learning has been described as non-structured, self-directed, voluntary, guided by individual needs and interests – " learning that we will engage in throughout our lives" (Falk & Dierking, 2002, p. 9). As Kelly (2006) also suggests, informal learning is different from the formal contexts of school and universities, being described as:

- Occurring outside of the formal, structured school or university environment;

- A lifelong process, given that humans spend more time outside, than inside, school;
- Happening across a variety of mediums, such as television, the internet and museums;
- Linking to formal learning in an unplanned way, and
- Voluntary

The above characteristics are enhanced in museums that create situations or settings that encourage exploration and enable meaning to be constructed through choice, challenge, control and collaboration, leading to self-discovery, building capacity for continued learning.

As a curriculum based educator at SAM, I work closely with community and cultural development worker, Angie Russi, to plan, coordinate and often deliver community or school programs including partnerships with local primary schools. Some of these programs have diverged from the exhibition centred models for public programming, however we still access artworks, exhibitions and "spaces" in the art museum. In fact, we rely quite heavily upon them. Aimed at contextualising learning at SAM, short term community based learning programs include courses for community groups such as: (1) *People Talking*, adult literacy programs for mainstream speakers alongside non-English speaking learners, (2) *Getting to Know SAM* for University of the Third Age students; (3) *Women's Business* in local Koorie community weaving projects; and (4) the perennial favourite, *Rainbow Kids* for parents and young children. Workshops programs have also been delivered off-site, in rural communities and bush settings and to provide school holiday programs, in gallery spaces and the workshop room for both children and adults in a range of media with professional artists and museum educators. However, museum education concepts are underpinned by both learning theories and art theories, catering to diverse visitor needs and motivations that inform multiple perspectives of museum learning. While curriculum in a museum setting is and should largely be informal, it should also be responsive, intuited and reflective. Whereas artworks and displays form the basis of interpretation, museum education can enhance and personalise visitor experiences. As Vallance suggests:

> Visitors seek stories, and museums tell them. Re-framing our characterization of the museum education experience as a study of the storylines offered and experienced can be a powerful tool for incorporating traditional educational concepts into the special setting of the museum (2004, p. 356).

In short, the development, design and presentation of visually coherent and stimulating collection and exhibition displays are not the sole factor in encouraging engagement and strong visitation. The following section further illustrates examples of how education programming at SAM focuses on contexts and connect audiences to "story-lines" that visitors can identify with.

GOLDEN AGE OF COLOUR PRINTS: UKIYO-E FROM THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

In 2013, a diverse range of programming was generated for a touring exhibition, *Golden Age of Colour Prints: Ukiyo-e from the Museum of Fine Arts,* Boston. With over one hundred rare and exquisite woodblock prints by master printmakers on display, SAM sought the expertise of Japanese residents, teachers and scholars to provide context to and deliver a host of cultural activities in the Museum. Over a three-month period, public programs targeted educators, students, Friends of SAM, staff and the general public. In addition to viewing original art works, visitors learnt how to make origami paper cranes, participated in the Japanese art of flower arrangement – ikebana, a tea ceremony, and were instructed about how to wear a kimono and play *Go*, a Japanese board game. Prominent Asian art scholars, artists and other arts specialists delivered illustrated talks that referenced famous ukiyo-e artists and themes from eighteenth century Japan. Participants of all ages and levels of artistic skill were engaged in the workshop programs that assisted their creation of tea bowls, woodblock prints and monoprints, Japanese puppets and manga inspired Japanese pop art paintings. Our local community also enjoyed performances of Japanese instruments such as 'shakuhachi' flute which accompanied Japanese infused high tea and 'taiko' drumming; these were followed by an extravagant Japanese inspired dinner.

In curating the exhibition for Australian audiences, the Museum's director Kirsten Paisley, sought image authorisation for an exhibition catalogue, marketing, shop merchandise and education materials. Subsequently, a full colour education resource booklet was published and distributed to over two hundred primary and secondary schools in the Goulburn Valley region. Many Japanese language teachers and institutions in metropolitan areas nation-wide also received complementary copies. Highlighting key aspects of ukiyo-e woodblock printmaking as a popular yet highly specialised and influential art form that flourished in Japan from the 17th through to 19th centuries, the booklet proved to be popular for visitor groups and school communities alike. For Monique Francis, Japanese language teacher at St Joseph's Primary School in Benalla, both the content and design of the education resource was an important component of her school-based language activities. She stated:

> The picture booklet is a fantastic resource - I appreciated being given a number of booklets so I can do follow up language activities with small groups. Having the colour pictures is particularly helpful in a language class as we will use the pictures in the booklet to assist in our language activities, using basic descriptive sentences about the ukiyo-e prints. (M. Francis, personal communication, May 2013).

The exhibition catalogue also proved to be very popular with visitors and schools. It featured an informative essay titled *The Evolution of Ukiyo-e* by Wayne Crothers, Senior Curator of Asian Arts at the National Gallery of Victoria. Along with accompanying text about the key artists during the 'Golden Age,' the emergence of proto-photographic images in ukiyo-e, highlights the iconic status of kabuki actors, courtesans and accompanying story-lines in popular culture; the remarkable world of ukiyo-e brought together subject matter, characters and motifs, materials and techniques, artists and publishers, and audiences.

Well beyond the scope of regional galleries, the *Golden Age of Colour Prints* exhibition provided digital links to all works on display via an online database at Boston Fine Art Museum. From this site images can be readily sourced, copied, emailed and even delivered as an e-card. Although Boston's collection database did not include extensive notes, a number of essays on the urbanizing Edo period (1603-1867) and ukiyo-e can be sourced through international museum websites, in particular, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Tokyo National Museum. The latter web-

site comprises an e-Museum with online collection galleries that include an excellent selection of Japanese woodblock prints, including Sharaku's actor portraits from kabuki theatre with extensive notes in English. Little is known about Toshusai Sharaku (active 1794-1795), but he is credited with the portrayal of the both the actor and character during stage performances in finely crafted colour prints. In addition, numerous museum websites provide recordings of traditional woodblock printmaking. In 2010, The Art Gallery of New South Wales filmed master printmaker, Keizaburo Matsuzaki reproducing an original woodblock print of the famous teahouse waitress Takashima Ohisa by the highly regarded ukiyo-e artist, Kitagawa Utamaro. The video can be accessed from the Gallery's website or on YouTube.

The *Golden Age of Colour Prints* exhibition and its programs catered to developing visual literacy, Asia literacy and global learners on a local level, and attracted a wide range of visitors to SAM. Technical proficiency and advances made in a twenty-year period in the late 18th century were astonishing and provided considerable insight of the link between artists, commercial publishing and popular culture in Japan. Genuine correlations and comparisons could also be made to contemporary culture today with particular regards to publishing, fashion and photography. Different aspects of the exhibition provided various discussion points on cultural forms, practices and enabled high levels of visual literacy and appreciation of Asian culture for both regional and metropolitan audiences. Through education partnerships and programs with schools, students in the region, many of whom come from diverse cultural backgrounds that included Afghani, Indian, Congolese as well as Japanese language students from predominantly Anglo-Australian backgrounds, had the chance to engage and identify with story-lines from foreign cultures and traditions.

Further opportunities for museum education in public programming

Complementing the *Golden Age of Colour Prints* exhibition in 2013, guest curator Tina Lee compiled a display of sixty ceramic artworks from the permanent collection in *Crawling Through Mud: Australian Ceramics and Japanese Tradition*. Housed together in a very large display cabinet, affectionately known as the "aquarium", the strong influence of *Mingei* folk-craft Asian ceramic traditions as promoted through 'Leachian' aesthetics have informed the development of studio and art based ceramics in Australia over the past fifty years. Bernard Leach was an English potter who

adopted forms and aesthetic principles from Japanese, Chinese and Korean ceramics. Through his practice and publishing of The Potter's Book in 1940, he is widely credited with challenging the historical distinction between high and low art by honouring handicrafts made by ordinary people and as being responsible for establishing ceramics as a significant visual art form in the Western world. Despite its appeal to specialised art audiences, numerous primary school groups, public program participants, avid ceramicists, artists and general visitors also participated in floor talks, class and group discussion, gallery and workshop activities or leisurely viewed the display. Offering considerable insights into the influence of Japanese art and aesthetics on Australian ceramics, learning programs were devised that introduced students to key Australian ceramic artists, such as Col Levy,

Figure 2. Using the 'Art Passports,' Year 4, 5 and 6 students from St Mels Primary School, Shepparton, engage with the exhibit Crawling Through Mud: Australian Ceramics and Japanese Tradition. Copyright 2013 by the Shepparton Art Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Gwynne Hanson Piggot and the influential Shigeo Shiga. Students were introduced to the aesthetics of still life, of 'wabi sabi' – a Japanese world-view centred on the acceptance of transience and imperfection, and of the rituals in tea ceremonies. They were introduced to wood-fired forms, Bizen ware Japanese pottery and rustic raku ware traditionally used in Japanese tea ceremonies, and marvelled at the beauty, variety and at times opulence of high-fired glazes including rare temmoku, celadon and chun glazes.

The extended school learning programs were initially designed to introduce students to Asian influences on Australian ceramics. However, students in Years 4, 5 and 6 from St. Mels, St. Lukes and Numurkah Primary schools also viewed the *Golden Age Of Colour Prints* exhibition during their excursion. Similarly, Japanese language students who principally came to view the *Golden Age of Colour Prints* exhibition also visited *Crawling Through Mud*. Notably, Japanese language teachers were amongst the most enthusiastic visitors for the exhibition, *Golden Age Of Colour Prints*. Quite remarkable for a regional museum, the exhibition attracted over 500 primary school students to view hand crafted and highly prized 200-year-old colour woodblock prints. Another 300 secondary art and Japanese language students learnt about the flourishing of Japanese popular culture during the Edo period that brought together publishing houses, print artists, kabuki actors and impossibly beautiful courtesans, costumes and settings.

Learning programs delivered on-site, online and in classrooms promoted intercultural and interdisciplinary learning. Nicky Houtas, Art specialist teacher at St Lukes Primary School, Shepparton was initially keen to bring her year five and six students to the Art Museum to learn about and experience Japanese inspired ceramics. With the enthusiastic support of Japanese language teacher, Yuko Sasaki, complementary tours to both the *Golden Age* and *Crawling Through Mud* exhibitions provided an opportunity for inter-disciplinary learning and resulted in unexpected learning outcomes. Notably, there was an understanding of the influence of Japanese arts on European and Australian art and craft, as well as a strong understanding of cultural forms and narrative themes, in popular art forms in both the Western and Eastern cultures. Nicky Houtas outlines the following activities undertaken with her year five and six visual art students:

> Many pre visit activities were done both in the visual arts and Japanese before the visit to the *Golden Age*. This included foam printing and collage and looking at a variety of artists influenced by Japanese design.

> In post visit activities, we also did a unit on perspective based upon techniques found in the prints; in Japanese, children studied the origin of Japanese printmaking, the unique dyes used, and the tea ceremony, incorporating their own tea bowls in performing the ritual. Working closely with the Japanese teacher, we were both able to work with the children on a common theme – enhancing their experience in both subject areas. (Personal communication, 20 June 2013).

Teachers at Euroa Secondary School also developed an interdisciplinary curriculum program for Year 8 that included art, history and Japanese curricular. Another art teacher from Mooroopna Secondary College developed an art unit on colour woodblock printmaking for Year 8 students. Senior art students participated in a student seminar, guided tours and Japanese language students as young as Year 1 and 2 actively participated in exhibition tours and workshop programs.

A significant commitment to extended learning took place at St. Mels Primary School in an eight-week program, *Things of Earth and Fire*. The program fused art theory and practice through applied learning about clay processes, glazes, forms and firing and drew upon the influence of Asian culture and ceramics on the development of Australian ceramics. Involving 100 Years four, five and six students in two excursions to the art museum for tours and demonstrations, hands-on art making activities, presentations at school and a final session of raku firing, a high level of arts appreciation and engagement was achieved. Students created a variety of clay forms; they made their own terracotta-like clay from scratch, raku tea bowls and animals, and Japanese water-dragons with paperclay. While the classes where intensive and could often challenge students, perseverance was rewarded when students received their fired pieces and when witnessing first hand the transformation of their tea bowls from bisque through to carbon-based raku firing at an artists' studio. A video segment at the Australian ceramic artist, Kaye Poulton's studio can be viewed on Vimeo.

There were positive and possibly enduring outcomes for the school, teachers as well as students. One Year 5/6 classroom teacher, from St. Mels Primary School, clearly notes the impact of learning program upon her own professional development:

> The professional development, which emerged from the visiting artists' program was exceptional. Not only did the children learn from Rhonda and Angie, I did too. The depth that the ladies went into was far beyond what our students are taught even at a high school level. In fact, I would happily take an art class and know exactly what I am talking about as a result of this program. The ladies taught me how to better engage students in art (St. Mels Primary School teacher, personal communication, July 16, 2013).

Fostering repeat visitation

Where museum educators are able to develop and implement curriculum programs, feedback received from teachers demonstrates that school communities are eager to further utilise museum art education to enhance the personal and social development of their students. Prep, Year 1 to Year 4 classes from St Mels have subsequently initiated visitation to SAM during semester two. Video recordings of St Mel's Year 3 and Year 4 primary students in the Art Museum's collection galleries and clay workshop with ceramic artist Kaye Poulton, can be viewed from Shepparton Art Museum's education website through Vimeo.

Having previously worked with SAM on a highly successful six month Extended School Residency program in 2011, *Little Treasures: Exploring Ourselves Through Clay*, primary school teachers from Numurkah Primary once again partnered with the museum over two terms to deliver an interdisciplinary based learning program. This incorporated art, English and literacy learning through the reading of the novel *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park. Reading the novel taught students something more about social and cultural values and of the integrity and perseverance required to be an artist. Suzy Turton, art specialist teacher at the school provided considerable insight into the successes of the program, which she undertook with two other Year four, five and six generalist classroom teachers at SAM. It is worth quoting her at length:

> Each week the students have been involved in an hour of peer reading and listening session where they are studying the novel *'A Single Shard'* by Linda Sue Park. The story follows the ambitions of a young

orphaned Korean boy called Tree Ear who wishes to be a master potter. Students have been following, chapter by chapter, and we have integrated the book into literacy lessons. Some of the tasks include:

- Analysing the characters.
- Completing a written and drawn story board.
- Japanese haiku poems.
- Celebrity heads.
- Researching Korea and other Asian cultures on the internet.
- A character profile for a new character to enter into one of the chapters of the book and engage with the other characters.
- Looking at popular music that draws on themes of power and inner strength through the songs *'She Wolf'* by David Guetta and '*Power*' by Will I Am and Justin Beiber.
- Students drawing pictures to show their understanding of metaphors. For example, a beast with two heads, one ashamed, one resentful.
- Visiting SAM to see *The Golden Age of Colour Prints* and *Crawling Through Mud*. Taking part in a master class with artist Tina Lee to make tea bowls.
- Bringing their new skills back to school to teach their younger peers.

Teaching the school choir Japanese songs to present to the school and cooking sushi. The students have also seen a special marrying ceremony with 'Hina Matsuri' dolls.

When we set outcomes for this project, they were set according to VELS; we believe those of English and The Arts [learning] outcomes were met by the students. However, there are always much more valuable outcomes that come from a long-term project like this, and they are the interpersonal skills. Our students were required to think deeply about Tree Ear's personality, the way he was raised, how he lived in poverty, how his luck changed, and the pressure he put on himself to succeed, his relationships with the other characters.

The students closed their eyes each session and visualised the setting of the chapter: the way the characters looked; the environment they were in; the weather; the countryside; the smell; the taste of the food; the feeling of being hungry, hurt, sore; the internal feeling of failure, success, honour and pride. The students then related all of this to their own lives, their own failures, successes and situations. With the students being the same age as Tree Ear, even though they lived in a different century and country they could relate to the similarities they shared. (S. Turton, personal communication, May 20, 2013).

The alignment of many different aspects of arts learning, in both formal and informal contexts made this education program particularly rewarding for the school and SAM. It provided arts leadership in curriculum design and embedded arts education in mainstream curriculum. For SAM, it validated our efforts in supporting a partnership program that was largely self-directed and that clearly articulated aims and learning outcomes. When Numurkah Primary School students came to view artworks and participate in the tea-bowl making workshop at SAM, they each brought their interpretation and understanding of *A Single Shard* as well as their own keen perceptions on art and life with them.

Reflecting on the value of cultivating learning experiences and storylines evident in well-designed art programs, the role of museum education is to invite and extend lifelong learning opportunities for all visitors. In suggesting museum education can build upon four prior models of learning with a new fifth, narrative model, Vallance suggests:

> The challenge for museums is to connect their educational purposes to the real lives of visitors, design programs and interpretative materials that engage and extend visitors' personal backgrounds, and develop assessment strategies that can capture visitors' responses in terms that will help tell the story better next time (2004, p. 356).

CONCLUSION

Over the last seven years, the Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) has supported significantly greater access and equity to arts learning and participation in northern Victoria. This article has shed light on how the Museum's collections and enhanced displays of artworks have provided new oppor-

tunities for visitors to engage in public forums and spaces, to interact with others in art-making workshops and to respond intellectually and emotionally to high calibre national, international and, at times, courageous exhibition and public programming. As a cultural organisation with significant resources and support within local communities, SAM must continue to play a critical and leading role in both formal and informal education arenas and settings. It is integral to the success of learning programs and spaces to acknowledge the role of audiences in the life of the museum and to encourage diversity as well as free-choice through a range of interpretative platforms. This includes further development of the Museum's physical and digital spaces and programs as well as online and in-house resources. As a key arts provider with the capacity to deliver a high level of service to a range of audiences, we must develop relationships as well as partnerships with visual arts organisations, educational institutions and philanthropy to embed arts in education as a socially relevant and core community value.

Despite the Museum's enthusiasm for public programing it is unlikely that *all* visitors, local, regional and metropolitan will develop a passionate interest in historical and contemporary Australian art and ceramics, however the Museum has provided memorable and engaging learning opportunities for many. This article has acknowledged the significant role that local government as well as state and federal agencies and philanthropy have in supporting the Museums' sustainable cultural development in regional Victoria. It also points to the need to maintain and develop new partnerships by sourcing further sponsorship and government funding for public programming if the Museum is to provide a number of entry points or platforms for increasingly diverse audiences. Given that Shepparton Art Museum is a small museum, engagement with both the collection and its offerings are both "public" and "personal". Through both the integrity and breadth of exhibitions and learning spaces, common ground and experiences are sought. While public programs and education opportunities are extended by digital and global learning contexts, building cultural and social capacity is far more prosaic. As Ellen Dissanayake explains, "Art, as making the things one cares about special, shaping and elaborating the ordinary to make it more than ordinary, is fundamental to everyone" (cited in Donley, 1993, p. 2).

Despite increasing attendances and repeat school visitation at SAM, I am often surprised as to how many students *haven't* visited the Art Museum before. With well over two thousand students and teachers participating in the learning program in 2013, the art museum has delivered varied and inclusive education opportunities for local and regional audiences. Foregrounding aspects of our local, cultural and social identity, through public programming, SAM provides novel educational spaces and experiences and, as such, is well placed to deliver art forums rather than art temples. The 'forum' as such, has arrived in regional Victoria.

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BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS:

THE WARBURTON ARTS PROJECT AND THE 2011 CHINESE TOUR OF *TU DI -SHEN TI / OUR LAND OUR BODY*

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ABSTRACT

In 2011, the Warburton Arts Project, an art centre located in the Ngaanyatjarra lands in Western Australia, toured the exhibition, *Tu Di Shen Ti / Our Land Our Body* to seven museums in Eastern China. The exhibition was so successful that an expanded version toured Western China in 2013/2014. This paper offers some critical reflections on this remarkable exhibition. It discusses its ground-breaking curatorial philosophy and the substantial educational material disseminated to visitors, and compares the exhibition strategies deployed by curator, Gary Proctor with the austere way that Aboriginal art from remote areas is often presented in fine art contexts. Using as a case study the exhibition as it was presented at the Shanghai Art Museum, our analysis explores the innovative installation strategies used by Proctor to overcome barriers of cross-cultural understanding and to convey to visitors that the artworks are socially meaningful in the cultural present.

INTRODUCTION

In March 2011, the Shanghai Art Museum launched *Tu Di - Shen Ti / Our Land Our Body*, an exhibition of 65 masterworks by 28 Ngaanyatjarra artists from the Warburton Aboriginal community in Western Australia. The exhibition continued on tour to the Today Art Museum in Beijing, the Nanjing City Museum, the West Lake Gallery – Zhejiang Provincial Museum, the Xi'An Art Museum, the Dong Guan Guancheng Art Museum and the Wuhan Art Museum, introducing thousands of Chinese viewers to Australian Indigenous art. *Tu Di-Shen Ti* consistently attracted healthy visitor numbers during this tour. At the Shanghai Art Museum, for example, the exhibition received 87,000 visitors in just twenty days, breaking an attendance record in the process.

As the exhibition embarks on a second tour of eight museums in Western China in 2013/2014, it seems timely to assess its significance. To begin this assessment, our paper will focus largely on the Shanghai Art Museum's display of the exhibition. It is important to note that neither of the authors has seen the exhibition. Our discussion draws substantially on interviews conducted with the curator and Warburton Arts Project coordinator Gary Proctor, and Shanghai Art Museum curator Li Ning, from exhibition catalogues, ephemera and extensive photographs of the installation provided by Proctor. Using these sources, we examine the complex exhibition design strategies that were used to foster cross-cultural understanding, and to convey that the art displayed is of the social and cultural present. This latter objective is a perennial one for curators of exhibitions of Aboriginal art produced in remote locations. Of primary significance here are the unconventional means of display used by Gary Proctor to present *Tu Di - Shen Ti* to audiences in China. Proctor's exhibitionary strategies appear to transcend some of the long running tensions that have been at play where the exhibition of Aboriginal art has been concerned, between art museums and cultural/social history museums; and between 'white cube' and 'ethnographic' modes of presentation. However, as this paper will argue, these tensions are not his concern. Proctor's primary goals in using these unconventional means of exhibition design are to celebrate the aesthetic significance of the works, to facilitate viewers' engagement with the works in non-prescriptive ways, and to convey the social currency of what he terms the "Ngaanyatjarra poetic."

FRAMING THE EXHIBITION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TOUR

The exhibition, *Tu Di - Shen Ti* was curated and designed by Proctor, a non-indigenous artist and coordinator of the Warburton Arts Projects (WAP), in consultation with senior community artists from the Warburton region. Project manager Zhou Ling Ling (Proctor's wife), was also essential to the exhibition's delivery. The plan for an exhibition in China evolved at WAP in early 2009, and was brought to fruition when it was embraced by the organisers of the major diplomatic program, *Imagine Australia: The Year of Australian Culture in China*. This program commemorated the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Australia in 2011. Significantly, the *Imagine Australia* organisers chose to feature *Tu Di - Shen Ti* as a chief closing event. Support provided by the mining company Rio Tinto made it possible for Proctor to extend the tour of the exhibition.

Proctor has been the coordinator of WAP since its establishment in 1989, and in many ways, *Tu Di - Shen Ti* is a culmination of the unique cultural endeavor this organisation has pursued since its founding (Biddle, 2013). While all Aboriginal art centres treat art practice as a basis for the preservation and regeneration of localised cultural knowledge, WAP is distinguished by the degree to which it has prioritised these imperatives. As Proctor writes, WAP "views the promotion of a Ngaanyatjarra poetic as being the most important element in its operations, balancing this against strictly commercial outcomes" (2012, p. 91). The most significant manifestation of this philosophy is the Warburton Collection, initiated in 1990, and owned by the community, for the benefit of the community. Rather than being circulated within the commercial fine arts market, many of the best works produced by artists associated with Warburton in the last 20 years have been retained as part of this collection. Today, the collection comprises almost 1000 works, most of which are paintings, though there are also glass works, textiles and other cultural material. The collection is linked to an extensive database that documents the family trees, site locations and dreaming narratives that underpin the works. It is from this reservoir that the 65 paintings and the various explanatory materials that comprised *Tu Di - Shen Ti* were sourced.

Proctor, in close consultation with senior community artists, considered every facet of the installation for the exhibition. Together, they worked towards the achievement of three interconnected goals: first, ensuring that the works' aesthetic significance was amplified; second, underscoring that these were works of the social and cultural present; and third, facilitating viewers' engagement with the works, mindful of the difficulties associated with communicating with Chinese audiences. In her correspondence with us regarding the exhibition, Shanghai Art Museum curator Lin Ning (personal communication, June 7, 2013) noted that "the event that struck me most was the uncontrollable tears that Australian Aboriginal representatives shed after viewing the complete exhibition", an observation that in some way attests to the degree to which the artists' interests were honoured. Our attentiveness to the various ways in which these shared goals were pursued in the Shanghai context is informed by the work of Bruce Ferguson (1996), who argues that "all exhibitionary procedures – labels, didactics, advertising, catalogues, hanging systems, media . . . lighting, wall colours, security devices, posters, handouts etc. – combine as aspects of the exhibition's active recitation . . . all are contributive to the ways in which art is more or less understood" (p. 181).

Through the use of an innovative array of exhibition strategies, Proctor aimed to imaginatively evoke the immediacy of the social context within which the works were produced and to facilitate viewers' engagement with the exhibition content in a non-prescriptive way. As Proctor states:

> A good show in China would have to: communicate to as many people as possible in ways that allow them to encounter Ngaanyatjarra people in their absence, embracing them not as a cultural ideal but as people in a sense like themselves who just think differently (G. Proctor, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

Proctor also addresses this point within the catalogue for this exhibition:

> The exhibition has been designed to reflect the reality of artwork as an emanation of the whole dimension of cultural consciousness surrounding it. For Ngaanyatjarra art, the creation of context, as evidence of a world where all sacred things belong equally to everyone, is a more appropriate presentation of the paintings than others offered by Modernity (Proctor, 2011, p. 139).

Figure 1. Visitors viewing the genealogies, photos, text panels and paintings in the exhibition, Tu Di-Shen Ti, Shanghai Art Museum, 2011. Image courtesy of Gary Proctor.

The unique exhibition design of *Tu Di - Shen Ti* has been progressively refined through previous WAP exhibitions begun in the 1990s. It is made up of a number of discrete elements intended to be apprehended both simultaneously and discretely as the viewer moves through the space. Genealogies, which graphically represent the ancestral line of descent of the Ngaanyatjarra people, were hand-painted by volunteers from art schools within the vicinity of the museums (see Figure 1). These genealogies function as a beginning point from which the various cultural manifestations emerge. Overlaying the genealogical map are over 6000 small printed colour photographs taken by Wanarn Community school children with digital pocket cameras. While these photos appear to be randomly arranged, they, along with the genealogies, are visually anchored by the large scale, unframed artworks as well as horizontal bands of small text panels, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Visitors viewing photos and text panels at Tu Di-Shen Ti, Shanghai Art Museum, 2011. Image courtesy of Gary Proctor. Reproduced with permission.

According to Proctor (personal communication, June 10, 2013), the incorporation of these photos within the installation was designed "to suggest a vast mosaic of daily insights to their life in the Western Desert" and to provide "a seam of youthful consciousness". The text panels feature short, "relatively unedited" stories by local community members about issues of importance to them, including memories of life before white contact and aspects of daily life today. Both work in concert to convey what Proctor describes as "a lived present" or "the immediacy of a 'lived' social [experience]" (G. Proctor, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

The audio installations, which were concept designed by Proctor and built by Bryce Grunden with technical support provided by Michael Costa, are also integral to Proctor's efforts to imaginatively evoke something of this social experience. The 24-Channel audio installations feature sound recordings made around the Warburton Ranges between 1992 and 2010, and were used to create constantly changing, multilayered aural environments. They convey elliptically just some of the sounds characteristic of the region, including the wind of the Western Desert and the sounds of bird and insect life near shaded water areas (Proctor, 2011, p. 139). According to Li Ning, curator at the Shanghai Art Museum, the sound installation "create[d] an atmosphere that stimulate[d] the auditory senses while simultaneously bringing a modern impression to the audience" (L. Ning, personal communication, June 7, 2013).

A further notable curatorial decision pertains to the fact that the paintings were unframed, and some were located close to the ceiling. Proctor has argued that this particular display strategy was intended "to 'speak around' the ways Dreamings occur spatially, and also to indicate their three forms: as specific locations, as Dreaming tracks sometimes thousands of kilometers long, and the great sea of Tingarri Dreaming . . .". (G. Proctor, personal communication, June 27, 2013). As pictured in Figure 3, projections of photographic landscape imagery on the floor in some parts of the museum space also contributed to this disruption of the restraints of conventional exhibition geometry.

Proctor recognises that some viewers may find the visually and textually dense character of the installation difficult to navigate. However, these elements have been carefully marshaled to construct new kinds of cultural encounters that invite different pathways, or "multiple contexts" for viewers to engage with the works, and that offer an alternative to orthodox ways of presenting Aboriginal art. Proctor's desire to enable viewers to arrive at their own conclusions about this cultural material has some affinity with constructivism, a theory of learning that enjoys wide popularity amongst art museum educators today. In this approach, the learner's prior experience is central to the process of learning. Attention is focused on the contextual interpretation of artworks as well as the context of the individual learner. Meaning-making is experiential and performative. Knowledge is not transmitted by an authoritative curatorial source, but is rather produced by the viewer who draws on their preexisting knowledge. Proctor alludes to this mode of engagement when he notes that "I rarely want to prescribe this outcome or that in exhibition design, rather [I] create a

Figure 3. Visitors at the exhibition Tu Di-Shen Ti, viewing projects of photographic landscape imagery, Shanghai Art Museum. Image courtesy of Gary Proctor. Reproduced with permission.

charged space where people can think what they want to think, where they are free to create meaning for themselves" (G. Proctor, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

Within Proctor's immersive installation, viewers are encouraged to engage with each artwork, not as a discrete culturally isolated entity, but as an integral component of the living culture within which this art was produced. Proctor states:

> My exhibition designs are not invitations to an easily read experience in an art gallery (work, caption, catalogue & now you've got it) . . . This is, after all, about a contemporary Indigenous society, where representations speak not so much of an act of cultural 'recovery' as they do of a lived 'present'. To represent the forces and dynamics of this Indigenous contemporary society I look for ways I can gently deepen uncertainty, linking this to a sense of shared being, of others with ourselves (G. Proctor, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

Rather than overwhelming viewers as might be expected, the rich layering of visual and textual materials or "presentation without edit" as Proctor

(personal communication, June 10, 2013) describes it, empowered viewers to "make small discoveries of their own" in order to come to their own conclusions about the content of the exhibition. Proctor noted that: "We often observed people moving slowly along installation walls reading the narrative texts and looking at photographs" (see Figure 4) and that in general, audiences "really appreciated the extent of the translation and interpretative material, the catalogues and education books" (G. Proctor, personal communication, June 10, 2013). Similarly, Li Ning related that evidence of the exhibition's success emerged from "watch[ing] the audience's reaction and listen[ing] to their feelings . . . Chinese audiences were fully immersed in the pure atmosphere we constructed while [being] deeply moved by the story depicted by the works" (L. Ning, personal communication, June 7, 2013).

Figure 4. Broad view of the installation of *Tu Di-Shen Ti*, Shanghai Art Museum. Image courtesy of Gary Proctor. Reproduced with permission.

THE POLITICS AROUND ABORIGINAL ART DISPLAY

We now wish to situate Proctor's exhibition design strategies with respect to the wider politics of Aboriginal art display, particularly because it is evident that these strategies depart considerably from the minimalist conventions that currently prevail in many art museum and gallery contexts. For several decades now, Aboriginal art curators and gallerists have sought to draw a line under the racist paradigms of the past and establish models for

display which are commensurate with the post-colonial reconfiguration of Aboriginal people's status within the nation, and with the broader recognition of the equality of all cultures more generally (Murphy, 1987; Johnson, 1991; Myers, 1998). Their priority has been to present Aboriginal art as 'Contemporary Art', where 'contemporary' has a double meaning. On the one hand, it is a literal referent that indicates that the artists are not exotic remnants of a pre-modern society, but rather, empowered practitioners of a dynamic, 'contemporary' culture. On the other, it signifies that the work is of equal status to the most revered western contemporary art despite being made by people who do not inhabit western social domains. This duality registers the legacy of ways in which tribal material culture was interpreted and collected in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: both the evolutionist and typological frameworks embraced in museums and anthropological studies, and the primitivist idioms of European modernism. The West's interest in tribal cultural objects was shaped by the idea that these objects were vestiges of lost worlds that needed to be salvaged, and vestiges of a primal subjectivity that could be a resource for the discontented modern subject (Clifford, 1988; Myers, 2006).

In their efforts to assert the dual contemporariness of Aboriginal art, these curators and galleries have embraced what industry insiders refer to as the *white cube* model of displaying artworks. In brief, the 'white cube' model has been in use since the 1930s and refers to a particular set of viewing conditions designed to facilitate the viewer's aesthetic engagement with art. Simple, unadorned spaces featuring white walls, timber floorboards, or neutral coloured carpet, provide the backdrop. Paintings are typically installed in a single row at eye level, with ample 'breathing space'. Brian O'Doherty, who wrote the first sustained critique of the 'white cube's' purported ideological neutrality, persuasively argues in his book *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of The Gallery Space* (1999) that these viewing conditions have the power to imbue objects with aesthetic value. As he puts the matter: "the firehose in a modern museum looks not like a firehose but an esthetic conundrum" (1999, p. 25).[1]

The implicit or explicit counterpoint to the 'white cube' model in the Aboriginal art context is the 'ethnographic' model of display. Put simply, if an exhibitionary practice is characterised as 'ethnographic', it is seen to be consistent with a tradition strongly associated with the discipline of anthropology, of presenting art objects and objects of material culture in a manner that emphasises the object's cultural meanings and social and prac-

tical purpose within the community context. This involves, for example, displaying objects in groups to communicate their interrelatedness, and providing the viewer with a variety of informative material (maps, photographs, genealogies, religious stories) within the wall-text or in the display units themselves. Some aspects of this tradition have their origins in the evolutionist perspectives on race and 'primitive man' propagated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, perspectives which underpinned the hierarchical and taxonomical schemas of display of non-western material culture employed during the Great Exhibitions/World Fairs and in early natural history museums. Other aspects of this tradition reflect curators' interest in communicating to audiences that the objects displayed are not "autonomous" works of art but continue to have significance as part of a living (but often threatened) culture; a concern often shared by the practitioners themselves (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Jones, 1988; Myers, 1998; Price, 2007; Fisher, 2012, for relevant critical discussions).

Many gallerists and curators working within the sphere of the art museum are averse to providing contextual material of any kind where Aboriginal art is concerned. Extensive framing information is seen to diminish the artwork's aesthetic power while locating it within an "anthropological" or "ethnographic" domain (Vergo, 1989; Fenner, 2004; Johnson, Hodges & Neale, 2008). A case in point is provided by the relatively recent reinstallation of the National Gallery of Australia's collection of Aboriginal art. The National Gallery's purpose-built galleries of Aboriginal art conform to the white cube aesthetic, with works well spaced and, with the exception of tombstone labels (artist-date-medium), no wall text or explanatory room sheets provided. As Philp explains, such a restrained approach to the works' physical installation and interpretation has a long history at the National Gallery of Art, with education staff being advised in the 1980s "to speak only in aesthetic terms (of the formal properties of line, colour and form and media) about Aboriginal work" (Philp, 2007, p. 57). As Hinkson observed during the 2010 launch of these spaces, director Ron Radford's

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[1] O'Doherty's critique was first presented in a series of articles in Art Forum in 1976. In a 2004 interview, he noted that the debate about the efficacy of the white cube aesthetic is by no means settled. He suggested that some readers accepted the Inside the White Cube's central intention to "make manifest the latent content of a cultural construct", however he noted that "in the long run it seems to have confirmed for many that the white cube is a space that has virtue and should be used" (Godfrey et. al, 2004).

remarks on the importance of the occasion "emphasised that these new galleries celebrated Indigenous creativity through the lens of art, not anthropology" (Hinkson, 2010/2011, p. 17). In so doing, Radford offered yet another iteration of an opposition between art and anthropology, and art and ethnography, that has been foundational to the narrative of Aboriginal art's emergence as contemporary art (Thomas, 1976; 1988; Morphy, 2001; Fisher, 2012).

It is quite clear that Proctor's multifaceted approach to conveying that the works of art in *Tu Di - Shen Ti* are part of a lived present runs counter to the prevailing white cube model, and furthermore that the constraints and oppositions that coalesce around the counterposing of 'art' to 'ethnography' have had little bearing on the design strategies he utilised at the Shanghai Art Museum. The singularity of Proctor's approach in this regard is striking, given that his concern with conveying that the art is part of a "lived present" is ostensibly the same imperative that motivates curators and gallerists to adhere to the white cube model. To focus on just one aspect of Proctor's approach, which transgresses these conventions, the presentation of genealogies adjacent to the paintings in *Tu Di - Shen Ti* would likely represent a problematic museology for those viewers who favour a more orthodox aesthetic approach to the installation, given that the documentation of ancestry is foundational to ethnographic methods of study. For some of these critics, such a focus detracts from the intrinsic aesthetic and conceptual value of the art object and further encourages us to view the artist as subject to various social, moral and legal forces rather than as one who has a reflexive mastery of his or her life and art practice (Marcus & Myers, 1995). Proctor's approach challenges this view. He has acted on the conviction that diverse sources of information and visual and aural interest can effectively convey the contemporary relevance and gravity of the works, without robbing them of their aesthetic power. As Proctor put the matter: "I don't think the aesthetic stature of the art is in any way diminished by proximity to other contextual material – others may disagree (in which case they should do their own show)" (personal communication, June 10, 2013). And indeed, when one views the genealogies set within hundreds of vibrant autobiographical photos, it is hard to interpret this depiction of ancestral connections as anything other than a dynamic element of the artists' visualisation of their world.

Proctor's abiding respect for the cultural expressions of the Warburton artists seems key here: his mixed strategies are founded upon his desire to

present these works as 'authentically' as possible out of respect for the art and the artists, and are also attuned to the imperative of engaging non-specialist audiences. Proctor's evasion of the politics around Aboriginal art display is perhaps indicative of the fact that the recent history of post-colonial critique in occidental cultural settings (manifest, for example, in the debates around the Museum of Modern Art's *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* (1984; see also Clifford, 1988, Araeen, 1987)), has little relevance in the Chinese context. For his part, Proctor is clearly well versed in the various conceptual discourses of modern and contemporary art, yet he has chosen not to partake in them.

In the Australian context, parallels can be drawn between Proctor's approach and that deployed in the exhibition, *Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route* (2010) by the National Museum of Australia (NMA). As Susan Freeman, the exhibition designer, describes:

> The *Yiwarra Kuju* exhibition was curatorially fantastic as it aimed to bridge the anthropological, 'museological' and interpreted view of indigenous culture with the 'art gallery' view where the visual attributes are the focus. In this sense, the 'white cube' was never appropriate, and like many museum institutions, the NMA has not followed an art gallery mandate (S. Freeman, personal communication, August 22, 2012).

Similarly, Vivien Johnson has persistently argued that Aboriginal paintings need to be recognised as more than just 'art', but as being akin to title deeds to country; testaments to the persistence of Indigenous people's stewardship of their tribal estates, their lore and their law. Her exhibition *Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert* (2007), also staged at the NMA, involved the display of photographs and informative plaques about the content of each painting alongside the works, and she argued that "I've never found the explanation of Papunya painting stood in the way of being able to have that spiritual experience in front of the painting . . . it just enriches it." (Meacham, 2008, p. 3).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The unique exhibitionary strategies adopted by Proctor for *Tu Di – Shen Ti/ Our Land Our Body* provide us with a vantage point from which to reflect on the austere ways in which Aboriginal art from remote locations is typi-

cally presented in fine art contexts. Proctor's approach makes it possible for us to recognise the dissonance that exists between the two kinds of contemporariness discussed above. It could be argued that those curatorial methods that are indicative of the 'white cube' tradition, which adhere to the project of gaining recognition for Aboriginal art as 'Contemporary Art', preclude many possible ways to expand the audience's experience of the layered meanings, aesthetic power and social currency of Aboriginal art works. This point seems particularly pertinent to *Tu Di – Shen Ti* given its display within a country like China, where the idea that something can be simultaneously timeless, ancient and current is not such a complicated one. In addition, underpinning our appreciation of the exhibition's importance is the fact that it departs significantly from the tradition of using text (in a minimal way) as the principal means to explain aesthetic objects. Audiences of *Tu Di – Shen Ti* encountered an array of informative aesthetic objects within a highly stimulating immersive environment. Many of the individual facets of the exhibition: the paintings, photos, projections, soundscapes and even the text panels, function as aesthetically interesting material – vessels of the 'Nganyaatjarra poetic' – while also working in concert to provide context. As Proctor has argued, such an approach opens up a "fourth wall" in the space, a concept derived from the world of theatre that signals the "deconstruction of boundaries set up by works of representation" (Proctor, 2012, p. 92-93). This multifaceted approach, in which meanings can be seen to reverberate between the various components of the display, has important implications with respect to the educative power of exhibitions displayed within art museums, perhaps particularly in cross-cultural contexts. In summary, in *Tu Di – Shen Ti* we find a dynamic and eminently 'contemporary' style of presenting Aboriginal art that has the potential to inspire audiences and artists alike while contributing to the perpetuation of the "Ngaantjatjarra poetic".

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8X8:

USING ARTMAKING TO TEACH COLLABORATION IN STUDENT OUTREACH PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Through the *8x8* project, the Biennale of Sydney, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia aimed to create an outreach program where high school and tertiary students could learn about collaboration in its various forms. This involved assimilating collaborative techniques and strategies, and negotiating issues faced by collaborators in a team and outcomes-focused setting. This paper shares the various stages of the project to highlight the lessons learned and demonstrates the benefits of partnering with other organisations when designing outreach programs.

INTRODUCTION

Active participation in formal and informal learning programs has recently flourished in museum public program and education practice. When participation is located at the core of informal learning, participants are provided with an exciting opportunity to learn from hands-on experiences, interact with peers, and benefit from a sense of achievement in purposefully contributing to a real-world outcome. This paper examines the various stages of a *multi-partner* outreach project – the *8x8* project – to highlight the key considerations of the project partners involved. When stating 'multi-partner project', 'project partnership' or referring to 'the partners', these terms refer to the partnership of the three organisations involved in the development and implementation of the project, namely: the Biennale of Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (CPAC). As an *outreach* program, the *8x8* took place outside of the museum or walls, designed to 'reach out' to individuals who would not normally attend the museum (McClellan, 2003; Huber, 2009). For *8x8*, sections of each program took place across the aforementioned venues so that, at any one point in time, the program partners were engaging with groups that would not normally visit their centre. For Casula Powerhouse, this was the tertiary students, and for the Biennale of Sydney and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, this encompassed the high school students from southwest Sydney. This notion of outreach also links with the ideas of social exclusion/inclusion, as many of the high school participants would not normally have visited a museum on a regular basis due to geographic, cultural and social barriers to participation.

This analysis emphasises certain observations, especially in regard to project participant behaviour. Most significantly, the observations illuminate how certain relationships of collaboration are negotiated in artmaking – noting that collaboration takes many forms, and also presents the benefits of using collaborative exercises in outreach programming. The theme of the 18th Biennale of Sydney itself highlighted collaborative, discursive and relational practice, whereby collaboration was a key element in the project. When used in this paper, the term *collaboration* refers to the process of the MCA artist educators working with the project participants as well as the participants with one another, to produce artworks with multiple authors. Collaborative exercises involve 'making' activities, workshops or games designed by the project partners to encourage communication between the participants and teach the basic principles of collaboration.

Throughout this paper a variety of additional key terms have been used to describe the processes and rationale underlying the project, and of the participants themselves. The following concepts not only strengthened and set out a framework for the development of the project, but they also draw upon a rich history of community oriented and socially inclusive practices.

Community programming

The project was considered by the partners to fundamentally be a community arts partnership. The participants in the project actively contributed to the project, which involved artists directly in its activities, and the primary aim of the project 'gives voice' to the participants over the project coordinators. Community arts programs almost universally involve community members in a creative activity leading to a public performance or exhibit. It is an art process that involves professional artists (in the form of the MCA artist educator and Biennale artists) and community members in a collaborative creative process resulting in a collective experience and public expression (Kreamer, Lavine & Karp, 1992; Walker, 1997; Guetzkow, 2002).

Active participation

Active participation refers to the process whereby project participants are actively participating in and contributing to the project. This is manifest in the ultimate aim of the project: to realise an exhibition of works developed and made by the participants, including the curation of the space by these students. However, it also extends to the way in which feedback was taken from the 'making' workshops and excursions. Active participation forms an inevitable part of the project, propelled by the focus on collaboration and processes implicit in the development of community arts programs. This, however, is underpinned by a widening body of research that demonstrates the importance of social interaction in learning and the ways in which knowledge and skills are gained in practical situations in and through the communication (Rogoff, Turkanis & Bartlett, 2001).

Social exclusion

The term social exclusion has been defined in multifarious ways by the museum sector; its definition is dynamic and constantly evolving (Sandell,

2003). For the purpose of this project, social exclusion pertains to individuals or groups that experience one or a number of forms of disadvantage (economic, social, geographic) or a lack of access to the services and experiences that other communities or parts of the community would normally utilise. This definition does not necessarily imply financial poverty but describes social exclusion as:

> A more comprehensive formulation, which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society (Walker & Walker, 1997, p. 8).

Countering social exclusion involves advocating for social inclusion – that is, in the context of this paper, the belief that at an individual or personal level, engagement with museums can deliver positive outcomes such as increased self-esteem, confidence and creativity (Sandell, 2003). These individual outcomes can also inspire broader community benefits, including social regeneration, inter-community understanding and resilience. The following section further details the development of the *8x8* project, which actively positions these museums as agents of social change (Sandell, 2002, p. 233), demonstrating how the above socially inclusive practices manifest in the program.

8x8 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The *8x8* project was a co-developed outreach initiative presented by the Biennale of Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA), and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (CPAC) during the 18th Biennale of Sydney in 2012.

Opened in 1994, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre is a multidisciplinary arts venue focused on producing and presenting contemporary art and community engagement work. Over 150 languages are spoken in CPAC's local government area, and the centre aims to represent the culturally diverse stories of this community in a way that allows its audiences to reflect on the world. The MCA is a contemporary art museum dedicated to exhibiting, collecting and interpreting contemporary art. The museum holds a strong emphasis on engaging artists with audiences and is also a major partner of the Biennale of Sydney. The MCA seeks to engage with audiences beyond the building by developing a program of touring exhibitions and

C3West, a collaboration with galleries and non-arts partners in Western Sydney.

Developed in response to recent trends in outreach (McClellan, 2003; Huber, 2009), program partnerships between multiple organisations, schools and tertiary institutions (Williams, 1996) and community engagement (Newsom & Silver, 1978; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Anderson, 2004), the program saw eight high school students from socio-economically disadvantaged areas in Sydney (Casula, Liverpool, Macquarie Fields and Miller), paired with eight postgraduate students studying Fine Arts at Sydney College of the Arts (SCA) and the National Art School (NAS).

The student pairs participated in an excursion to Cockatoo Island, receiving talks from Biennale artists. They also visited the tertiary students' studios and attended two foundation workshops held at the MCA, which introduced the participants to one another. Following these introductory sessions, the students worked with their designated partners for three consecutive days to produce an artwork in response to the 18th Biennale of Sydney theme, 'all our relations'. The resulting works of art were exhibited at CPAC for six weeks alongside the 18th Biennale of Sydney exhibition.

8x8 project aims

The Young Creatives Coordinator at the MCA, the Public Program and Education Manager at CPAC, and the Head of Public Programs and Education at the Biennale of Sydney, developed the *8x8* project after initial impetus for the project from the Young Creatives Coordinator – coordinator of public engagement programs for youth – at the MCA.

During the project's inception phase, the core aim of *8x8* was to utilise the networks and resources of each partnering organisation to develop an outreach program with active participation as its core value. The project reinforced the process of organising programming priorities to increase community involvement and to create stronger connections to diverse audiences (Sandell, 1999; Heumann, 2006; Simon, 2010). The program partners acknowledged that, in order to facilitate a strong sense of engagement and commitment from the participants, an intensive mode of engagement would be essential, and that the resulting program would likely be resource and time-consuming (Simon, 2010).

The key outreach and community engagement aims of the project were:

- To provide disadvantaged high school students from schools in low socioeconomic status areas with access to learning opportunities with high-profile artists and skilled tertiary students.
- For students to be challenged by new learning settings and contexts, and for this to feed into their learning process about collaboration and their artistic practice.
- For tertiary students to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the politics and ethics of mentorship; and
- To trial a method of 'circular mentoring', where the younger participants also feed back into the process of mentoring and have something of value to pass to the older students.

In addition to the participant-focused objectives, the project partners aimed to establish a collaborative project development process. This required the partners to value the very different contribution of unique assets and resources made by each collaborator. For the Biennale, this was access to high-profile international and Australian artists; for the MCA, it was a newly developed National Centre for Creative Learning and highly-trained and knowledgeable staff and artist educators; for CPAC, it was the provision of substantial amounts of space for artmaking, access to a workshop and tools, fewer operational barriers for artmaking workshops, and a deep understanding of community practice. CPAC also provided the 'home base' from which the high school students could operate – a space close to home where they felt comfortable and could use as a conduit to experiencing the other arts organisations (Walker, Scott-Melnyk & Sherwood, 2002).

Project development

Positive working relationships across the project partners facilitated the capacity to talk openly about the project and how it should be structured. This ethos of knowledge sharing, and a mutual respect for one another, helped to enable a fluid dialogue and transparency of process between the three large arts organisations. The partners shared the common idea that audiences naturally traversed multiple cultural spaces and that they could develop different and meaningful relationships with each of the partners

that would not compete with, but rather complement, the individual's experience as well as the core business of each entity. By co-producing *8x8,* the partners supported the fluidity of their audience (movement of different communities across Sydney) and bolstered the sustainability of outreach programming through the sharing of resources, ideas, networks and communities.

As the scoping for *8x8* moved forward, it became apparent that the project was an opportunity for the partners to continue their exploration into outreach and engagement strategies. Museum and gallery outreach practice is often defined as activities that take place outside the physical boundaries of a museum i.e. talks to community groups, in-school sessions, travelling exhibitions, web-based programs and other strategies (Huber, 2009). The *8x8* project was expanded to consider programs that utilise community engagement practices, such as long-term programming, workshops and consultation in development, to connect with socially excluded groups in order to bring them into the museum space.

As different facets of the program were spread across the three venues (Cockatoo Island – the non-museum venue of the Biennale of Sydney, the MCA and CPAC), what constituted outreach for some partners was at the same time an in-house program for the other. The program was subsequently presented across shared multiple sites. This brought to the program the capacity for students to draw relationships between different venues, develop an understanding of how cultural spaces complement one another, and to recognise the types of experiences that each site offers.

Program days were designed to occur at the site that was most relevant in terms of geographical access, the facilities and technology available, access to diverse stimuli and inspiration, and the provision of a space to exhibit the students' final product and to celebrate their achievements. The project, which involved city-based tertiary students collaborating with western Sydney high school students, enabled participants to gain a sense of the physical and ideological space between one another, fostered particularly through conversations during their shared travel time. The design of the project involved a process of orientation across the greater Sydney area, and as such, the physicality of distance, space and time in relationships of collaboration was a key focus.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Eight tertiary students from Sydney College of the Arts and the National Art School, and two Visual Arts students (Years 10–11) from four different Western Sydney high schools were selected to participate in the program. Each student was required to submit a written application and provide images of their recent work for the selection process. Additionally, many tertiary students were also interviewed.

Although it would have been ideal to accept the participation of as many schools as possible, it was decided that the high school students would be selected in pairs, in order to ensure that they would have a partner for the duration of the project. This was arranged to help students feel comfortable in a new environment. The high school students were required to describe their current practice and interests as well as write a short creative writing piece or a short biographical piece that reflected their personality. The successful applicants were selected upon the basis of their effort made in the application and in the quality of their submission. Their schoolteachers were instrumental to the project as they championed the project to their students and built their interest in applying for the project. The high school students were especially excited about their successful selection for the program, which was evident in their high degree of commitment to the program and sustained attendance.

A key factor in selecting tertiary students for the project was the students' interest in community arts or collaborative practice and in the diversity of their practice. This was to ensure that the high school students would be exposed to a wide variety of media and processes. The tertiary students submitted portfolio images and answered questions about their interests and experience in collaboration. The successful participants included two Bachelor of Art students and six Masters of Fine Arts students.

OBSERVATION METHODS

It is important to note that the *8x8* project was not initially intended as a research or evaluative project. It was presented as a program with outcomes based upon participant engagement and satisfaction. Nonetheless, to manage the expectations of the project participants and to ensure that the project delivered tangible works of art for the exhibition, the project partners implemented a variety of basic front-end, *formative* (observations made dur-

ing the project) and *summative observations* (observations made at the end of the project) of the participants and the process (Diamond, 1999). These observations not only facilitated the development of this research report, but it also allowed the project to be fine-tuned and managed to cater to the needs of the high school and tertiary students as they arose. Front-end observations involved each partner summarising their experiences from past outreach programs in order to inform project development – meeting and assessing the personalities of the participants and also observing how they engaged with one another. These informed the decisions about how the participants were paired and how much attention each pair would receive from the artist educators assigned to the project. On the other hand, formative observations included monitoring the participants throughout the project, noting their levels of communication (minimal/cursory/moderate/extensive), their body language (open/closed/relaxed/tense), and their facial expressions (serious/happy/focused/bored/frustrated/flippant). These formative observations informed the 'on-the-ground' management of project participants. In response to these observations, the artist educators might have involved themselves to motivate, explain, encourage, discipline or calm the participants. Finally, the project concluded with summative observations from the project partners, including a debrief session, interviews with participants, and collation of photographs and other documentation from the project. Results from these methodologies will inform the program analysis presented in the subsequent section of this paper.

ANALYSIS OF THE *8x8* PROGRAM

Critical to the momentum of the project was the scheduling of the excursion and workshop days. The project was designed to span a short period of time, hence there was impetus to consolidate relationships quickly. The meetings were organised in a manner that would enable continuity and familiarity in relationships, ensuring the students will be less likely to forget one another or become awkward in the process. These connections were highly important. Successful arts partnerships, as Bamford (2006) reinforces, often rely upon relationships of mutual respect, which sees students have ownership of their experiences.

In order to enable students to wholly commit to the project, the *8x8* project was purposefully delivered during the students' school holidays. This was especially integral to the effectiveness of the artmaking days, which were delivered over three consecutive days – this was a component that

fostered sustained energy and allowed works to be collated together in a period of intense production.

Prior to embarking on the project, the tertiary students were required to attend one additional session whereby they discussed with the project partners their views towards collaboration and their aims for the project. This was an opportunity for the project partners to make the tertiary students aware of their responsibilities in caring for the creative egos and aspirations of their younger mentees. Three artist educators from the MCA, who were employed to chaperone the project, facilitated this session. The role of these artist educators was to monitor the collaborative relationships between the students and to assist them with practical problems related to artmaking or resolve any potential conflict or disagreement between the partners.

Use of artist educators

Artist educators were staff supplied by the MCA for the project. Artist educators at the MCA are distinguished from other educators by the fact that they will also hold their own artist practice separate to their role at the MCA. They bring to projects an artist's ability to problem-solve the conceptual and technical development of artworks. Two educators were assigned to the project as a whole and accompanied the group each day to assist and support each pair of students during their collaborations. The role of the artist educator shifted and changed organically with the differing formats of engagement. During the day at the MCA, artist educators played the role of a workshop leader, educator and facilitator. During the three intensive artmaking days, they adopted the role of enabler, allowing the students' works to develop independently, gradually guiding the experience and remaining accessible should their assistance be required. Artist and educator at MCA, Will French stated:

> My role at the MCA as an artist educator involves these two hats: you're an artist in the world, and you're also an educator, and one complements the other. [With *8x8*] you have some idea of what can be achieved, but without pressing expectations onto [the participants], you just wait to see and then push where you can – help when people need help, catch them when they fall and just keep the thing moving in the right direction (W. French, personal communication, July 30, 2013).

Initially, the project partners had assumed that the artist educators would remain vital across the project in teaching both groups of students how to communicate effectively with one another and to manage their collaboration. However, it became apparent that, when faced with a pressing task, most pairs needed little support in negotiating with one another to achieve a desired outcome. The result was that a relaxed engagement from artist educators during the artmaking workshops was crucial in enabling the participants to discover their preferred method of working, to develop confidence, maintain their independence and to achieve their goals as collaborators.

Day 1: Cockatoo Island excursion and artist talks

The first day of the program involved visiting the Biennale artists on Cockatoo Island whilst they installed their works for the exhibition. The visit was chosen for the first day of the program in order to inspire and orient the students with the collaborative practices of international artists. This was to be the first time the high school students and tertiary students would meet. Once on the island, the students participated in some games designed to familiarise and introduce students to one another. The Biennale of Sydney staff provided introductions and facilitated opportunities for students to converse with the Biennale artists. The artists provided distinctively different accounts of their experiences working with contributors on their work of art, highlighting to the group that collaboration could certainly take different forms.

Berlin-based artist, Monika Grzymala, for example, told of her experience corresponding with the Euraba Artists & Papermakers to create fine paper elements for her work, *The River* (2012). The Euraba Artists are Indigenious artists specialising in handmade paper art. Situated in the bordertown of Boggabilla and Toomelah in northwest New South Wales, they comprise of Goomeroi women. The processes undertaken by Grzymala and the Euraba Artists did not take place in the same physical space. Instead, the paper items were created in north west NSW and then transported to the site of the artwork installation, where Grzymala worked independently to install the work. Alternatively, Taiwan-born, Canadian-based artist Ed Pien worked with a team of assistants and volunteers to dye lengths of rope in the colour blue, only metres from the space where his installation *Source* (2012) would take shape. This was a very social and visceral form of col-

laboration, whereby the artist and assistants engaged in the same activity, utilising a critical mass of effort to achieve the result.

The diversity in the artists' responses to the idea of collaboration provoked a multitude of questions amongst the students in a following discussion session regarding the usefulness, value and meaning of different forms of collaboration. Does collaboration occur when separate parties play a supplier role, contributing to the individual artist's vision? Or does it occur when each participant contributes equally with the artist as a facilitator, where the final work is framed as a celebrated by-product of the community-engagement process? How do artists value collaboration? How is this represented in their work? What is characterised as genuine collaboration? The project partners were enthusiastic to use the observable diversity of artists' experiences as a stimuli for expanding students' perspectives of the possibilities of how their relationship with their partner might take shape. This experience on Cockatoo Island increased confidence among the participants as they accepted the possibility of there being no explicit definition of what collaboration looked like, in effect, feeling more inspired and open to experimentation. As one high school student participating in the project stated,

> [Collaboration], I think it's something that could take on different forms, 'cause everyone has different mannerisms. You see everyone else's work and it ranged from different styles . . . so, no recipe. If it's a recipe, it's a different one for each of the artworks" (E.A, personal communication, June 9, 2013).

Day 2: MCA workshop day

A preliminary workshop was held in the MCA's National Centre for Creative Learning prior to the studio experience at CPAC. During this time, interactive, social and time-based activities were implemented to demonstrate elements of teamwork, problem-solving, working to a deadline, critical decision-making, risk-taking and trust, and curating a group exhibition. Activities included designing and selling an invention made from found craft materials, group drawing exercises (see Figure 1), and developing a mind map on the concept of collaboration.

Responding to the contemporary art climate of collectives, artist-run initiatives, group exhibitions, limited resources and interdisciplinary art-

making, the day included an introduction to industry forms of collaboration and the ways that contemporary artists often choose to, or are required to, create and present art as a group. This day was also used to define the parameters, resources and expectations surrounding the artmaking days to come, giving the students a foundation upon which to begin their artmaking process.

Day 3: Visit to SCA and CPAC

Figure 1. Artist educator, Will French, leads a collaborative making exercise at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Photo by Rhys Votano. Reproduced with permission.

The tertiary participants guided the high school students through a variety of spaces and studios where they routinely learnt and created work, and showed some of their works in progress. This exercise aimed to provide the high school students with some context around the skills, interests and day-to-day experiences of their partners. Each pair was given time to discuss the skills and benefits they could each bring to a partnership, and to have preliminary discussions about what kind of product they would like to produce for the exhibition. Overall, these conversations were incredibly productive albeit slightly conservative, as most students approached

the process of negotiating with their partner tentatively and diplomatically. Students quickly established their respective skill sets and interests, and many students in this time were able to write a basic approach or concept for their collaborative artwork.

Following this, all the students caught the bus to CPAC. Asked to sit in their pairs, this was another opportunity for the students to learn about one another and develop a rapport. The students spent the last few hours of the day familiarising themselves with the large workshop space in which they would spend the next three days, as well as developing a comprehensive list of materials required for their proposed work. The proposed work was decided by each pair and was presented to an artist educator, who then gave advice (if required) regarding how their artwork could be expanded or developed. By the end of the day, each pair had a basic outline of their artwork and a rough project plan of how they envisioned to approach making the proposed work over the course of the next three days.

THE THREE-DAY INTENSIVE ARTMAKING EXPERIENCE AT CPAC

Over three consecutive days, the students worked for a total of 21 hours to produce the artwork that they had planned with their partner. All materials were provided upon request, including specialised equipment, to ensure as few obstacles to the artmaking process as possible.

The pairs of students formed distinctive relationships when producing their work. They developed their own unique methods for achieving their goals, and each realised a different momentum and energy. One pair developed a way of working that saw the tertiary student teaching the high school student how to work with resin to make pendants, while the high school student developed designs. In this case, roles were clearly defined. It was a pattern observed in several of the pairs: the tertiary student would often determine the technologies, media and skills that would be used for the development of the work, while the high school student's primary role would organically become that of the content contributor, arranging imagery and narratives from their personal experience. A dynamic often evolved where the younger student was intrigued by the new skill set, and the tertiary student knew they had a responsibility to encourage, support and even elicit content being generated by the high school student. This dynamic evolved naturally without intervention by the staff or artist educators.

Although the aforementioned dynamic was common between some of the pairs, several of the cases extended their experience beyond this pattern. Some cases saw the tertiary student identify a skill or talent that the high school student could contribute, in addition to content. In one example, it was recognised by the older student that the younger student was

Figure 2. Student manipulating a metal pendant. Photo by Rhys Votano. Reproduced with permission.

a skilful illustrator. The tertiary student in this case was a digital media artist. A stop-motion video was developed, combining a suite of illustrations and various photographic and video technologies. Both participants developed audio, narrating accounts of personal childhood experiences to add another layer to the video. The high school student later remarked, "I felt like I got along with my partner like a friend and not just a partner. We shared many similar interests and it made it easier to talk to him. I think that contributed to the fun we had during the process" (D.Z, personal communication, July 27, 2013).

One pair was mutually inspired by the process used by South African artist, Nicholas Hlobo in his works on paper *Tyaphaka* (2011) and *Amaqabaza* (2012), encountered during their visit to the MCA. The artist had used disparate materials and techniques including watercolour, black tea and embroidery to create abstract forms on paper. Inspired by the aesthetic

processes behind these works, the pair engaged in a methodical, mesmeric and almost meditative process of sitting cross-legged and face-to-face, with a piece of watercolour canvas between them. Each with a paintbrush in hand, they discussed and mutually agreed on every decision related to the formation of the artwork, from the smallest brushstroke to the length of each stitch. The high school student later reflected upon the process stating, "Collaborating with a partner allows you to use both of your [different] strengths. Often, you feed off each other's creativity and energy and it keeps you a lot more inspired and motivated" (C.I, personal communication, July 19, 2013).

The program partners observed that, while each pair was eventually successful in cultivating a collaborative way of working, not all of them discovered their synergy quickly. As one of the high school students described, "Art is quite personal and so having to work with another individual who probably feels the same way was a big challenge. Both of us create works

Figure 3. Students step back to review their watercolour. Photo by Rhys Votano. Reproduced with permission.

in different ways and our ideas were completely different, [so] to come up with a concept took us a while" (G.H, personal communication, July 20, 2013).

It soon became clear that each tertiary student's temperament, leadership initiative and personal interest in engaging and developing the high school student as an artistic contributor, directly influenced the contribution of the high school students. For example, a confident tertiary student would lead exercises and encourage the high school student to develop their ideas within a framework. Initially, the high school students looked to the tertiary students for structure and guidance and were less likely to instigate a new direction, and it was therefore the leadership of the tertiary student that either enabled or inhibited what and how much the high school students contributed.

As the artmaking process progressed, it was the perceptive and adaptable tertiary students who were able to enable the high school students to express themselves more confidently and to share their ideas and opinions. For this reason, the *8x8* project advocates for the development and preparation of young arts and community engagement practitioners through in-

Figure 4. Tertiary student explaining how to make a pinhole camera. Photo by Rhys Votano. Reproduced with permission.

creased access to comprehensive practical experiences for tertiary students during their study.

Installation day

In their final workshop, the students were divided into their pairs to install their work with the supervision of CPAC install staff and MCA artist educator, Will French. The day began with a short talk by Will French about curatorial practice, detailing how and why different decisions could be made about installation. The talk was designed to prepare students for the holistic experience of both developing a work and installing that work; it was particularly pertinent for students who had developed more in-situ works, where painting, appliques or modifications to the space were required.

A rough map was drawn on a whiteboard (see Figure 5) and the floor was opened to discuss what works should go where and why. Overall, the students approached the task with the same collaborative spirit they had refined during the workshops. First consideration was given to students with larger unwieldy works and pairs that required wall space. From there, the remaining students negotiated with one another regarding where the rest of the works should be placed.

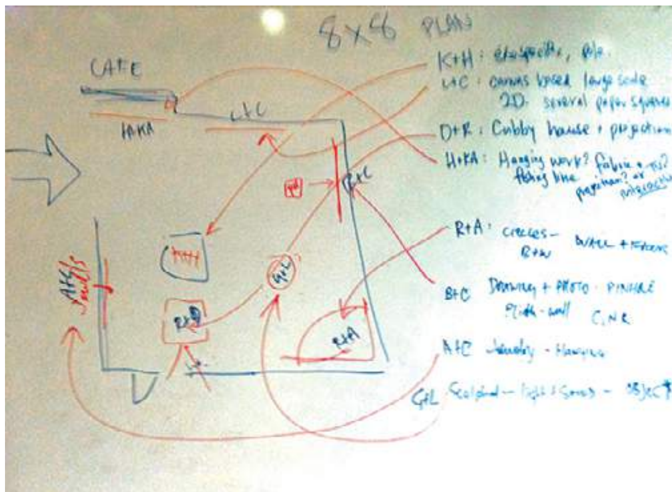

Figure 5. Diagram of the *8x8* installation plan. Photo by Nisa Mackie.

Opening night

The participant's works were displayed alongside a concurrent exhibition at CPAC. The exhibition opening was one of the busiest for the centre in 2012. As a celebration, it consolidated the students' efforts and gave them an opportunity to take pride in their work with family and friends. One participant stated, "... having our own exhibition really gave me a sense of achievement" (D.S, personal communication, July 20, 2012).

18 NEWS

NEWS 1-40

BUSBY

Artists Rhys Votano and Dzenita Semic at the Casula Powerhouse. Picture: ARMEN DEUSHIAN

Dzenita's life in art

STUDENT'S STORY A POWERHOUSE SHOW

Peter Way

MILLER Technology High School student Dzenita Semic sat down and considered her life, her childhood and her family's move to Australia from war-torn Bosnia when she was two.

The result of this self-reflection is artwork now on display at the Casula Powerhouse Art Centre.

Dzenita was one of eight secondary students from southwestern Sydney chosen to collaborate with eight art students from Sydney College for the Arts.

The 16-year-old was excited to see her own artwork in an exhibition.

"I am really proud of myself. Good stuff is happening to me this year," she said.

The artwork takes the form of a cubbyhouse and uses images from Dzenita and her artwork partner Rhys Votano's childhood.

The Busby artist drew a picture of Bosnian bridge Stari Most, which forms one of the central images of the artwork. Dzenita said the bridge reminded her of her homeland.

"The bridge was destroyed during the war and got rebuilt. It reminds me of the country when it was nice and not torn apart," she said.

The *8x8 Project* is on display until August 28.

Figure 6. Local newspaper article celebrating high school student's achievement.

Figure 7. Student participants and their peers at the *8x8* exhibition opening. Photo by Rhys Votano. Reproduced with permission.

The public programs

The display of the students' works were complemented by four weeks of public programs. Each pair developed and presented a program that showcased or provided insight into their artwork. Passionate about the alignment and integration of creative learning and public programs with artistic and curatorial programs, the project partners designed this segment of the program as an opportunity for the core participants to learn how to devise activities that engaged the public with their work. It was designed as a way for students to develop an understanding of expanding industry interest in active audience participation, growing artist interest in community engagement and the importance of young artists' commitment to contemporary thinking around these ideas.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The key outcomes of the *8x8* project were to enable tertiary and high school students to produce and exhibit a physical work, installed at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, to provide an environment where the students could learn more about processes of collaboration and teamwork and the role of mentors and mentees, and to inspire high school students by allowing them to work in close proximity to practising artists.

It should be noted that the project's findings came with their own set of limitations. Not initially designed as a research project, there was no formal evaluation methodology implemented in *8x8* to collect *quantatitive* data regarding the participants' behaviours. Rather, the impact of the program was gathered from *qualitative* and anecdotal information, through observations and the direct relationships between the program coordinators and the students involved. However, this information was vital in evaluating the project overall. Most significant were the personal relationships developed between the high school students and the partner organisations, which extended well beyond the initial project timeframe. The project partners intend for the conclusions drawn from the *8x8* project to feed into a justification for more directed and formal evaluation processes to be implemented in future program collaborations.

Overall, the partners were pleased with the project, and it was clear that the range of key outcomes had been realised, including increased confidence in artmaking and articulating ideas from the high school students, growth in the ability to work with others, and increased understanding of the articulation of community engagement within artmaking practices for the tertiary students. Most of the high school students identified the opportunity to meet new creative people with different skill sets and approaches to artmaking as the most valuable experience offered by the program. As one student stated when asked what she took away from the experience, "meeting new people. Discovering different artists' interests and really connecting and sharing our interests ... [finding] a way to express ourselves" (E.A, personal communication, July 8, 2012).

It is noteworthy that students involved in the project continued a relationship with the project partners. Examples of this ranged from many members of *8x8* going on to apply to be members of the CPAC Youth Committee, as well as continuing their relationship with the MCA by regularly

attending the museum's flagship program for young people, *generationext*. Many of the tertiary students also indicated their desire to learn more about community engagement in the production of art. Significantly, this highlights the ability of the program to demonstrate to the project participants that the museums involved are welcoming and accessible institutions where they can realise a degree of social agency and cultural engagement. This outcome mirrors other examples cited by other arts education researchers such as Sandell (2003), who stated that "museums are purposefully designing programmes that position access to, or use of, the museum, not as a goal in itself but as the means of helping to bring personal and practical benefits to individuals" (p. 6).

The *8x8* program exemplified that engagement with one organisation can be supported by engagement with another. Particularly crucial is the ongoing support that a local arts centre can offer to participants in a program like *8x8*. In this instance, the strong relationship that CPAC has with community could be harnessed not only to recruit and coordinate participants for *8x8*, but also to guide them to extend their cultural experience upon completion of the program.

Given the strong relationship between the MCA and CPAC, and a comprehensive understanding of each other's core mission (fostered through past collaborations on C3 West projects and a CPAC-hosted *generationext* event in 2011), CPAC is in a position to encourage the high school students' participation in MCA programs. The MCA also continues to foster friendship and the sharing of ideas between the MCA and CPAC youth committees both physically and across social media platforms.

In this way, organisations can work with each other to provide students and youth with a broad and diverse scope of creative opportunities. This industry behavior can contribute to the sustainability of programs, as each project partner is not burdened with the prospect of needing to deliver the full cultural experience. Resources can be shared and multiple stakeholders can drive advocacy for innovative programs. Working in such a way could enable organisations to harness a young person's open and flexible nature, moving with the flow of their cultural consumption instead of trying to establish loyalty.

One year after the pilot *8x8* program, reflection on the significance of the experience continues. There has been substantial discussion regarding the methods of collaboration, the impact of interactions between students and exhibiting artists, the function of the artist educators, the duration of the program and the impact of using multiple cultural spaces. CPAC, the Biennale of Sydney and the MCA aim to develop the second incarnation of the *8x8* project in 2014, consolidating the successful learning strategies and acquiring funding to invest in comprehensive research into the collaborative processes that have been documented through observation, reflection and in the development of this paper.

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ART & DESIGN PROGRAMS IN AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT: EXPLORING THE BENEFITS WITH EXAMPLES FROM THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

Some core purposes of the Australian Museum are to inspire the exploration of nature and culture, and to work towards a sustainable natural world with vibrant and diverse communities. Education programs are key to the Museum's approach, and innovative examples include: Indigenous Art Workshops, Fashion Less Waste, Artlook and Artlink. Participants learn about art or design, as well as about nature or Australian Indigenous culture. This opens the potential to foster appreciations, interests and behaviours that are beneficial towards attainment of the aforementioned purposes. This will be discussed, along with how certain elements of program design are conducive to learning.

INTRODUCTION

Museums are a public social investment (arguably that is particularly the case for government museums) and they wield a powerful influence on society (Hein, 2005). In light of this, shouldn't museums seize the opportunity to use their influence for positive effect? In fact, museums do have a long history of trying to influence their visitors. In the 19th century, when the Australian Museum and various other "nationalist" museums like it were being founded, one aim of museums was to be a "civilising" influence, in the hope that the public would begin to meet accepted norms of behaviour. This was a conscious and documented aim of staff in museums at the time; see for example, Bennett (1995). In the 20th century, museums increasingly adopted progressive agenda, with education as a socio-political activity with a goal to improve society, to make it more equitable, inclusive and democratic (Hein, 2005). Markedly, if museums could help their visitors to develop knowledge as well as the ability and will to enquire, question and discuss, then conceptions, attitudes and behaviours would transform. Indeed, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as an institution "in the service of society and its development" (ICOM, 2013, para. 3).

It is of no surprise then, that the Australian Museum's current Corporate Strategic Plan (2011–2014) states a mission to "inspire exploration of nature and culture" (p. 1) and a vision to "work to achieve a sustainable natural world with vibrant and diverse communities" (p. 1). The stated purposes include "to use our custodianship of collections of tangible and intangible heritage to shape ideas, inform debates . . . to provide a forum for engagement with, and debate about, nature and culture" (p. 1).

The Australian Museum delivers art and design programs in which participants develop knowledge and skills in art or design, and develop their understanding of Indigenous Australian culture or of the natural world. This paper will examine how the inter-disciplinary nature of these programs is conducive to learning, and how it opens the potential for change in attitudes and behaviors, to the benefit of Indigenous Australia and the natural world. This and other key program elements will be considered in light of the applicability of constructivism as a learning theory, and in the context of international museum practice.

Certainly, the Australian Museum is not the only museum in Australia or internationally that offers programs with an aim to encourage a more socially inclusive and/or environmentally responsible culture. As can be expected then, this paper is not unusual for its discussion of education programs with such aims, however, more so for its focus in discussion on art and design programs.

Art and design programs at the Australian Museum

An introduction to what typically occurs in the art and design programs at the Australian Museum is beneficial at this point. The participant learning that may result from these programs will be addressed in subsequent sections of this paper.

The Australian Museum is located in Sydney, New South Wales (NSW). As such, the Museum's education programs for schools are linked to the NSW school curriculum. This curriculum is based on stages of learning, and describes the skills and knowledge that students are anticipated to develop at each stage. These stages encompass: 'K' for Kindergarten, then 1 to 6, to span the first year of primary school to the final year of secondary school.

Each of the Museum's art and design education programs caters to school students undertaking visual arts subjects; some also cater for school students of design/technology subjects. There are outcomes in the curriculum of these subjects that students may realise through project participation; these outcomes are specified in the program information that is made available to teachers. By means of the inter-disciplinary nature of these programs, there are also relevant learning outcomes in the curricula for science and Indigenous culture subjects. Additionally, each program was devised for students across a range of curriculum learning stages. Museum educators will vary their level of discussion during program delivery according to the curriculum level of the students. One of the programs, Fashion Less Waste, has also been available to post-school age participants.

At the time of writing, the incoming Australian Curriculum was not yet in place in NSW. In time it will be in place across Australia, and will replace the existing state curriculum. In the approach to transition, the Museum will ensure that its programs are linked to learning outcomes of the Australian Curriculum, and that these links are advised to schoolteachers.

Indigenous Art Workshops: School classes, Stages 1-3 (Primary school) and Stage 4 (Early high school)

This Indigenous Art Workshop is a Museum educator–led program held in one of the Museum's teaching spaces. Museum educators first involve students in discussion about Indigenous Australian art. Images or objects are on hand to illustrate the discussion, which typically covers a range of content such as: various styles; variance between the art of people from different language groups/areas; the contexts in which Indigenous Australian art was traditionally made; the importance of it and the nature of it, including the art materials and techniques used, both traditional and modern. In time, discussion comes to focus on art of the Western Desert including its style, the common symbols and their meanings. With instruction and assistance from the educator, each student will then create a painting in this style. Each student in the class is expected to paint on the same type of object, usually a wooden boomerang.

Figure 1. Stage 2 (mid-primary school) students in an Indigenous Art Workshop. Photo by Sheryl Connors. Copyright 2010 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Artlook: School classes, Stages 1-3 (Primary school) and Stage 4 (Early high school)

In Museum educator-led sessions, students learn in a teaching space pre-arranged with various objects of natural history, such as minerals, taxidermied animals, fossils or bones. Students are involved in discussion about observation and about portraying the features of an object. Following this, they select an object and create a two-dimensional artwork using a medium such as pencil, crayon or watercolour paint, with instruction and assistance from the Museum educator. A self-guided version of this program is also offered to teachers, whereby curriculum-linked written resources are available to assist teachers to plan and deliver a similar experience for their students in one of the Museum's public exhibition spaces.

Figure 2. Early primary school students during an Artlook session. Photo by Andrea Sturgeon. Copyright 2009 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Artlink: School classes, Stages 2–3 (Mid-late primary school) and Stage 4 (Early high school)

This Museum educator-led program is similar to Artlook, in that objects from the natural world are used as inspiration and information in the creation of art. However, Artlink explores how this could be approached professionally.

Students gather in a teaching space, and firstly watch a short video that features an artist whose works are relevant to the type of workshop that the students are soon to participate in. The type of workshop will have been pre-selected by the school teacher, from the options of illustration, textile art or sculpture. Through the images and recordings of the artist's voice in the video, students gain an introduction to the artist's work and art-making processes, materials, tools and studio. This video was made in-house, especially for Artlink.

Subsequently, the Museum educator introduces students to: the idea that they are about to assume the identity of a professional commercial artist; the concept of a design brief; and the three or four briefs they are to choose from. The class then relocates to an exhibition, which contains some animal or rock/mineral content. Each student is provided with paper and a pencil (or a Museum iPad) and is invited to explore the exhibition, individually or with others as they wish, making drawings (or taking photographs) of their favourite objects. Upon their return to the teaching space, each student chooses a design brief and uses the materials available to commence an artwork, on the basis of their drawings (or photos) and with instruction and assistance from the educator.

Drawings are provided as visual stimuli to assist students to visualise their design outcome in terms of the chosen design brief. For example, in the textile art workshop, a drawing of a chair is provided. The dimensions of the blank space on the back of this drawing of a chair, equates to the dimensions of the artworks that the students make, so that a student can place their artwork on the drawing in order to literally see their artwork as a textile panel on the back of this chair. For instance, Figure 4 is a photograph of the drawing overlaid by an example textile artwork. This drawing relates to a design brief which requests students to create a design suitable for a chair to be used onstage as a prop in a theatre production; the play is about a king who is both blessed and cursed by great mineral wealth.

Figure 3. Early high school student works in progress, Artlink program. Photo by Andrea Sturgeon. Copyright 2011 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 4. Photo of Artlink visualisation aid (drawing of a chair) overlaid by a malachite-inspired textile artwork. Drawing and textile artwork by Andrea Sturgeon. Photo by Jane Johnston. Copyright 2014 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 5. A specimen of the mineral malachite. Photo by Carl Bento. Copyright 2013 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Fashion Less Waste (FLW): Stages 4+ (Early to late high school) or post-school age

In this fashion design competition, entrants created outfits made mostly from used, non-clothing materials. There were two categories for entry – High School (Stages 4+) and Open. A Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Tertiary category from 2009 and 2010 was revised to an Open category in 2011, in response to interest in entry from the general public. Finalists in each category were selected by judges on the basis of images of the completed outfits, as well as on information about the materials used and the entrant's inspirations, all of which were supplied upon entry to the competition. Students were able to submit an entry independently or, if they had made an entry during a class activity at school, their teacher would submit an entry for them, as part of a class set of entries. The outfits created by the finalists were modeled during a nighttime fashion parade event at the Museum. Winners and runners-up were selected and awarded

by judges on the night of the event. The awarded entries were placed in a temporary public display, contextualised with labels that acknowledge the designer and their inspiration/s and the materials used.

The program began in 2009, in connection to the Museum's temporary exhibition, *Climate Change; your future, our choice*. The competition was so well received, that the Museum decided to continue the program as an annual event with a series of natural history themes which would connect to a temporary exhibition at the Museum. In 2010, the theme was "Bio-diverse" – Australian animals; in 2011, "Birds of Paradise"; in 2012, "Deep Oceans." The entrants were advised to choose an animal or animals relevant to the theme, and to incorporate some element or elements of these in their design – for example colour, shape, texture, manner of movement. Some entrants even incorporated references to habitat, predators or prey. In order to perform well in FLW, an entrant's research on the theme had to be more than cursory; on the entry form, entrants were required to describe how elements of the inspiring animal/s were apparent in their design. This written explanation was carefully considered during the selection of the finalists, because Style (including incorporation of theme inspiration) was one of the selection criteria, and was equal-weighted with the other selection criterion: Proportion of materials originally used for a non-clothing purpose, Craftsmanship, and Originality. Also, as each entry was modeled at the fashion parade, an image of each animal of inspiration was projected onto a large screen visible behind the model. This juxtaposition had the effect of highlighting the animal elements that had been embedded in the designs, for the benefit of the judges and the audience.

Figure 6. FLW 2012: Deep Oceans parade. Designer and model: Tess Tavener-Hanks, Winner, High School category. Photo by Stuart Humphreys. Copyright 2012 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 7. FLW 2011: Birds of Paradise parade. Designer: Cody Winward, Runner-up, Open category. Model: Brogane Clayton. Photo by Stuart Humphreys. Copyright 2011 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

LEARNING ACROSS CONTENT

The FLW program fostered learning about creative/artistic design in fashion. From 2010, it also fostered learning about animals. Moreover, the program was successful in promoting appreciation for animals – a key aim for this program as well as for the Museum generally, as stated in the Museum's Corporate Strategic Plan (Australian Museum Corporate Strategic Plan 2011–2014), quoted earlier in this paper. The content and language of the writing wherein the entrants described the animal elements that had been incorporated into their design, indicated that a good proportion of the entrants held a genuine appreciation and affection for "their" animals (i.e. those that they had been inspired by). It seemed that appreciation had followed as a consequence of a time of learning about how "their" animals looked and moved etc., and after a time of imagining how to work parts of what they knew about them into a design. Listening to finalists on the parade night invariably confirmed this impression.

It is assumed that the principal motivation to enter FLW will have been design and fashion related – that entrants either had an interest in, or a desire to gain experience and learning in these disciplines. A fair portion of entrants must also have had an existing interest in the natural world and environmental concerns; the entry information clearly communicated the aim of FLW – to raise awareness of sustainability issues in the fashion industry, and from 2010, a need to base an entry on an animal or animals. For instance, the 2012 entry information read: "Your entry should strongly and obviously express your appreciation for deep ocean animal life, and be able to catch the eye and spark thought about sustainability issues in the fashion industry."

However, there were other motivators to enter the competition. These included the cash prizes, the potential for publicity, and the acknowledgement associated with high-profile judges. This meant that entrants were not necessarily people who were already interested in animals or environmental concerns, or who were motivated to learn on these topics or to visit the Museum's spaces or website in order to do so. Thus, FLW enabled the Museum to pursue a key aim to inform and to inspire about nature across an audience that was composed, at least in part, of people that the institution would not usually reach. This assertion can also be made in relation to the wider audience that FLW attracted: teachers, family and friends who attended the parade; visitors to the displays at the Museum and other venues; viewers of the photographs and the video of the parade on the Museum's website.

Similarly, Artlook and Artlink facilitate learning about the natural world, though the prospect of this learning would not be the primary motivator for a teacher of visual art or technology subjects to book for either of these programs. In these programs, students learn about the natural world by paying close attention to objects, especially in Artlook where a key aim is to teach students to *really* look at an object. That is, to try to see an object with "fresh" eyes – to examine it in its entirety and in detail, as it really is, with its colours, textures, shapes etc. This is as opposed to students looking at an object to see just what they expected to see, given that they already know that it is a bandicoot, for example, and given any pre-existing ideas of what a bandicoot looks like. With careful observation, a better conception of an object is made possible.

This is resonant with the work of some of the scientists at the Australian Museum (and at other museums with natural history collections), who use drawing as a way to document, differentiate and explain animal specimens, as well as to attune their eye to the visible features of them. Of course this resonance was stronger in the past – technological advances have provided scientists with various other ways to analyse specimens (such as DNA analysis and sequencing, or electron microscopy), which means that drawing now forms one of many methods to help to determine the nature and species of an animal. Nonetheless, this is a resonance that Museum educators may address with students during a session of Artlook.

Additionally, in Artlook and Artlink, there is opportunity for Museum educators to enhance and extend students' learning by talking to students about the animals, as they move around the teaching space to assist students with art-making. For example, a student may comment on their realisation that echidnas have fur amidst the spines, and the educator could explain that the spines are actually specialised shafts of hair/fur. Indeed, such realisations about animals are common when students are looking deeply at the objects, as are enthusiastic "wow" comments from students on account of some new understanding. As in FLW, participant responses suggest that appreciation as well as understanding is being fostered.

In the Indigenous Art Workshops, students learn about Indigenous Australian culture while they learn about the art. Undoubtedly, teachers are anticipating this cross-content learning, for art is such a core part of the culture that arguably, one cannot understand the former without understanding the latter.

Figure 8. FLW 2010: Biodiverse parade. Awarded entrants and models (back row) and judges (front row). Judges left to right: Louise Olsen, Akira Isogawa and Kara Smith. Photo by Stuart Humphreys. Copyright 2010 by the Australian Museum. Reproduced with permission.

This section has noted the way that appreciation can follow from understanding. The following section will look at the way that shifts in attitude and behavior may follow from increased appreciation, as a result of greater understanding.

POTENTIAL TO FOSTER SOCIAL CHANGE

Consider the entrants in FLW, who by their participation have furthered their appreciation of animals, and have been spurred on to think about sustainability issues in the fashion industry – are they not more likely than they were before to behave in environmentally sensitive ways? Inevitably, such a transformation in thinking and behaviour may only occur for some participants of the FLW, Artlook or Artlink programs, perhaps even only for a few participants each time that a program is run. However, the contribution of these programs towards social change for a more environmentally sustainable culture is cumulative; the total number of people who have experienced such a transformation through program participation will continue to grow while the program continues to run.

In a similar way, the Indigenous Art Workshops may foster social change, so that a respectful manner of relating to Indigenous Australians may become more widespread in Australia. The potential for this change exists because the workshops promote a better understanding of Indigenous Australian culture, i.e. they increase "Indigenous cultural competency", defined as "the ability to understand and value Indigenous perspectives. It provides the basis upon which Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians may engage positively in a spirit of mutual respect and reconciliation" (Curtin University, 2014, para. 2).

Thus, while an aim to engender cultural change via a workshop about Indigenous Australian Art may seem to be "a bit of a reach", the Workshops do have the means to promote cultural change. Also, the Australian Museum is not the only museum in Australia or internationally to hold such a hope for what can result from programs that improve cultural understanding. An example is the *Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue* (MAP for ID) project that is active across Europe, with the aim of "promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect for human diversity" (Kreps, 2009, p. 4). In the publication of Bodo, Gibbs and Sani (2009), selected practices from the project are discussed. This publication illustrates a Europe-wide recognition of the power of object-based learning to promote intercultural dialogues, and exemplifies museums as sites where knowledge of cultures is produced – knowledge that is represented by museums in various ways, and that is helpful in promoting understanding of cultures, and thereby in fostering recognition and respect for them (Gibbs, Siung & Sunderland, 2009). Indeed, as Kreps states, the project examples of MAP for ID "illustrate how museums and other cultural institutions do not just mirror social changes ... They can also help shape them as agents of change themselves" (2009, p. 5).

This accords with the idea of what the Australian Museum should be, as expressed by its Corporate Strategic Plan. It also has wider accordance; an aim to act in order to foster social change is widespread in the Australian and international museum community. To see this, one only has to look to the guiding statements of various museums, or to museum-sector bodies such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM). For example, the ICOM website provides a bibliography for the assistance and encouragement of museum staff as they set out to play an active role in fostering an environmentally responsible society. Papers in museum-sector professional publications are also indicative. For instance, authors including Worts (2009), Yuqin (2008) and Knapp (2009) describe the activities of

other museums, and in doing so confirm that the Australian Museum is in good company – it is one of a number of museums that aim to lead the way towards a more environmentally sustainable culture. Although, as noted by Kendall (2013), to date much of the activity related to this aim has been carried out by science museums, and there is capacity and benefit to such activity becoming more widespread in the museum sector.

PROGRAM MOTIVATIONS AND RELEVANCE

As discussed above, the potential to foster social change is a key reason why the Museum would deliver such art and design programs, especially given the audience for these programs as described above – these programs enable the Museum to reach an audience that it otherwise would not reach.

However, it is also important to acknowledge the other important reasons pertaining to why the Museum offers such programs. Firstly, the programs are relevant to *what is in the museum* – the objects and people. The collections include Indigenous art and objects from the natural world. Also, there are staff with the relevant expertise and cultural background. Where possible, the Indigenous Art Workshops are taken by a Museum educator of Indigenous Australian background. This enables the students to feel a greater trust in the authenticity of their learning about Indigenous Australian art and culture. It also implicitly conveys the Museum's respect for people of Australian Indigenous culture, and students' recognition of this respect can in turn help with motivation and learning in this program. The programs also have relevance to *what happens in the museum*. For example, artists/designers have used the Museum collection to gain information and inspiration for the making of their works. Thus, if a student should ask, "Why are we going to the Australian Museum to learn about art (or design or…)?" there are sound reasons that a teacher can give. These reasons help to contextualise a Museum visit for art-related programs, to make it more understandable and meaningful, which in turn is conducive for motivation and learning.

Acknowledging constructivism

Before discussing other ways in which these programs foster motivation and learning, it is useful to examine the nature of learning, and thus to acknowledge *constructivism*. This author is in concurrence with eminent authors in museum education including Hein (2005), Hooper-Greenhill

(2007), Falk and Dierkling (2000), who contend that constructivism is the most appropriate learning theory to use in consideration of learning in museums, as well as learning in general. Hein (2005) explains:

> As an educational theory, Constructivism represents the view that learning is an active process in which we as learners make meaning – construct concepts – of the phenomena we encounter. In order to convert sensory input (what we see, hear, feel, and so on) into meaning, we rely on our previous experiences and on our previous meaning making. Thus, everything that we bring with us to any new situation – our culture, language, family background, companions on the visit – influences how we interpret the experience. Similarly, the environment in which we have these experiences will influence our understanding (p. 359).

According to constructivist theory, each person constructs their own understanding of the world as they reflect on experience; learning is an active process of constructing new ideas or concepts, by building on past knowledge or experience. It follows that each individual (with different past experiences and learning to anyone else) will, even in the same session of a program, make a unique set of meanings from participation, although there may be substantial commonalities between the learning of individuals.

Hein (2005) points out that museum education has a long association with constructivist principles, reaching back to well before the theory was 'coined'. Its central ideas – recognising that learning is a process and recognising the importance of valuing the learner's meaning making – are fundamental to the "progressive education" that has shaped museum education internationally.

Key elements conducive to learning

This section will look at key elements of the art and design programs at the Australian Museum in light of constructivism, and discuss how these key elements are conducive to learning.

Inter-disciplinary nature

If a participant comes to a program with either of the following factors, the level of their learning will be improved: (1) a level of interest/motivation

conducive to engagement; and (2) some prior knowledge/experience to add to or build from (Black, 2005, p. 141).

With this in mind, one can see how the inter-disciplinary nature of the programs increases the variety of potential "entry points" into engagement in learning. For instance, in the Artlink, Artlook and FLW programs, a participant may enter into engagement by an interest in, or knowledge of: the topics of art/design; or for FLW, also fashion; or for Artlink, also the commercial art professions mentioned in the design briefs (for example a student may know someone who is a graphic designer), or even situations from the design briefs – movies, zoos or restaurants, for instance. Furthermore, participants may engage via the topics of animals or rocks/minerals. Of course the range of entry points into engagement in learning is enhanced by the choices that participants are given – for example, which animal to base an artwork on, or which design brief to select, or which recycled materials to use in an FLW outfit. That is because such choices increase the likelihood of catering to participants' existing interests and familiarities.

Of course, museums in general are well known for the provision of choice in learning. *Free-choice* learning is a term that is commonly used in reference to learning in museums. Clearly a museum, which by its very nature contains a variety of objects, is an ideal setting for free- choice learning. Visitors can be free to choose to engage with certain objects over others, from the range of those that are in view, and to set their own agenda for learning. Publications including Falk, Heimlick & Foutz (2009) have discussed the nature and benefits of free-choice learning in museums, which can occur as visitors explore an exhibition or participate in an education program, which is designed for free-choice learning. The Australian Museum's Animal Hands-on Sessions for primary school students is an example of such a program. It is, however, important to be clear that the Australian Museum's art and design programs can't truly be said to offer a free-choice learning experience – they provide *a degree* of participant choice (to increase the likelihood of catering to participant's existing interests and familiarities) alongside specific direction as to what participants will do during the program. However, a combination of choice and direction brings its own benefits for learning, to be discussed in the following section.

Level of choice in instruction

Consider the Indigenous Art Workshops. Led by the Museum educator, each student is expected to progress through three steps to create an art-work: (1) a background wash in one colour; (2) symbols in various colours; (3) dots as an overlaying feature. The educator models for students how each step is to be conducted so that, for example, students know not to make the wash too thick, and how to make *neat* dots. This closeness of instruction enables students to: develop their painting skills; gain a real understanding of how the artworks that they observed during the initial discussion were made; all produce works of the same style, with the result that the class can see their work as part of body of similar works, and gain a sense of what it feels like to be part of a group with a common visual language.

Also, arguably, students are more likely to result in feeling happy about their artworks by use of this approach to instruction, rather than a less-controlled approach where students would need to be more experimental in technique as they vie to make an art work similar to what they have been shown as an example of the type of work that is expected of them. Emplacing conditions wherein students are more likely to feel happy about the artworks that they are producing is especially important for students with less confidence in their art abilities, but is also of benefit to every student. As Hooper-Greenhill (2007) points out, "enjoyment is an integral part of learning – we learn better and remember more if we are motivated through enjoyment" (p. 36).

Students are also provided with choice in their selection of colours and symbols. As they paint, students view a card that indicates the form and meaning of common symbols in Western Desert art. Students are able to use any of these or to invent symbols of their own, and they can arrange the symbols as they wish. The educator will have invited students to tell a story with their painting – one that has happened to them or to someone else, or a story from their imagination. The educator will have also advised the students to use symbols that can communicate meaning in that story, and to arrange them as they think best to tell the story. The educator will also mention that, in any case, it would not be right to copy another person's art or story. The educator may draw a parallel to graphic cartoons as they would

be familiar to many of the students, but would also discern the contrasts: there is no need for the story parts to be arranged in a linear, sequential way on the boomerang; there won't be any words, not even an artist signature on front – in Australian Indigenous culture this wouldn't be done.

Thus, this freedom of choice is helping to enhance student motivation and engagement – the students are producing a story with meaning for them (allowing for a connection to prior meaning-making), and they are exercising their sense of individuality/style while painting a visual arrangement that pleases them. Moreover, crucially, this freedom of choice is enabling the students to gain an authentic understanding of the nature and purpose of Indigenous art.

It is important to note that the aim is *not* for students to feel that they entirely understand Indigenous Australian art. As Delgado (2009) states, "Museums, like other cultural institutions, should strive not only to be capable of representing otherness, but also to acknowledge the limits of interpretation and translation . . . We cannot pretend, not even as scholars or specialists, to know all the codes underlying any object" (p. 9). The educator will convey to students that they are gaining an introduction – that there are levels of knowledge within the Indigenous Australian culture of the geographic area where the art was made that allow for better levels of understanding of how to make and view the art.

Nonetheless, by the overall blend of instruction and choice during art-making, students are led to feel that they are having an experience that is *somewhat* akin to that of an Indigenous Australian person making art. For a non-Indigenous student, this experience has the *capacity* to create a sense of identification that can help to make the "other" culture feel not quite as other, which may help them to feel more comfortable with the idea of interacting with someone who is an Indigenous Australian.

Of course, it is important to acknowledge that not every student will feel this way – there will always be a gap between potential and actual outcomes in this regard. For example, a student may simply be interested in the act of painting, and pay little or no attention to information regarding Indigenous Australian culture. This is not to say that no learning has occurred for this student, or that this particular session of the program has

been unsuccessful. To say that every student will engage with information about Indigenous Australian art and culture and will feel a sense of identification would be idealistic; it would be folly to set this as a characteristic of program success. Rather, it is to acknowledge that the social change effects of the program are partial, as well as incremental – "step-by-step" (Kreps, 2009, p. 4) as described by Kreps in her summation of the MAP for ID projects. Also, it is to concur with Bodo, Gibbs & Sani (2009) when they state::

> We are aware that museums and other cultural institutions play only a small part in the complex process of promoting integration and the

Figure 9. Selection of works from Indigenous Art Workshop. Photo by Jane Johnston. Copyright 2014 by the Australian Museum.

> respectful coexistence of different communities and cultural practices; but we also believe that this contribution has an extraordinary potential to challenge prejudice and stereotypes as well as to create shared spaces and a sense of belonging (p. 7).

Engaging discussion

In the Museum educator-led sessions of these programs, the educator will seek to involve students in discussion, whether in discussion with the whole group or individually, as educators move around the teaching space to assist all students with art making. The students' ideas can be heard and addressed – this enables a dialogue wherein students feel valued, and places educators in a position to help students to build from the conceptions (of animals, or painting, or Indigenous Australian culture etc.) that the students held upon arrival at the Museum.

Museum objects and active learning

The object-rich nature of museums is a point of difference for museum education, and one to be taken full advantage of, as argued by Garcia (2012) and Hooper Greenhill (2007). Various authors have written about the tangibility of museum objects, and the associated benefits for motivation, strength of learning and memorability, including Hooper Greenhill (2007) who furthermore presents these benefits as a prime reason given by teachers for why they bring their students to museums.

Of the programs discussed in this paper, Artlink and Artlook take the fullest advantage. In Artlink, students draw or take photos in an exhibition. The program utilises the strengths of object selection in an exhibition – objects are particularly numerous, various and eye-catching. By contrast in Artlook, students are in a teaching space with objects from the education collection and object tangibility can come to the fore. Students have the chosen object in front of them throughout the session and can carefully turn and touch it to investigate. There is great potential to know what the object is, physically, and this enhances the capacity to make an artwork that is truly in reference to it, and thus the potential for learning about art-making and about the object. This can be asserted even when the students

are aiming for artworks that are not directly representational – even if a teacher requests that students set out to create artworks that are abstract or impressionist in style, it is still important for a student to really look at an object/model, if they are to make a work that is true to it.

Also, participants are physically active, in research for Artlook and Artlink, as well as in art- making in each of the programs discussed in this paper. Various authors have studied active/performative learning. For example:

> in learning in the museum, mind and body work together . . . It is crystal clear from what the pupils tell us that they learn best when their bodies are immersed in physical experiences which engage their feelings and emotions and allow their minds to open up to new ideas (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p. 165).

Recognising the influence of self-identity

Self-identity has a powerful effect on the impact and nature of experience in a museum, and motivation to learn is closely aligned with self-identity (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). FLW and Artlink have self-identity strongly and overtly at heart, as students try on some artistic careers.

Certain program elements were emplaced to heighten the effect. For example, in FLW, effort was put into making the fashion parade feel authentic – we used a grand space (the Museum entrance), laid a massive red carpet, seated an audience to either side, used suitable music and spotlighting. A Museum photographer captured typical fashion parade shots, which were later posted on the Museum's website along with a video documenting the night. Also, from 2010, the Australian Museum collaborated on FLW with The Strand Arcade – a shopping centre that was founded (like the Museum) in the 19th century and has a high proportion of boutique Australian designer/fashion stores. This collaboration led to the Arcade being added as a display venue for the awarded entries. We were also grateful to secure some high-profile professionals among the FLW judges, all of whom were involved in the fashion industry in some way. For an aspiring designer, it can be a career benefit to be awarded by a panel including Akira Isogawa of *Akira* and Louise Olsen of *Dinosaur Designs* (Strand Arcade members) who

Figure 10. FLW 2012: Deep Oceans display at The Strand Arcade.

Design by Joseph Mashett, Winner, Open. Photo by Nick Wood. Copyright 2012 by The Strand Arcade. Reproduced with Permission.

Figure 11. FLW 2012: Deep Oceans display at The Strand Arcade.

Left design by Rebecca Lee, right design by Bonita Poppy Alexander, Runners-up, High School category. Photo by Nick Wood. Copyright 2012 by The Strand Arcade. Reproduced with permission.

judged from 2010-2012. Each year the judges were listed in the FLW entry information.

The aim in emplacing such elements was to enhance the Museum's ability to enthuse and engage all participants, particularly those who could see themselves as fashion designers. This was in order to attract entrants and to promote a higher level of learning than may have otherwise occurred. There was also an aim to give participants an insight into what it might be like to be a fashion designer, and to enhance their confidence to investigate career pathways in fashion design. When further opportunities arose to do this for selected finalists, the Museum agreed. There was a 10-page photo spread in the Spring 2011 Peppermint Magazine with professional models wearing FLW outfits. The designers could attend the photo shoot at the Museum. This Australian magazine brings attention to environmentally and socially aware options for fashion. The shoot came about because Kelley Sheenan, the editor and founder of Peppermint Magazine was a judge for FLW for 2011-2012. Furthermore, in 2011, FLW outfits were modeled

Figure 12. Peppermint Magazine spread, FLW 2011: Birds of Paradise.

Designers left to right: Stephanie Powell, Winner, Open & Tess Tavener-Hanks, Winner, Secondary School & Best Hat. Photo by Rachel Manns. Copyright 2011 by Peppermint Magazine. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 13. Peppermint Magazine spread, FLW 2011: Birds of Paradise.

Designers left to right: Annelyse Lumley, Amelia Hermawan, Paula Yosephine, finalists. Photo by Rachel Manns. Copyright 2011 by Peppermint Magazine. Reproduced with permission.

on the television series, Australia's Next Top Model (Series 7, Episode 9); in 2012, a Saturday Disney story was filmed at the parade event. This story included footage of the parade and pre-parade interviews with finalists.

Extending the learning beyond the Museum visit

Firstly, during the discussion that takes place at the Museum, educators try to build students' curiosity – a desire to seek further learning after the Museum visit. Also, in the design and delivery of programs, educators are mindful of the need for programs to be enjoyable – to benefit learning during the program, and in order for students to be more likely to seek further opportunities for learning. Curiosity as well as the skill for inquiry is the basis for life long learning, and thus the development of these is arguably more important than the development of knowledge about any particular bird or drawing technique, for example. Furthermore, as asserted by Hein (2005), curiosity and the skill for enquiry are requisite to the type of pro-

gressive aims stated at the outset of this paper. Progressive education "is appropriate for a progressive society, one that is making progress towards a democratic ideal. Such a society needs a cognizant, thinking citizenry, people who have been educated to enquire and question" (Hein, 2005, p. 361).

Secondly, learning is latent; it can be drawn out and built upon afterwards, and in the process, be made more memorable. Also, in part, learning will be tacit – non-verbal, i.e. "everything we know minus everything we can say" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p 37). If, soon after the Museum visit, teachers can facilitate the process of students drawing out and building on the learning (tacit or otherwise) that occurred during the Museum visit, the learning may come to fuller potential.

Teachers who visit the Museum for class sessions are encouraged to undertake post-visit discussion and activities back at school. Activity ideas are suggested in teachers' notes and often also in person by an educator during a visit. One obvious and important activity is for students to complete their artworks following a program such as Artlink, wherein students do not usually have the time to fully complete a work. Another is the production of a display of the completed artworks. The careful blend of instruction and choice in these programs produces a class set of works that look like a body or series of work when placed together. This is fortunate, as it tends teachers towards wanting to make a display.

CONCLUSION

The Australian Museum programs of Artlink, Artlook, Fashion Less Waste and the Indigenous Art Workshops, provide insight into the potential benefits for learning about art and design in an inter-disciplinary context. Some benefits are obvious – for instance, it is advantageous to learn about art and design at a site where there are fabulous natural objects to inspire and inform, and with Museum educators who have knowledge about the objects, as well as about art and design. Less obvious, perhaps, is how the inter-disciplinary context of these programs both: increases the variety of entry points into participant engagement in learning, thereby boosting learning in the programs; and provides learning about Indigenous Australian culture or the natural world, which has the potential to instigate positive social change.

Optimising the capacity for learning has meant remembering the im-

portance of the following points during program design and delivery: active-learning; involvement of museum objects; a thoughtful mix of explicit instruction and choice; engaging students in conversation; making the program experience enjoyable; paying attention to the role of self-identity in learning; encouraging post-museum activities by teachers; and fostering curiosity – the will to learn more once the Museum experience is over.

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EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED: THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN ENCOURAGING WONDER AND CURIOSITY ABOUT HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

Today, the role of the Library in breaking down cultural, educational, and financial barriers to capture the curiosity and wonder of people of all ages remains paramount. This paper will examine the role of the State Library of Victoria, Australia, in encouraging wonder and curiosity through the lens of the Little Boxes school program. Through the teaching strategies explored, readers will be challenged to reflect upon the importance of wonder and curiosity in the development of History skills, concepts and sense of belonging in learning. This program aimed to increase access to the Library's collections, facilities and services for students who would otherwise not be given this opportunity. Stimulating curiosity, questions, and ideas from the students about the Library's vast historical collection was a key outcome of the program.

INTRODUCTION

Does everything have a story? Consider this image (see Figure 1):

Figure 1. Donated by Miss C. McLeod, 1993. (c. 1853). *Mourning brooch.* [Gold and hair] State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

What do you see? What do you think it is? Who does it belong to? What if you're told this brooch is made of hair; does it change anything? Why do you think it is important? And, what does it make you wonder?

Wonder and curiosity are at the heart of learning. According to Opdal (2001), "there is a need to distinguish between curiosity, conceived of as a confident and focused interest to find something out, and the state of mind called wonder, where one is struck by the strangeness or peculiarity of the things met" (p. 331). In education, curiosity can be viewed as the drive that motivates students to inquire even deeper into a topic. On the other hand, wonder can be described as the sense of awe that is created

when one understands that there is so much more to know. Both curiosity and wonder are attributes to be nurtured throughout a lifetime to promote continual learning and understanding. Schmitt and Lahroodi (2008) suggest curiosity plays an important role in lifelong learning and development. John Dewey, (cited in Schmitt and Lahroodi, 2008) further suggests that curiosity creates a sense of genuine enthusiasm in inquiry and 'finding out.'

With an extensive collection of over five million items, including books, newspapers, images, manuscripts and artefacts, the possibilities for learning in the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, are endless. Through the teaching and learning approaches outlined in this paper, educators can consider the importance of questioning, thinking routines and inquiry skills for enhancing lifelong learning. When the State Library of Victoria first opened its doors in 1856, its founder, Sir Redmond Barry proclaimed, "every person of respectable appearance is admitted, even though he be coatless . . . if only his hands are clean" (cited in, Bantick, 2007, p. 18). Today, the role of the Library in breaking down cultural, educational, and financial barriers to capture the curiosity and wonder of people of *all* ages remains paramount.

Figure 2. Chevalier, N. (1860). *The Public Library.* [Watercolour]. Gift of Mr McEwan, 1965. State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

In 2013, over 1,600 primary school students from metropolitan Melbourne government schools that would otherwise not have the opportunity to visit the Library, were offered a free full-day excursion to the State Library of Victoria. Complimentary transport to and from the Library was also provided, as the cost of transport can limit access to the cultural organisations located in the city of Melbourne. Invited schools were motivated to participate in a philanthropically funded learning program, *Little Boxes*, as it aimed to increase students' access to the Library's collections, facilities and services. The program involved Year 2 students delving into the secrets of the Library and discovering the hidden gems of the collections by exploring the Library's galleries, exclusive Library spaces, and venturing behind-the-scenes. Stimulating curiosity, questions, and ideas from the students about the Library's vast historical collection was a key aim and outcome of the program. This was achieved through a series of organised activities.

Following a morning of discovering stories about the Library and of Victoria through guided visible thinking routines, students began to expect the unexpected. Visible thinking routines are a sequence of actions that elevate thinking to a highly valued part of classroom culture. According to Harvard's Project Zero (2010, para. 4), "Visible Thinking includes a large number of classroom routines, easily and flexibly integrated with content learning, and representing areas of thinking such as understanding, truth and evidence, fairness and moral reasoning, creativity, self-management, and decision making." Thinking routines were embedded in the program as research suggests this practical framework deepens student thinking and learning about historical content, while in the immersive Library environment. By actively encouraging wonder and curiosity within a framework, it was proposed that students would be more motivated to learn. Visible thinking is purposefully designed to foster abilities, attitudes and alertness required for deep thinking.

Through facilitation by the Library educators, students developed an appreciation that everything has a story to tell, be it a painting, an object or a building. Students were challenged to delve beyond the surface level and deep into what they think, wonder and understand about Victorian history. In order to better understand how collections are organised and managed, the students were also invited to bring along a treasure from their own lives, stored in special miniature archive box. The object formed the basis of rotation activities whereby students experienced the role of the historian, conservator, librarian and archaeologist. By the conclusion of the day, each

student had contributed their realia to a digital library collection, discovering, conserving and sharing their own story.

Figure 3. Preparing a rare book for storage at the State Library of Victoria.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA AS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR THINKING AND LEARNING

In 2013, Victorian schools began the implementation of AusVELS, the State's interpretation of the Australian Curriculum. As a cultural organisation, it is important to not only offer collection based educational experiences and resources, but also to align and model best practice in the implementation of contemporary teaching.

Understanding by design

Using the "Understanding by Design" curriculum-planning model (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), the Library educators started the program development process. This framework focuses on developing curriculum that deep-

ens student understanding through a three step process, beginning with defining student learning goals, determining assessment opportunities and finally designing learning experiences that will support student understanding. In addition to identifying what the educators wanted the students to know, do and understand following their experience at the Library, they also questioned, what did they want the students to feel? Embedding the new curriculum content for Year 2, the following learning intentions were crafted for the *Little Boxes* program:

- For students to know the role of the Library as a significant cultural building in the lives of Victorians – past, present and future.
- For students to understand that the diverse and extensive collection offers insights into the lives of Victorians.
- For students to be able to apply questioning and thinking strategies to deepen understanding.
- For students to feel curious.
- For students to develop a strong, positive connection to the Library.

Making connections before, during and after the learning experiences

For effective learning to occur, the experience must extend beyond the day of the visit. According to Ritchhart (2007), educators have the opportunity to create a culture of thinking, when engaging with school students in their setting. Educators from the Library intentionally aspire to engage the group before they have even met, in an endeavour to create a transformative experience on the day. This was carried out in the following means:

Setting the scene for the teacher

Classroom teachers can improve the level of connection, learning and curiosity that the students experience on an excursion. Prior to a visit, teachers can manifest a sense of purpose in their students through discussion, shared learning experiences and generating student questions to explore at the Library. In an attempt to set engagement and excitement for the *Little Boxes* program, participating teachers were invited to attend a day of free professional learning at the Library. On this day, teachers experienced first-hand and investigated the learning their students would be undertaking on their excursion day. Additionally, Uncovering Places, an inquiry unit for

Year 2 History, was created by the Library's education team to promote the development of historical skills, knowledge and understanding (State Library of Victoria, 2014b). According to Bhatia (2009), purposefully connecting and developing learning before and after excursions, helps construct meaningful learning experiences. The school-Library partnership was valued in an effort to promote connected and transformative student learning. One teacher participating in the *Little Boxes* professional development (PD) program expressed the value of the PD towards the generation of new ideas for the classroom:

> Tips on how to use Google were great and will definitely help me save my time! Also thought that the run through of the rotational activities was a great way to see what the kids will be doing on the day and also gave me some ideas for classroom activities. Really, it was a fantastic day and one of the best PDs I've attended to date." (Participating teacher, feedback survey, 2013)

Setting the scene for students

In order to set student expectation for their visit to the Library, and invite an inquisitive approach to learning in the Library, the film *Royal Society for Questions and Curiosity* (State Library of Victoria, 2014a) was created. Modelling the language of a curious disposition and visible thinking, characters Dimity Briggstoke and Reginald Jacoby set about on their very first adventure through the Library. Exhausted at the end of their amazing adventure, Dimity challenges the students, "And you? Why don't you come in yourself and see what secrets you can unlock? You never know what you'll find." The mission is set for students to approach the learning at the Library with unabated curiosity.

*Figure 4. The Royal Society for Questions and Curiosity (*2013). [Video still]. State Library of Victoria

LEARNING IN THE LIBRARY

The day at the Library was organized as follows:

- Tuning-in
- Thinking tour
- Workshop
- Reflection

The stages above aim to guide the students through a process of gradual release of responsibility. At the beginning of the day, students are challenged to activate their prior knowledge, consider the history and purpose of the Library and acquire a shared language for learning in the Library. Through the tour, thinking routines are first modelled and then guided by the library Educator. By the time the students take part in the workshop, they have developed an understanding of the work of the Library in discovering, conserving, organising, and sharing stories that they can then begin to apply.

Tuning In: The language of historical thinking

Throughout the day, the students were introduced to the vocabulary required for historical thinking. Words such as "past", "evidence" and "conservation" were introduced through shared discussion and visual aids. This also provided a language for students to articulate their historical thinking and understanding.

Tuning In: Visualisation

Gathered in the location of the very first Library in Victoria, students were invited to visualise Redmond Barry, the Library's founder, stocking the shelves full of books the night before the opening. They were challenged to imagine the significance of these books, from all around the world, free for any person to open up and read, to discover, to wonder and dream.

Figure 5. Interior of Queen's Hall, Looking North, Public Library, Melbourne [Photograph]. (ca. 1910). State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

Tuning In: Defining the learning intention

It is not enough to simply take students on a tour of this magnificent place. At the beginning of the day, the Library educator shared the learning intentions with the students, so that they would have a framework for thinking while in the Library.

The Library as a stage for encouraging curiosity

According to Ritchhart (2007), a curious disposition cannot be taught to students, but needs to be "enculturated," nurtured and stimulated. Learning in the Library offers a unique immersive experience with Victorian culture and history that cannot be obtained elsewhere.

During the *Little Boxes* program, Library educators actively sought to encourage thinking, wondering and pondering with the intention to stimulate deep connections beyond the known and into the unknown. In this rich learning environment, the Library educators identify key opportunities for developing a curious disposition.

To promote higher order thinking, the educators guided students beyond remembering facts, to delve deeper to understand, apply and even to evaluate what they are seeing. Harvard's Project Zero provided useful insights into the development of visible thinking routines unique to the Library's stage, such as "See, think, wonder" and "What makes you say that?" (Visible Thinking, 2014a; Harvard Graduate School, 2014). The former routine encourages students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations using questions including, "What do you see? What do you think about that? What does it make you wonder?" The latter routine encourages students to describe and explain what they see or know, by asking the following guided questions: "What's going on?" and "What do you see that makes you say that?" (Visible Thinking, Core Routines, 2014b, para. 1). Project Zero is an educational research department of Harvard Graduate School of Education. Thinking routines have been designed "to promote students' thinking, such as asking students what they know, what they want to know, and what they have learned as part of a unit of study" (Visible Thinking, 2014b, para. 1).

Modelling and structuring thinking routines while considering the Library's collections, encourages an appreciation and connection to visual storytelling texts such as paintings, artefacts and photographs. To further encourage and stimulate a curious disposition, a community of inquiry was fostered, whereby educators were seen to be "in the learning" and not simply tour guides.

Thinking tour: Compare and contrast

Figure 6. School students discussing art in the Cowen Gallery, State Library of Victoria.

As the impressive La Trobe Reading Room celebrates its 100th Birthday, students considered a photograph from the past (see Figure 7), and compared it to the same room that they saw on the day of the program.

Students were challenged to explore the key inquiry questions from AusVELS (the State of Victoria's interpretation of the Australian

Figure 7. Birds-eye view of the Dome reading room. [Photograph] (ca. 1940). Herald Sun and Weekly Times, photographer unknown. State Library of Victoria

Curriculum), in this significant place. Such questions adopted from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority for History Level 2 (VCAA, 2014, History Level 2) included:

- What aspects of the past can you see today? What do they tell us?
- What remains of the past are important to the local community? Why?
- How have changes in technology shaped our daily life?

Thinking tour: See, think, wonder

Students were asked what they could see in the painting depicted in Figure 8. What did they think is happening in this painting, to the place, to the people? This painting depicts Melbourne, six months after European colonization. The students were then asked what they were wondering? Will this place change significantly in 10 years? What about in one lifetime? What will this place be like? By visualising change over time

and discussing with their peers, students were able to begin developing a narrative about the past. While there may have been a few obstacles with the invention of time travel, by engaging with their imagination, the students travelled through time, to Melbourne one lifetime later (see Figure 9). When students were shown the painting, *Melbourne 1998-1999* by Senbergs, they were guided through the thinking routine, 'See, Think, Wonder,' reflecting upon contemporary Melbourne.

By asking for evidence in what they have seen, students elaborated their thinking and made visible the process they undertook to draw a particular conclusion. Additionally, an expectation was set – that there are many ways of knowing and seeing, a variety of perspectives can be valued, and that there is no right or wrong, but instead only evidence-based thinking. The students' wonderings helped the educator extend students' understandings and tailor to their interests.

Figure 8. Hoffman, R. (n.d.). *Melbourne 1836.* [oil painting on linen mounted on masonite]. State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 9. Wilson, L. W. (ca. 1910). *Melbourne 1906*. [oil painting on canvas]. State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

Thinking tour: The spaces between

Little boxes not only focuses on the Library's collection as story-telling devices, but also upon the discovery, conservation, access and sharing of the collection. Going behind the scenes quickly became an uncharted addition to this unique experience. The Library's closed storage, where the several million collection items are housed, was also visited by the students. This special experience, that most of the public do not have the opportunity to see, served as a foundation for helping students understand the purpose of Library in being a care-taker of the community's stories, including those of the students.

IT ALL STARTS WITH A LITTLE BOX: CREATING A SENSE OF CONNECTION

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs has often been applied to recognizing and responding to visitor needs in museums (Black, 2012). According to Black (2012), "all visitors should feel welcome to the site, not experience a sense of exclusion" (p. 34). A key barrier to participation is the feeling of being unwelcome, "of not knowing where to go what to expect, or what is expected" (2012, p. 34). In this regard, the Library's role is to communicate a sense of 'place,' ensuring students can understand what is special or unique about the site and its relevance to them.

Little Boxes deliberately endeavoured for students to develop a life-long connection to the Library. This ensures the development of a future audience and as Black (2012) reinforces, students are audiences in their own right and deserve to be treated as such, by providing tailored programs. To promote the Library as a learning environment for all Victorians, students were challenged to bring an item of their own to the Library. A little archive box was sent to each student. They were communicated that their item must hold a story that has relevance to their lives. The item formed the basis for the workshop at the Library – see for example, Figure 10.

Workshop: Little boxes, big stories

To encourage appreciation of the importance of the Library as a care-taker of Victoria's stories, the students experienced the 'work' of the Library through role-play. Using their own collection item, they each became the

Figure 10. Double decker bus, copyright 2013 by the State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

archaeologist, conservator, librarian or historian, documenting, preserving and sharing their item and their story. The little boxes were digitally archived to offer insight into the lives, voices and values of Victorian primary school students in 2013. Thus, the role of the Library in documenting the history of Victoria, through a diverse and extensive collection is reinforced. A Year 2 student who participated in the program articulated his learning: "I learnt that the past is completely different from now" (Year 2 participant, Little Boxes student feedback survey, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has explored the importance of wonder and curiosity in learning; in museums, libraries and classrooms and throughout one's life. Through an analysis of the *Little Boxes* program at the State Library of Victoria, the paper demonstrated how thinking routines and tools were used to translate theory into effective practice.

Figure 11. Hair clip, copyright 2013 by State Library of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

When making thinking visible, we consider the evidence on hand that has led us to a particular conclusion. How do we know that educators have encouraged wonder and curiosity about History? In a traditional 'chalk and talk' model, educators at the Library would be the story keepers, weaving wonderful stories about the history of Victoria. This tour model is very entertaining and informative, however a distinction must be made between a "tour" and a learning experience. Tours often imply that knowledge is transmitted via unidirectional modes of communication rather than the shared construction of understanding achieved through a learning experience. Too often, in an effort to "get through the content," the disposition of curiosity, which is at the very heart of learning, is neglected. The Library, with its rich and diverse collection, its culture of thinking and learning, provides a wonderful stage for curiosity and thinking through inquiry-based learning.

By working with their own collection item, students had the opportunity to authentically experience the Library as a place where stories are cherished and shared. They could appreciate that all stories are valued, big and small. They can understand that the Library can be a useful poten-

tial resource for learning throughout their life. Educators at the Library endeavour to continue designing experiences that cultivate questions and curiosity and promote lifelong learning.

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To explore the range of Library resources, visit slv.vic.gov.au or for enquiries about education programs, please email education@slv.vic.gov.au

MATERIALS-BASED TEACHING IN MUSEUMS:

THE EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT SYDNEY UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

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ABSTRACT

The historically significant collections of the University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum, Macleay Museum and University Art Gallery are diverse, containing archaeological and ethnographic material, natural history specimens, historical scientific collections and visual arts. As a result, the educational programs are also diverse in scope, audience and aim. One pedagogical philosophy is however consistent: the importance of kinaesthetic learning in museum spaces through the handling of a variety of collection material. This descriptive paper reviews the experiences of the Education Program run by Sydney University Museums, whose intellectual framework is situated within broader educational models of archaeological and historical teaching through interpretative-based analysis of material culture. It further analyses the methodology of the Education Program and questions, how can museum visitors best experience 'hands-on' history?

INTRODUCTION

This paper will present several of the methodologies and experiences of the Education Program delivered as part of the educational and community outreach activities of Sydney University Museums (the Nicholson Museum, Macleay Museum and University Art Gallery). A series of programs are offered for school students K-12, adult educational groups, and as befitting a university museum collection, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. The common activity linking these learning programs for visitors are hands-on materials-based or object-centred sessions with kinaesthetic learning outcomes.

Materials-based (also known as object-centred) learning is a hands-on way for students to hone their skills of observation and perception, enhance their creative thinking and problem solving ability, and build upon and apply different ways of communicating. As Paris (2002) states, "authentic, unique and first-hand experiences with objects stimulate curiosity, exploration and emotions" (p. xiv). Here I use the term kinaesthetic-learning as an alternative description of tactile-learning; students engage through being involved in physical activities that include handling items. Museums provide the perfect environment for this type of educational engagement of history and art.

This paper will review some of the techniques used by the Education Program for visiting school students on organised excursions and for children during our school holiday activities. The key focus is the development of critical analysis through using objects, where the object(s) is key to understanding the past in a manner described in Hein's (1998) model of the so-called "constructivist museum", whereby visitors are given the opportunity to "make connections with familiar concepts and objects" (Hein, 1999, p. 77). Furthermore, the paper will examine how the Education Program of Sydney University Museums engages audiences and encourages creative learning outcomes by using authentic museum artefacts in a way where visitors can handle them in a controlled environment. This concept of 'hands-on' history can provide valuable insight for students into the past, and stimulate consideration of the role of material culture in human society.

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

Founded in 1850, The University of Sydney is Australia's oldest tertiary institution. As a colonial institution modelled on the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford and Cambridge, the founders of the University desired a museum collection to "provide access for the public as well as to make it available for the illustration of lectures" (Turney, Bygott & Chippendale, 1991, p. 104), having clearly been inspired by the Ashmolean and the Fitzwilliam museums in both English university towns. The first museum to be opened on the campus was a collection of antiquities and archaeological artefacts collected by the University's first Provost (Chancellor). Sir Charles Nicholson (1808-1903) acquired these during a journey to Egypt and Italy in 1856-7 (Potts & Sowada, 2004, p. 9-10; Turner, 2012, p. 108-117). The Nicholson Museum opened to the public in late 1860, as Australia's first university museum. It rapidly grew in size through private donation and benefaction, and the active acquisition policies of a number of prominent curators through purchases from the art market and loans and gifts from other museums. Additionally, the University of Sydney's sponsorship of archaeological expeditions in an era before the passage of the 1970 UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property,* resulted in the acquisition of much material with precise archaeological provenance and context. The University of Sydney itself conducted historic excavations in Cyprus (Barker, 2012) and Jordan, adding material to the collection. In 2014, the Nicholson Museum houses nearly 30,000 items from Egypt, the Middle East, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Europe dating from the Neolithic period through to the Middle Ages.

The Macleay Museum is a museum of natural and cultural history. It began as the private collection of Scottish naturalist Alexander Macleay (1767-1848) in the early 19th century (Cherry 2012), and expanded through efforts of other Macleay family members including son William Sharp Macleay (1792-1865) and nephew William John Macleay (1820-1891), all of who were at the forefront of entomological and zoological research in 19th century Australia. The collection includes type specimens of many species, particularly insects. The family's collections were further expanded as a result of William John Macleay's scientific expedition to New Guinea on the

barque called the *Chevert* of 1875 (Stanbury & Holland, 1988). In addition to natural history specimens, the collection now included ethnographic materials from Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Pacific Islander communities; some of which continue to hold significant relevance to people across this region, including the oldest known Northern Australian bark paintings in a public museum (Davies, 2002; Stanbury & Holland, 1988). In 1887, the Macleay family collections were bequeathed to the University of Sydney to promote the study of science and to be housed in a purpose-built museum building. The collections have subsequently been expanded by the addition of scientific instruments and apparatus reflecting the development of scientific research and education in this country, and also a significant historic photograph collection from the 1840s to the 1960s. Further expansion of the entomology and other natural history collections has occurred under the University's management, and ethnographic materials have been acquired by the University's Department of Anthropology's historically-important contact with indigenous cultures in this country and in the Pacific Islands. Today, the public galleries of the museum are located in the top floor of the Macleay Building, displaying only a small percentage of the over 700,000 items that are held in the Macleay Museum collections.

The University's art collection dates to the foundation of the University, and has grown considerably over time with a collection today of thousands of works of Australian, European and Asian art in the form of paintings, photography, prints, sculpture and decorative arts (Bell, 1988). Since 1959, a small but vibrant art gallery situated in the University's Quadrangle has curated temporary exhibitions featuring both historical material in the University's collection and contemporary works by practising Australian and international artists. Other works of art are displayed throughout the campus, many in publicly accessible environments such as the Law School building and Fisher Library.

There are other museums and collections on the campus of the University of Sydney including the Rare Books collection of Fisher Library, the medical collections of the Pathology Museum, and the Shellshear and Wilson Museums, but it is the three historical collections (the Nicholson and Macleay Museums and University Art Gallery) that were brought together in 2002 under the umbrella organisation of Sydney University Museums (Malouf, Philip, Stephen & Turner, 2010) who are most actively involved in community outreach and museum education. The amalgamation of Sydney University Museums meant a single executive structure could bet-

ter manage the University's heritage assets, support research activities and public programs, centralise marketing and share the skills and expertise of specialist staff. These three collections have always been, and remain, an integral part of the University of Sydney's foundation mission to "promote useful knowledge and to encourage the residents of New South Wales to pursue a regular course of liberal education" (University of Sydney Act of Incorporation, 1850, p. 1).

Community outreach and school education have always been a significant component of the museums – the earliest school visit to the Nicholson Museum occurred as early as 1862, and during the 1950s, the museum employed its first educational staff specifically for guiding school visitors. Macleay Museum curators had been providing school tours since the 1960s. The development of the modern curricula-based program for visiting schools was first established at the Nicholson Museum in 1992, and has grown since then, particularly since the creation of the umbrella structure of Sydney University Museums.

MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAMS

With collections so diverse in scale and interest, covering topics from antiquities to natural history through to contemporary visual arts, and scattered across three different museums located in three different areas of the campus, it can be a challenge to present the museums as a cohesive and coherent unit for visitors. The education team at Sydney University Museums have discovered the key has been the ability to offer flexibility in our programs – enabling students to access just one collection for detailed study and analysis, or providing a broader introduction to a theme across all three collections, or solely sections of individual museums. The very act of comparison between materials and collections can provide interesting angles of inquiry for students to consider and provide 'power tools' for thinking beyond a straight linear narrative. Students can, for example, consider contemporary art after having seen a display of ancient objects, or biological specimens by examining artist depictions of the natural world.

Currently, over 10,000 K-12 school students visit the museums annually as part of the formalised educational program (Barker, 2013) and they form approximately ten per cent of total annual museum visitors to the museums. Many hundreds of additional students visit the museums on self-guided tours and with thousands more children visiting as part of school

holiday programs and family days and other community outreach activities, such as 'Mummies Day on Mother's Day' in the Nicholson Museum and 'animal days' in conjunction with the City of Sydney's Chinese New Year Festival at the Macleay Museum. One of the most active areas of student visitor engagement for Sydney University Museums has been our relationship with the University of Sydney's Compass Program (Montague & Miller, 2013, p. 28). This social inclusion program, founded in 2009, encourages students from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in higher education to consider engaging with university studies after their school career has ended (Cairnduff, 2009). Museum-based activities have played a significant role in the *Discover* (Year 3-6), *Explore* (Years 7-8), *Inquire* (Years 9-10) and *Experience* (Years 11-12) programs, with visits and lessons based around material in the collections. Many of the students participating in these activities have never visited a museum before. Museum education staff believes it is important that student experiences are positive, and that they feel inspired to visit other museums and galleries. A wide variety of adult educational groups also participate in organised sessions.

The actual guiding and teaching at the museums is conducted by Educational Officers who are recruited from the ranks of postgraduate students of the University, students with backgrounds of research in archaeology, ancient history, art history and theory and biology, as well as students of the Masters of Museum Studies program offered by the University. The recruitment and training of Educational Officers from this background serves a number of purposes. Importantly, for visiting school students they can also act as an inspirational and aspirational 'older sibling' figure providing students with insights into university life and study as well as the collections.

As well as welcoming external visitors, the Museums engage directly with many academic departments on campus, particularly the Department of Archaeology and Classics using the Nicholson Museum, the Department of Art History and Film Studies and the Sydney College of the Arts using the University Art Gallery, the University's Faculty of Science, particularly biological sciences, and the Department of History using the Macleay Museum, and with the University's Masters of Museums Studies program across all three collections. The museums provide space, resources, atmosphere and materials for numerous tutorials, gallery-based classes and frequently provide direct interaction with museum staff for undergraduate courses. This contact between Faculty and museum edu-

cation is part of a growing international trend of better use of university cultural resources (Jandl & Gold, 2012).

The range and diversity of experience is a challenge overall for the museums, so a common theme developed across of all of the educational activities is the use of collection items for object-based teaching and for providing direct communication of ideas and concept. A teaching collection consisting of Mediterranean archaeological material, Australian historical materials, and biological specimens is available for organised tours and for undergraduate classes to physically handle and use as the central focus of classes and learning activities.

'HANDS-ON' HISTORY: TACTILE LEARNING

As the museum on campus with the largest public awareness at this stage, and with the longest tradition of educational programs, much of the community and school engagement has been concentrated through the Nicholson Museum, although activities presented in the other two public spaces are growing rapidly in size, scale and popularity with visitors.

Much of the broader pedagogical philosophy of the education programs run through the Nicholson Museum have grown and developed from broader global trends in archaeological museum education (Corbishley, 2011; Stone & Mackenzie, 2013; Smardz & Smith, 2000), and focus on kinaesthetic learning programs where visitors are allowed to handle material from the collection as they learn. This archaeological education theory has emphasised not only the significance of students learning skills of interpretation based upon their 'reading' of objects, but also precision and accuracy in recording observation of the materials being studied (Corbishley, 2011). This can only be achieved by actually holding material. As Flatman (2011) states:

> it is noticeable that archaeology scores highly across the different types of learning styles that have been modeled. To take one example the VARK neuro-linguistic model breaks learning styles into (1) visual (learning though seeing), (2) auditory (learning through listening), (3) reading/writing and (4) kinaesthetic/tactile (learning through doing) styles of learning. Archaeologists, and thus archaeology students, get to use all of these different learning styles in their training and professional development (p. 49).

This not only applies to archaeological education, however. The museum provides the perfect venue to engage in all four learning models, particularly the ability to interact directly with history through touch. Liken (2009) describes how the senses "tactile, visual, auditory, spatial – remain the primary means of input for any new information" (p. 27), but touch in particular is important. Past society can be better understood and empathised with through direct historical contact. Harrison (1974) suggests:

> lifting things up and putting them down, stroking them with the finger tips or cupping them in the hands, are most vital processes of learning about things. It is just as important to know the feel as the look . . . There is indeed no substitute for the experience of handling and the awareness that it evokes (p. 58).

Positive outcomes of this type of engagement is demonstrated by Liken (2009) who described observation of a group of students within tactile sessions, "passing the artefacts and specimens . . . involved touching and interpreting the physical aspects of the object, including size, weight, surface texture, sharpness and fragility (analytic/deductive). Students observed reenacting aspects of object use (experimental, bodily/kinaesthetic)" (p. 34).

If we examine how an object-centred session works at Sydney University Museums we can begin to analyse the benefits for visiting students, and then explore ways in which similar sessions can be conducted within a classroom environment.

A hands-on artefact workshop in action

The tactile learning experiences created through the hands-on workshop are available to all students who participate in an organised excursion at Sydney University Museums. Students are taken to the museums' education room where they are given the chance to handle genuine archaeological and historical artefacts whilst wearing gloves (see Figure 1). Much of the intellectual framework of the Nicholson's program sits within broader educational models for archaeological teaching (for example, Fagan, 2000; Lea, 2000; Thomas, 2010). The main ideas underpinning the program's rationale are:

- Tangible learning experiences are developed through a hands-on approach by using genuine evidence from the past.

- We believe that the study of material culture can develop key skills of critical analysis and helps students develop the concept of multiple levels of interpretation of raw data more easily. Interrogation of artefacts helps develop an understanding of historical processes.
- Students will gain direct experience of learning to think and act the way a professional historian/archaeologist/biologist/art historian does.
- The museum must provide a memorable and fun learning experience for students outside of the classroom environment.
- Sessions are designed to develop lifelong learning concepts.

Figure 1. Students participating in an artefact workshop in the Nicholson Museum's Education Room with genuine Greek archaeological material. They handle, examine and then describe and interpret 'their' artefact to develop analytical skills and try and answer the question, 'what does the artefact tell us about the past society that produced it?' Copyright 2013 by University of Sydney. Reproduced with permission.

All students, irrespective of age and level of study, who visit the Nicholson Museum, are encouraged to think about what archaeology and ancient history is, and what these disciplines aim to achieve (Barker, 2006; Barker, 2010). The key focus is for students to comprehend the broader processes of archaeological investigation – the questions of 'who, what, where, how and why' of history and material culture. This is particularly the case with the artefact workshop, where students are taught to question the material they are handling. Broader questions may include:

- What is the artefact? (Identification)
- What was the artefact used for? (Function)
- *What was the artefact made from? Why? How? (Manufacturing technique)
- How old is the artefact? How do we know? (Chronology)
- Where was the artefact found? (Context)
- What does the artefact tell us about the culture that produced it? (Interpretation)

The six questions provide a framework of inquiry directly relevant to higher order thinking concepts in the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy such as developing skills of analysis, evaluation and synthesis (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Students engage in critical thinking and problem-solving (for example, 'what is the relationship between the various artefacts on the table chronologically, societally or contextually?'). From these six initial questions, more specialised and detailed study of particular cultures, time periods, archaeological sites or assemblages of materials may be possible, with increasing levels of sophistication depending upon the age of the visiting students and their prior knowledge (Barker, 2011a). Similar approaches to Australian history can be implemented using Indigenous and Australian historical material from the Macleay Museum's collection. Likewise, biological specimens can be used to pursue lines of scientific inquiry for students of natural history.

The Education Officer acts as a facilitator, encouraging the student to develop new questions to extend their interpretive abilities. Students present their findings both in illustrative form (they draw the artefact they are studying) and verbally, by presenting to their classmates. Presentation of

their research gives students ownership of their interpretations, but also a format in which to discuss and share ideas and interpretations.

Analysis of tactile learning techniques

The idea of hands-on history has had considerable intellectual conceptualising within museum education and archaeological education over recent decades (Russell, 1994; Gurian, 1999; Duensing, 2002). McAlpine's study (2002) of school services of the Museum of Reading in the United Kingdom demonstrated that 75% of teachers visiting the museum were already engaged in some form of object-based learning in the classroom; 92% of teachers viewed object learning as equally or more important than learning from books, and comments from students ten months after the visit highlighted the benefits towards memory and imagination. For instance, one primary aged student expressed to the interviewer, "if you look at pictures, you imagine what it was like for them. But when you have the objects you imagine what it would be like for you and how you would feel" (McAlpine, 2002, p. 26-27).

In our hands-on sessions, students are asked to draw, describe and analyse objects. Through presenting their ideas and discussing their own interpretations of the objects with their peers and museum educators, students develop key observational and identification skills necessary for historical inquiry. We can refer to the feedback from a Year 7 student who informed their teacher that he "didn't like history until he came to the museum and handled artefacts" (Teacher, excursion evaluation form, 2009). We have discovered that getting students to present their own research findings to their peers by analysing the object they have chosen, gives them ownership of the information the students have learnt. Looking more broadly, McAlpine's (2002) study in an English museum shows that the students also remember the museum experience much longer than they would a classroom learning experience.

The experience gained from hands-on education is essential for students to engage in historical and scientific education, and remains one of the reasons for visitation to museums. This pedagogy creates an accessible learning experience and helps break the mental concept of a barrier between objects and artworks and the visitor, particularly when dealing with students who have had relatively little exposure to museum and gallery visits. By holding most of our tactile sessions in an education room not

allowed entry by other general visitors, educators can control the environment of the lesson. Enacting the ritual of using gloves, students are given the feeling of a special relationship with the objects; that they are trusted to be handling materials that are in some cases, thousands of years old. Artefacts are chosen (and constantly maintained and evaluated by education, collection management and conservation teams) for their suitability for high volume handling. This focus on the visitor experience has been reflected in more recent years with exhibition choices and growing resources for public outreach within Sydney University Museums. The general pattern in museum education globally in recent years has been a shift towards student-centred learning, and although the object remains important to our educational narrative, our visitor engagement development has been no different. As McLean (1993) reinforces, "instead of only placing our objects on pedestals it's time we place our visitors on pedestals as well" (p. 5).

Additionally, archaeological educational theory has strongly influenced the development of our program over the years, particularly the Nicholson Museum experiences, but it is worth noting that this style of learning has become popular in a range of historical museums globally (Stone & MacKenzie, 2013; Smardz & Smith, 2000). The motivating factor for our development of tactile learning activities has been the strong focus in the New South Wales (NSW) syllabuses in recent decades, particularly the Ancient History Stage 6 syllabus for senior students aged 15-18, on the role of using objects in learning. Likewise, the new senior Australian ancient history curriculum now places considerable emphasis on the role of museums in acquiring, collecting, and storing artefacts/cultural materials, which will enable further growth for museums in terms of allowing students to consider the fundamental purposes of museum collections. We have often found ourselves responding to the demands of our visitors, and teachers have long realised the value of tactile-learning. Teacher evaluations often reveal, "students really loved the hands-on experiences" (Participating teacher, excursion evaluation form, 2013). Likewise, students respond positively – "the hands on room was very cool, being able to touch history" (Oliver, personal communication, 2012).

The challenge for any museum or gallery embarking on a program based around a tactile-learning experience is the selection of materials to be used. In the case of Sydney University Museums, the materials selected are chosen for curricula relevance, and in close consultation with the curators, conservation and collection management staff. The process is truly

collaborative, as maintenance and protection of the collection remains paramount, however the experience can be replicated using de-accessioned material or replica materials.

Do-it-yourself

The hands-on workshop offered by Sydney University Museums can, in part, be replicated in the school classroom by using replicas of historical items that can be purchased online, or even historical material bought from junk and antiques shops. However, it is essential that educators do not engage in the purchase of actual antiquities from disreputable sources, as the material may have been looted or faked. Indeed, examples of online sales of antiquities can provide a good example for students to debate the ethics of antiquity collecting and the value of material without provenanced archaeological context. Replicas are sufficient for students to gain experience in the process of handling material culture, and developing investigative skills. Similar techniques are applicable with the study of Australian history through family heirlooms, family photographs and material from local historical societies. Archaeological interpretation is based on recording and interrogating materials, so by using replicas, images and online databases students can develop their descriptive and visual skills by describing material culture and drawing or photographing to capture the details (Corbishley, 2011). The use of replicas in the classroom can never replace the atmosphere of a museum environment but it can provide a decent substitute when excursions are not possible due to financial, logistical or travel restrictions, in which case many museums provide online resources and content. Furthermore, historic photographs can be analysed as if they were an 'archaeological artefact' – students can interpret historical 'meaning' in the images. We have delivered sessions of this style using photographs in the Macleay Museum. While the programs proved incredibly popular with students, it is worth remembering that this type of analysis does not solely rely upon historic photographs from the collection. Many of these images are now available through Sydney University Museum's online catalogue (and those of other museums), in order to create local historical content through local historical societies. Moreover, many schools have their own collections of historical photographs, or students could access family historical images and materials for the same degree of historical reflection and questioning.

The disadvantage of a classroom-based experience is the lack of access

to both the skills and expertise of the museum Education Officer, and to the actual physical environment of the museum itself. While many of the concepts of the tactile learning activities we use can be replicated within a classroom or through online content, I still maintain that an actual physical visitation to a museum has greater impact upon the students, as is also reinforced by the literature (McAlpine, 2002). Johnsson (2003) refers to a focus group with teachers in London:

> when asked if learning is different in the museum to the classroom .... Participants perceived the museum environment to be visual, engaging, 'more alive,' contextualised, fun, multi-sensory, imaginative, arousing emotion, that it gave a connection to real life; a place where pupils were given opportunities to explore new skills through interplay, hands on and minds on learning (p. 6).

A separate study (Hooper-Greenhill, Dodd, Phillips, O'Riain, Jones & Woodward, 2004) found, "pupils themselves clearly enjoyed their visits . . . many found the museums inspiring and unusual places for learning" (p. xxiv). In our experience, this creation of a fun space within the museum environment can also develop creative outputs.

Drawing the past: Using creativity to engage with history

A key component of any historical hands-on workshop involves asking students to draw the material encountered in the hands-on workshops. This focus on illustration is to teach students the skills of observation through recording their artefact on paper. Senior student groups are often able to engage in a discussion about the historic role of scientific illustration and of archaeological drawing as a method of recording. As the students draw their chosen artefact, they engage in the idea of accurate reproduction of the object as opposed to a creative and artistic depiction of the piece, and the values that both types of drawing have to both archaeological and art historical researchers. Questions that students are encouraged to consider include: why would archaeologists need accurate drawings in an era of photography and 3D scanning, and how does this type of illustration train one's eye to make careful observation of the material in examination? Exercises where students describe objects verbally after looking at an authentic artefact, as opposed to examples of students describing the artefact that they have sketched, are very telling, as the levels of comprehension of details are profoundly different (Jolley, Knox & Foster, 2000). Sketching and illustrat-

ing invites new insights into the processes of research and the ongoing role of museums for researching historical, scientific and artistic traditions.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN BEYOND FORMAL SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

As well as organised school museum excursion/tours, we have deliberately attempted to make the museums more accessible to children through numerous programs and activity days. In 2012, the Nicholson Museum became the first museum in Australia to join the UK-based 'Kids in Museums' organisation, committed to supporting museum engagement with young visitors. A program of exhibitions of ancient Mediterranean monuments constructed from Lego blocks, such as the Colosseum in 2012, the Acropolis of Athens in 2013, and plans for a Lego replica of Pompeii in 2014 (Barker, forthcoming) has seen thousands of younger visitors attracted to the museums (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Children enjoying the Nicholson Museum's Lego recreation of the Acropolis of Athens. Copyright 2013 by Nicholson Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Sydney University Museums have also developed education programs with organisations such as City of Sydney libraries in recent years that will continue to grow. We have made active attempts to welcome teenagers into our gallery spaces with activities beyond tours booked by schools and guided by an Education Officer(s). Working with the City of Sydney Council's 'Youth in the City' festival for example, the Museums have offered creative drawing and sketching classes in the gallery and a 'Roman love tour' of the Nicholson Museum based upon ancient Latin poetry and Roman material culture. These and other sessions beyond the organised tours booked by schools and other educational groups will continue to be developed; they provide a valuable means of allowing children to engage with items in the collection. More broadly, better panelling and more engaging displays of materials invited greater visitor interaction and learning in a personal and informal context (Screven, 1993; Tishman, 2009).

Creative play and mummy wrapping

Younger students are often encouraged to empathise with the past through role-playing and costume wearing. It provides a tactile and kinaesthetic experience for visitors, but studies also demonstrate that it provides a means for children to identify with history directly (Wilson & Woodhouse, 1987; Zeegers & Sullivan, 2011).

The Nicholson Museum offers a range of options of togas for ancient Rome, and hoplite armour for ancient Greece; re-enacting the stories of Greek mythology in costume has proved to be an incredibly popular activity (see Figure 3).

This aspect of developing early learning of the history of drama and theatre is an area in which the education program is beginning to develop further. This is important as the Nicholson Museum is home to one of the most significant collections of material culture of ancient Greek and Roman theatre in the world (Green, Muecke, Sowada, Turner & Backmann, 2003) and is a sponsor of a major archaeological excavation at the site of an ancient theatre in Paphos in Cyprus by the University of Sydney (Green, Barker & Gabrieli, 2004). This connection has not only provided experiences for many of the Education Officers to share during their guiding and teaching, but also through the excavation's educational blog, a chance for students to engage directly with archaeological investigations (Barker, 2011b). One exciting recent development has been the building of a rela-

Figure 3. Children dressed as ancient Greek hoplites in an activity outside the museum. Copyright 2013 by Nicholson Museum. Reproduced with permission.

tionship between the Nicholson Museum and the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) for school holiday sessions whereby students are exposed to ideas of Greek tragedy and comedy by viewing artefacts in the collection before finding quiet space to write and create their own stories and then performing them. There is considerable literature on methods of encouraging an understanding of ancient Greek performance in drama students (Wiles, 2000). The Nicholson Museum and ATYP program looks towards developing a greater connection between object and creative performance in future years. Beyond this development, many schools that are examining ancient performances will visit to examine the collection of artefacts associated with Greek theatre.

Without doubt, one of the most popular activities for primary students in the Nicholson Museum is the session focusing on mummy wrapping. A series of pre-visit and post-visit classroom activities have been developed for young students, who when they visit, are able to examine authentic

Egyptian mummies. Students of Years 4 to 6 then experience the process of wrapping one of their peers in bandages and 'mummifying' them. All students get involved, role-playing as embalmers, priests or worshippers, and using bandages and replica amulets and replica death masks, the students wrap themselves up. During the activity, the museum guides explain the process of ancient mummification (see Figure 4). The response is always positive: "the activity I enjoyed the most was the mummy wrapping of Jonathan and Marco. I got to be the priest and everyone started wrapping them . . . I really enjoyed it!" (Year 5 student, personal communication, 2013).

Figure 4. Year 3 students learning about the processes of Egyptian mummification in the Nicholson Museum gallery spaces. Copyright 2013 by the University of Sydney. Reproduced

If a museum visit is not possible, the activity can be replicated in a classroom environment using bandages or even toilet paper – numerous teachers have told me of successfully implementing this or a similar lesson. However, the advantage of learning in an archaeological museum context is the ability to allow students to reference genuine examples, as well as gently engage with difficult concepts such as the ethics of museum displays, issues of repatriation and conservation of fragile materials.

Creativity at work: creative artistic education in the museum and gallery

Programs within the University Art Gallery are still relatively limited in scale, partly due to the limited exhibition space. As each exhibition in the gallery is installed during the gallery's rotating policy, new educational resources for K-12 students have likewise been developed or modified from previous temporary exhibitions. Tours for tertiary and older secondary students are often based upon a more traditional art-historical methodology with guided tours and discussions informed by the works on display, placing these within an art historical, art theoretical, curatorial or societal context. For younger students, a series of creative activities are offered, ensuring all junior students who visit the gallery will engage in creating artwork within a gallery context. According to Kindler (1993), this better enables students to realise the connection between artistic creation and curation, display and critical appreciation. Indeed, in the cases of the 'Compass program' activity days, students from participating schools not only create works of art, but they create work to be hung on temporary walls within the gallery for the day as part of the exhibition. This allows discussion regarding the link between artistic expression and gallery curation, whilst students are within a museum and gallery space.

Many of the creative programs for younger children are themed to current exhibitions. The activities associated with the 2013 exhibition, *J.W. Power: Abstraction-Création, Paris 1934* asked students to create their own abstractionist ideas while focussing on listening to 1930s jazz music for influence and inspiration. An exhibition of works created by Australian artists while working at the *Cité Internationale des Arts* in Paris saw programs that asked students and children to create works with Parisian themes (from gargoyles to Eiffel Towers), and an exhibition of works of found abstraction had students making paper mosaics and collages of geometric patterns. These activities took place in the gallery where the students were creating and responding to artworks among the exhibition's artworks. As Piscitelli and Weier (2002) emphasise, "young children's learning with, through, and about art is enhanced when children are provided with balanced opportunities to both make art and to respond to authentic works of art" (p. 145). We perceive it necessary to continue offering tactile learning experiences for students in the art gallery. Programs of this nature have been implemented successfully in many other institutions (Alvarez, 2005).

However, it is important to note that at times, the art gallery is not the only place where children's creativity is incorporated into the displays. For example, the Macleay Museum's 2012 exhibition titled *Coral: Art Science Life*, asked visitors to consider the important role of coral reefs, not just in marine biodiversity but also for the communities living on reefs. Displays of paintings from school students in the Torres Strait Islands were complemented by a display of an artificial coral reef made by children from colouring in and cutting out animals found on a reef, and created their own artistic coral using paper, plasticine and other craft materials (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Children examine the arts and craft coral reef display. By the conclusion of the exhibition, the 'coral' created by students had filled the case and was displayed as part of the exhibition alongside real scientific materials and artistic works. Copyright 2013 by the Macleay Museum. Reproduced with permission.

One of the highlights of this exhibition was a Skype conversation between students of Mer Eruer Uter, the Murray Island campus of the Torres Strait's Tagia College, with students from the Compass program-aligned Athelstane Public School who were situated inside the museum at the time (August, 2012). The students conversed with each other, comparing life on the reef with life in urban Sydney.

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the experiences of Sydney University Museums' Education Program, in terms of developing and implementing tactile educational activities based upon the collections and student engagement through object handling. The strategies and activities developed by Sydney University Museums for educational outreach are not particularly unique, despite the fact that some of the objects in the collection, which we use, are. The techniques examined above are not particularly 'revolutionary' when examined within broader museum education theoretical perspectives over the past decade, particularly in relation to "the constructivist museum" (Hein, 1998; Hein, 2006). Sessions focusing on kinaesthetic learning or creative depiction enables a museum environment to centre upon student engagement, rather than just focusing on the display of objects. Like many museums, we identify with budgetary, space and time limitations, which impact upon the potential plans for the extent of school educational engagement. One solution has been developing partnerships with organisations such as ATYP, the City of Sydney Libraries, and with individual schools, particularly through the Compass program. Like all museums, we can and will continue to develop more educational activities in the future.

The paper illuminates that diversity in the accessible collections of the University of Sydney's museums, implies diversity in the ages, knowledge levels and subject interests of our visiting school students, who engage in the education programs. The manner in which primary students need to engage with collections varies from the needs of High School Certificate students, in regard to key research questions and detailed foci.

Successful strategies within museum education lies in effective and personal communication between the museum educators and teachers, in order for teachers to be informed of what to expect from the museum experience before their visit, to feel comfortable in the museum environment, to prepare classes for this experience, and for pre-visit and for post-visit reflection (Black, 2005). Museum educators must know the unique needs of teachers so that they can develop activities to suit the curricula needs of the class. Above all, the most important aspect of any museum education visit is that the students have a fun and enjoyable experience. Not only does this facilitate student learning, but also it will optimistically develop a lifelong love of museums and galleries. As Piscitelli & Weier (2002) put it, "objects are a very important aspect of the learning process, as they are in-

trinsically motivating. They can stimulate children's curiosity and ongoing interest, especially if they can be manipulated" (p. 128). The experiences of Sydney University Museums demonstrated that 'hands-on' history works best when the experience is open to as many visitors as possible, when sessions are developed in collaboration with educators so that the museum or institute is aware of the needs of teachers, and when trained staff can act as facilitators to assist students develop skills of critical analysis and interpretation. In our experience, there is nothing quite like the experience of handling genuine archaeological artefacts and natural history specimens to inspire students for further study.

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Secondary College

THE ART OF ENGLISH:

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO SUPPORTING ENGLISH AND LITERATURE CURRICULA AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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Susie May has been an Educator at the National Gallery of Victoria for 12 years. She regularly provides professional learning programs for teachers focusing on cross-curricular teaching and has lectured on museum education in Australia, India and the United States. She coordinated the award winning NGV Student Label Project, which fostered excellence in creative writing and co-founded the annual Ekphrasis program whereby students, facilitated by a guest poet, create poetry inspired by art. She has collaborated extensively with the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE) to create English programs at the NGV and an online VCE English Contexts resource.

ABSTRACT

"Creating an inspiring future: Enriching our understanding of art and life" is the vision statement of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Australia. This is embraced by Gallery Educators who facilitate cross-curricular and inquiry based programs that connect audiences with knowledge and ideas. Using NGV Education's English and Literature programs as a case study, the benefits of engaging secondary school students with original works of art will be discussed with reference to evaluation results including teacher and student feedback. Students' skills in key areas of English curricula: visual literacy, creative writing, particularly poetry, and interpretation of literary texts are shown to significantly improve. These findings indicate that art museums should be widely used as a resource for teaching English.

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1. John Brack (Australia, 1920–1999). Collins St, 5p.m., 1955. [oil on canvas] 114.9 x 162.8 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1956. Copyright by the National Gallery of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

Dead alive
An army of people
Marching along
All heading in the same direction
As though something is calling.
But what?
The ritual,
The daily stain,
Always
Everyday
Same time
Same place,
Covered in shadow,

Dark clones,
Skin folds, masking expression,
Tiredness plastered on their faces
Sleeping with eyes wide shut
Dead alive

(Poem written by Year 8 student, in response to John Brack's painting, *Collins St, 5p.m.*, 1955).

John Brack's painting, *Collins Street, 5p.m.* (1955) in Figure 1, depicts the artist's view of conformist Melbourne workers streaming home from work like marching soldiers in a surreal, monochromatic world. The poem above, which reveals an individual and confident interpretation of the artwork's themes and a skilful use of imagery, is a student's imaginative personal response to the work of art encountered during an inquiry based creative writing program at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). The visual imagery stimulates creative description relating to Melbourne society in the 1950s and allows students to interrogate the benefits and disadvantages of belonging to a group and the sense of alienation that can be experienced in densely populated environments.

The fruitful relationship between art and literature has long been established. Plutarch drew a memorable parallel between the modes of written and visual expression when he stated, painting is mute poetry and poetry is a speaking picture (Barkan, 2012). Ekphrasis, which takes its name from a literary practice that dates back to ancient Greek times and literally meant "telling in full," is most commonly used today to describe prose or poetry inspired by a work of visual art (Moorman, 2006). Homer's description of the *Shield of Achilles* in *The Illiad and* John Keats' poem, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* are examples of Ekphrastic writing.

From a more contemporary perspective, Terry Blackhawk suggests:

Art gives us imagery – images that are representational rather than "real". Art requires leaps of perceiving and experiencing . . . This "otherness" or detachment from the rest of the world – which the philosopher Suzanne Langer defines as characteristic of every genuine work of art – may be one reason why art can provide such a wonderful stimulus for writing (In Foster & Prevallet, 2002).

However, the critical role of this relationship in developing secondary students' skills in key areas of English has been largely unexplored by teachers of English in an art museum context. Whilst many art museums throughout the world offer interdisciplinary programs for students, those designed specifically to accommodate English curricula tend to be offered on an irregular rather than a comprehensive basis. A notable exception to this is the Education department of the National Gallery of Art in London, who offer programs under the umbrella title of *Teaching English and Drama*: *from art to words* (The National Gallery, 2014). They have also pioneered the *Articulate* program which allows secondary school students to work closely in the gallery with professional authors, poets, scriptwriters and a journalist to create writing inspired by works of art in their collection. An evaluation report detailing the results of the project suggested that:

> with the resources museums and galleries have at their disposal, students can be provided with a purpose to write that can stimulate their imaginations and motivate them. The museum environment provides a context for literacy particularly suitable for disadvantaged young people who may not have access to cultural and wider experiences through their home lives (Dodd & Jones, 2009).

The NGV is currently unique in providing a suite of programs for the teaching and learning of English, together with the option of negotiated programs, which are specific to the curriculum in Victoria, Australia. Examples of these programs can be viewed in the NGV Schools Collection Programs online (The National Gallery of Victoria, 2014a).

The aim of this article is to outline the benefits of engaging secondary school students of English and Literature with original works of art. It will argue that creative writing of the calibre featured above, and deep levels of visual analysis are more likely to occur when students are inspired by visual stimulus in a gallery environment. It will demonstrate how students' skills in visual literacy, creative writing, particularly poetry, and interpretation of literary and cinematic texts can be enhanced when attending inquiry based programs facilitated by gallery educators. The design and implementation of the NGV Education's English programs and subsequent findings will be used as a case study. Evaluations of these programs, examples of student writing and the voices of students and teachers who have participated in NGV's English and Literature programs will be highlighted to demonstrate the positive impact of their experiences in the Gallery environment on

their learning and teaching of English. Importantly, the case study highlights how museum programs serve to support school curriculum, broaden perspectives, improve knowledge of a particular subject and competence in specific skills; aims that are characteristic of museum education programs overall (Vallance, 2004).

Interdisciplinary and inquiry based learning

The English programs examined are interdisciplinary, whereby the goal is not solely to get students and teachers to look at art objects from a new perspective, but also to examine art objects that may not have previously been considered related to the English discipline, and to do so in radical ways. As Buchanan states, the goal of interdisciplinary studies is to produce new knowledge, but also to engender new fields of inquiry (Ohio University, 2014, para. 5). However, learning with pictures, objects and cultural artefacts often requires unique teaching and learning strategies (Shuh, 2001). Today, museum educators largely favour inquiry-based strategies (Schmidt, 2004), for the benefits that they reap, such as:

- Teaching problem-solving, critical thinking and disciplinary content.
- Developing student ownership of their inquiry and enhancing student interest in the subject matter.
- Promoting the transfer of concepts leading to new questions.
- Teaching students how to learn and build self-directed learning skills.
- Building visual literacy and language skills and fostering personal relationships with museums and art in general.

(Northeastern Illinois University, para. 3).

Above all, inquiry-based teaching honours the complex, interconnected nature of knowledge construction, providing opportunities for both students and teachers to collaboratively build, test and reflect on their learning (Stephenson, 2007). Inquiry instruction based upon open-ended conversational pedagogies, are used in these interdisciplinary learning experiences to foster aesthetic engagements and understanding of the two disciplines through pleasurable, narrative, analytical and interpretive experiences.

Constructivism and museum narratives

The programs described in this article respond to the democratisation of art museums as social institutions (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994), which recognises that visitors will make sense of exhibits on their own terms, no matter how carefully crafted an exhibit or visitor friendly its design (Roberts, 1997). They demonstrate the "business" of education programs overall, which revolves around the generation and communication of knowledge by visitors. Knowledge is no longer transmitted with unidirectional modes of communication when visitors encounter objects and educators. As Roberts (1997) emphasises, contemporary education programs support visitors to create their own narratives. Museums today foster inclusion, access and user-generated content.

Visitors are encouraged to determine and interpret the meaning of works; interpretation is not only conducted by those with "expert" knowledge, but also by those with *any* knowledge and interaction with the collections (Roberts, 1997). Educational theorists such as Lev Vygotsky, argue knowledge is socially constructed through interactions that take place between visitors. The resulting shared authority over objects and what they represent has influenced museum educators' pedagogies. By perceiving education as an "act of empowerment," (Robert, 1997), educators can design learning situations that invite multiple stories and meanings from objects, and encourage language about context, meaning and discourse

However, what is the educator's role in such open-ended, student-centred learning situations? The role of museum educators is an important one that involves supporting visitors in the process of interpreting and meaning making– "anticipating and negotiating meanings constructed" (Roberts, 1997, p. 3). They are responsible for providing a learning situation, the condition and environment for visitors to experience learning in multiple ways – seeing, hearing, doing, gaining meaning and understanding (Singh, 2004). The experience of *meaning making* is enhanced when education staff scaffold the process through a variety of teaching and learning strategies. This perspective represents the shift in thought from "knowledge to knowledges, and from science to narratives" (Roberts, 1997, p. 3), implying knowledge is contingent on the manner and context it is experienced, which is shaped by individuals' values and interests.

These implications are significant as they raise the importance of the

“meaningfulness” criteria in visitor’s experiences, making it vital to acknowledge, in program evaluations, the context and character of visitor responses. Unsurprisingly, Roberts articulates that many museums favour a *narrative* model of evaluation, which illustrates in “visitors’ own words the role that personal values and interests play in shaping why they visit . . . the narrative they create that describes what they experienced that will live on in their memory” (1997, p. 140). Such kinds of personal experiences in programs are also paralleled with shifts in educational theory from teacher-centered models of learning to social constructivist models of learning that encourage thinking, meaning making and problem solving, emphasising not only *what* is learned, but also *how* it is learnt (Hein, 1998).

The teachers’ and students’ comments interspersed in this article express how and what visitors learn and what constitutes visitors having a positive experience. Roberts (1997) explains that whilst early evaluation studies focused on the effectiveness of exhibits – layout, artifacts and interpretive devices, later studies focused on visitors: what visitors learned and complexities of their experience. Roberts (1997) argues for this “narrative model” of evaluation, whereby ‘narrative’ implies that stories establish meaning as opposed to truth, in support of meaning making activities and qualitative evaluation procedures in museums, such as those that have been used to evaluate the programs at the National Gallery of Victoria illustrated in this case study.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AT NGV EDUCATION

Gallery educators embrace the vision statement of the NGV, to “connect audiences with knowledge and ideas” (Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, Strategic Direction 2013–2016) by facilitating cross-curricular and holistic programs designed to engage with all subject areas of the Victorian curriculum through engagement with art.

Visual literacy underpins all programs at NGV Education. The term refers to the ability to understand and utilise the visual arts and find meaning in imagery (Yenawine, 1997). Active interpretation of visual art can provide a rich source of experience, language and stimulation to support the development of literacy and cultivate many types of cognition directly transferable to creative problem solving skills in all facets of contemporary life (Richhart, Morrison & Church, 2011; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1982; 1995). A small number of creative writing and literature programs have always

been offered at the Gallery for students and teachers of English. However in 2010 a decision was made to create a series of new programs that made specific links with the evolving English curricula throughout Australia. The following factors were key to the design of the programs:

- Visual literacy was becoming an essential component of English curricula at secondary school level. It now features in the Australian English curriculum at all year levels from 7 to 12, and is an important part of the final Year 12 English exams in Victoria and New South Wales. It is also studied at year 11 and 12 in other Australian states.
- The new Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) English/English as an Additional Language (EAL) study design implemented in 2008 for Year 11/12 students includes an 'Area of Study' that involves students in exploring ideas, and creating writing related to themes and literature studied within one of four 'Contexts': (1) *The imaginative landscape* (2) *Whose reality?* (3) *Encountering conflict and* (4) *Issues of identity and belonging*. Students are encouraged to explore the Contexts through engagement with multiple text types, which can include visual art.
- A greater focus on English programs was logical as all students throughout their secondary schooling study English.
- Anecdotal evidence and international research indicating a widespread lack of confidence in teaching poetry among teachers resulting in a failure to generate positive attitudes to poetry among young people in schools (Arts Council England, 2010). This situation presented an opening for creative ideas for teaching poetry, such as engaging students in the Ekphrastic tradition. Additionally, recent research suggested that Ekphrastic writing also helps students become more observant in their reading and writing and in their analysis of visual images (Moorman, 2006).
- The Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12 (PoLT) articulates six principles that support teachers' development of skills and knowledge to be implemented in classrooms. Point 6 in PoLT advocates for links to be made between the classroom program and the local and broader community, stating that "learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom." (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2013).

Certainly, the factors outlined above contribute to the development of the programs by focusing on audience development and understanding the audience's needs. In regard to English related curriculum, NGV Educators also work collaboratively with the Education Officer at the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English, (VATE). As a result of the ensuing close co-operation the following were developed:

- NGV Education programs for students and teachers of VCE English Contexts.
- An online resource (The National Gallery of Victoria, 2010) to complement these programs jointly authored by NGV and VATE Educators.
- An online resource (The National Gallery of Victoria, 2009) aimed at preparing students for creative writing programs at the Gallery.
- Regular presentations at VATE conferences by NGV Educators on the benefits of teaching English using original works of art, as well as advocacy for the programs in state education journals, such as *Idiom* (May, 2012) and *Metaphor* (May, 2013).

Collectively, these strategies built strong relationships with English teachers and students and encouraged them to utilise the Gallery and its collections as a resource. Collaborative work was key to establishing a shared vision and common goals, which, as will be discussed in the following sections, have led to both increased visitation and success of the programs.

OVERVIEW OF ENGLISH PROGRAMS

The programs are designed to offer alternative and innovative avenues for enriching the teaching of writing and literature by providing stimulating experiences for students outside the classroom setting, involving communal engagement with original artworks. The special nature of the gallery environment and its encyclopedic collection, which in some cases can be a new experience for students, introduces a new dimension to the study of English. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory strongly supports that "learning in new contexts enhances the proclivity for learning and specifically points to the differences in intelligence that are aroused in a museum context as compared to a classroom" (Magrab, 2005).

Key foci of the programs are:

- To explore and weave the three strands of the English curriculum: Language, Literature and Literacy, which are in both the Australian Curriculum and the AusVELS, the Victorian version of the Australian Curriculum.
- To develop students' ability to view critically, a fundamental literacy skill that cultivates the ability to deconstruct, manipulate, create, critique and evaluate a range of text types.

Typically, the programs span one or two hours and are facilitated by Gallery Educators who have undertaken considerable professional learning in English curricula in order to maximise learning outcomes in the Gallery. Students may be engaged in a range of activities from writing workshops to specific literature sessions that aim to develop understanding of key themes or concepts in texts studied at school.

Prior to students taking part in Gallery programs, NGV educators are required to plan and organise the experience in order to cater to student and teachers' needs by developing education resources, selecting artworks for tours and preparing how to use them with visitors. Planning also occurs on the part of the school teacher to ensure a visit is productive. This is done by consulting the Gallery Educators beforehand and preparing the class for themes and concepts using educational materials (Singh, 2004) and the NGV online resources that relate to English. Demonstrably, gallery educators exercise cooperative strategies to prepare their teachers and students for a visit (Lacey & Agar, 1980), indicating the intimate partnership between museums and schools.

Introducing students of English to the Gallery programs

In an endeavour to make learning meaningful, it is vital that Gallery Educators make relevant connections between artworks on display and the subject/topic in question. Teaching the English programs requires an intimate knowledge of the English and Literature curriculum. This section details the introductory activities that take place in both writing and literature programs at the NGV. They aim to allow students to reach an understanding of the value of engaging with artworks in a gallery to enrich their studies of English. Designed to explore the similarities between art and written texts, they make explicit the dual existence of linguistic and visual

literacies, which complement one another in the meaning making process (Yenawine, 1997).

At the beginning of each session in the gallery, the Gallery Educators will ask students questions such as "What is art?" and "What can we learn from art?" in order to ascertain what the class already thinks about the nature of art and its function. Based on observations by the Gallery Educators, students participating in the programs often have a preconception that visual art is purely an aesthetic statement. Hence, it is the role of the Gallery Educator to engage the students with a diversity of works that allows them to view the environment as a new resource for learning – a visual 'library' where a wealth of knowledge relating to culture, history, contemporary society and the human condition can stimulate multiple perspectives and viewpoints.

Figure 2. Students engaging with art in the National Gallery of Victoria: NGV International. Reproduced with permission.

To focus attention on the English curriculum, students are asked to consider what art and writing in various genres may have in common. Usual responses, such as "they both tell stories or explore ideas and emotion," allow students to come to the rapid realisation that art is a form of text, which like writing, can communicate narratives, ideas, emotions and cultural knowledge.

Throughout the programs, students are invited to view each artwork silently for up to three minutes. Fostering prolonged 'looking' is essential to extend the process of engaging with small, sometimes unnoticed details, making meaning and forming a relationship with the work. In referring to "Poem," Elizabeth Bishop's ekphrastic poem, Blackhawk states:

> As Marcel Duchamp says, "art is not about itself but the attention we bring to it." Through attentiveness to the artwork's exact size, colour, detail and purpose, Bishop teaches us that nothing is unworthy of attention, not even a modest painting (In Foster & Prevallet, 2002).

Such focused observation is also supported by Harvard Graduate School of Education's Visible Thinking routines (Visible Thinking, 2014) that encourages participants to observe or read a work in silence, sometimes making brief notes about whatever they particularly notice. Considered attention to an artwork is important – a survey conducted at the Museum of Metropolitan Art revealed that people generally look at an artwork for an average of 30 seconds each (Elkins, 2010). However, discovering the elements and principles in works of art and analysing how they convey meaning certainly takes more than 30 seconds. At the Gallery, students are prompted to look at works of art carefully, talk about what they see and are often introduced to new vocabulary. Some international museums, such as the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, also recognise that engaging with works of art naturally builds vocabulary, as evidenced in the rationale of their English as a Second language programs (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2014).

In order to build a framework of ideas, students are asked to respond to questions posed by the Gallery Educator that draw upon students' observational and interpretive skills, such as "What are your first impressions?"; "What do you see?"; "How does it make you feel?"; "What might the work be about?" and "How might it remind you of an experience in your life?" When students respond, they are asked to explain what visual evidence has led them to the initial ideas about the work of art they are expressing,

promoting the development of higher order thinking and visual literacy skills. In doing so, the connection between artists and writers, who both construct meaning using visual elements or descriptive and metaphoric written language, respectively, is reinforced.

Figure 3. Students engaging with art in the Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia. Reproduced with permission.

Additionally, Gallery Educators or students read aloud from selected poetry and articles or literature by professional writers, which relate to themes in the artworks. For example, extracts from T. S. Eliot's poem, *The Wasteland* (Eliot, 1974), which had inspired the painting, *Collins Street, 5p.m.* by John Brack, pictured in Figure 1, enable students to experience the bleak melancholic tones referencing alienation in the modern world in both picture and words.

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
(T. S. Eliot, 1974, *The Wasteland*, lines 60–65)

Jester reinforces that "examining literature using the vocabulary of both writing and art also allows students to see intentionality at work" (2003, para 10). Students experience the idea that both mediums fire our imagination through the power of imagery; a writer chooses words and literary devices that 'paint' a picture, an artist achieves a similar outcome with their tools, which include art and design elements and principles such as colour, line, form and composition.

By making explicit the parallels in the creative process involved in these modes of expression, students recognise the value of engaging with different text types in order to gain multiple perspectives on both reading and writing. The sections below, interspersed with samples of students' work, provide a snapshot of the multiple ways in which students engage with different forms of writing genres in the Gallery's English programs. They are pathways from the introductory activities described above.

Creative writing

The writing programs may be negotiated with individual teachers or drawn from those described in the NGV Education's program booklet online (The National Gallery of Victoria, 2014a). They can encompass numerous writing genres including poetry and forms of expository writing. All programs commence with group discussion about the chosen artworks. Questioning strategies elicit students' exploration of the artwork – students are asked to describe aspects of an artwork in detail or to explore their sensory experiences through imagining what they see, feel, hear and taste. Students are encouraged to take viewing notes to record their own and others' responses as a stimulus for writing when back at school. Students may then engage in automatic writing or short creative writing exercises in which they are encouraged to use figurative language such as allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor, which is a skill development requirement for example, at Year 9 as indicated in the Australian Curriculum, English (ACARA, 2014). On some occasions they write first drafts in a particular genre such as poetry, a feature article or a vignette relating to Australian identity that can be developed, refined and edited back in the classroom.

Figure 4. Student responding to art in the National Gallery of Victoria: NGV International. Reproduced with permission.

Students become increasingly confident and lyrical in their oral and written expression as their ideas are affirmed by both the Gallery Educator and their peers. Comprehensive description leads naturally to students 'unveiling' possible meanings and personal associations, allowing them to move from the literal to the metaphoric, symbolic and perceptual. Kroll & Evans (2006) affirm that an understanding of metaphor is fundamental not only to creative writing but also to how we make sense of the world, stating that "metaphors make abstractions into particulars; they are concrete conveyors of emotion" (p. 6) and "it is one of the ways in which we begin, as children, to make sense of the world (2006, p. 2). Observations in the Gallery have suggested that students can experience a more concrete understanding of metaphor through engaging with the messages and meanings

in art, which they come to appreciate as a visual expression of metaphor. Viewing imagery in art also stimulates students to write their own metaphors. To allow students to gain a holistic understanding of an artwork, Educators provide students with factual information about the artworks and artists during the writing stage, which they may refer to in order to develop their writing. Interpersonal learning is developed in the Gallery program, as peer-to-peer learning is encouraged by students being invited by the Gallery Educators to read their initial written responses aloud.

The poem below by a Year 9 student was written in September 2009 following a Gallery creative writing program with a focus on Australian identity. Julie Gough's artwork depicted in Figure 5, had a powerful impact on the students who engaged in intense description and interpretation of the symbols *before* the artist's intention was revealed. Identical white Aboriginal heads resembling 'soap on a rope' are displayed on red towelling in the configuration of the Union Jack. According to the artist, *Imperial Leather* (1994) addresses notions of Imperialism, cleanliness/cleansing, whitening, placement, loss of self, identity, policies of rendering indistinct (National Gallery of Victoria, 2014b). The importance of viewing the original work in the Gallery compared with seeing a reproduction in a book or on the Internet is clearly demonstrated in the poem: the student has been inspired to combine vivid imagery with potent messages in response to the scale, texture, richness of colour and powerful symbolism he has encountered directly.

Figure 5. Julie Gough (Tasmanian Aboriginal, born 1965). *Imperial Leather*, 1994. [wax and cotton rope and drawing pins on tie-dyed cotton on composition board] 149.2 x 204.4 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by Gabrielle Pizzi, Member, 1995. Reproduced with permission.

White faces, unblinking, unflinching, all lined up, all the same
The true embodiment of all that is adverse in this world.
Conformity, similarity, others trying to 'breed out' a race, like a farmer smoking rabbits from a den,
Other people, so bigoted in their views, that they feel the compunction to destroy another race.
A union jack, tainted with the blood of thousands of innocents, resting there without empathy or compassion,
as we see a culture die, like a rotting corpse, slowly eating away into nothing, without deliverance from itself.
Just as it rose from the ground, it recedes back into it, because we have not let it flourish.
A culture, culled into non-existence, a people once again driven from their homes, just because they are not the same.
If an animal is on the brink of extinction, we make every effort to save it
Perhaps we should look within our own culture, and see the race,
that is slowly dying off before our eyes.

(Max Gibson, 2009, Year 9, Melbourne Boys Grammar School)

Poetry

According to Garner (2010), many teachers perceive poetry as a problem to teach and it is often considered a bore by students. English poet and novelist, Sir Andrew Motion states, "one of the problems is that children are fed 'too narrow a diet' of poetry in schools" (Garner, 2010, para. 7). He also proposes that there are not enough approaches aimed at stimulating teachers' and students' interest in poetry sufficiently for them to regard poetry as an enriching experience to be enjoyed within and outside the school system rather than a tedious subject to be avoided. Furthermore, Australian poet, Bonny Cassidy, who has collaborated with English teachers in Australian schools, has experienced their anxiety in how to approach the poetic form in classrooms (Doecke, McLean Davies & Mead, 2011). Additionally, Melbourne-based teacher and journalist, Christopher Bantick declares, "many [teachers] do not understand [poetry] and therefore will not teach it. This no-go attitude consolidates the mistaken view that if you present a child with a poem, the result is fear or fleeing to prose" (Bantick, 2014).

An increasing number of educationalists, such as Janette Hughes, Assistant Professor at University of Ontario's Faculty of Education, assert the importance of teaching poetry. She states that:

> Poetry is more than a vehicle for expression; it is also a way of knowing. Poetry both requires and facilitates a concentration of mind or sustained attention to which our hectic lives have unaccustomed us. The linking of the strange with the familiar through the image or even through well-placed line breaks is perhaps what makes poetry so powerful. Poetry transforms the way we see the commonplace through new perspectives (Hughes, 2007).

Educators can use teaching strategies focusing on artworks in the Gallery to make poetry accessible and engaging for students, as well as providing a model for teachers who may lack confidence in teaching poetry. For example, Japanese ink brush paintings of landscape, which reveal a traditional reverence for nature and the ephemeral quality of the changing seasons are ideal vehicles for engaging students in the simple beauty of writing Haiku and Tanka poems. Many classroom teachers have documented that when students look at the distillation of an idea and the rich imagery within works of art, they have something tangible to write about (Moorman, 2006). Based on the observations of NGV Gallery Educators and evaluations of participating students and teachers, even hesitant poets, and those constricted by the idea that poetry must rhyme, are empowered as their creative descriptions lead to the writing of forms such as free verse, cinquain, lyric or limerick, and an increased use of figurative devices.

Below is an extract from a poem, *Copper Lions*, written by a Year 11 student from Firbank Grammar School, in response to John Longstaff's painting, *The sirens* (1892). In this case, viewing of the original image and prompting by Helen Kent, the Gallery Educator, to imagine the sensory experiences that one would encounter aboard the ship have stimulated the student to write with graphic description and compelling immediacy.

> The flurry of wings cut foreign air
> Oars gape from our mouths
> Like lolling tongues, brewing
> a whirlwind of salt and brine

Figure 6. John Longstaff (Australian 1861–1941, worked throughout Europe 1890–94, 1901–20). *The sirens,* 1892 [oil on canvas] 308.0 x 212.2 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by the artist under the terms of the National Gallery of Victoria Travelling Scholarship, 1894. Reproduced with permission.

> Sweet concord sings its melody
> But cast in bronze, we cannot hear
> A touch of heat, and a dash of copper:
> Chaos winks. Sanity blinks
>
> (Sunjuri Sun, Year 11, Firbank Grammar School)

This extract from Sunjuri Sun's poem is one example of many student poems that have resulted from English students' participation in the Gallery's *Ekphrasis* program. This program allows students the unique opportunity to engage in an authentic learning experience with a professional poet who, together with the Gallery Educators, provide inspiring opportunities for students to practice the many aspects of professional writing – drafting, editing, publishing and performing. Now in its fifth year, the Poet-in-Residence program involves six Year 10 students from six schools in Melbourne, in writing and performing poetry inspired by works of art in the Gallery's collection. Poetry resulting from the program is published online through the Australian Poetry Centre (Australian Poetry Centre, 2013). Such an initiative reflects a key characteristic of successful education

programs, as outlined by the best practice model for education in museums (American Association of Museums, 2005). In particular, that diverse communities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and voices to the museum's collection and interpretation, including representing audience narratives on the museum's/partner's public forums, such as the website. A participating English teacher from Firbank Grammar School commented that the students "have not written much poetry and were worried about 'getting it right'; the experience opened their eyes to a more creative and risk taking approach to writing" (V. Norton, personal communication, April 18, 2012).

VCE English Contexts and Literature

Year 11 and Year 12 students who participate in the VCE English Contexts programs explore texts related to one of four themes known as 'Contexts.' They take place over a one or two-hour period and can include an illustrated lecture that complements artworks in the Gallery. Rachel Kafka, Head of English at Leibler Yavneh College, commented on how repeat visits to the Gallery form an integral part of her school's VCE English curriculum:

> Over the past years I have ensured that my Unit 3 & 4 English students attend the National Gallery of Victoria's Context program. The program includes an informative lecture, which elicits considered responses from students, followed by a tour of specially selected art works relevant to the Context being studied (R. Kafka, personal communication, August 1, 2013).

The following examples of works studied in the Gallery illuminate the many opportunities for linking themes in art with the Contexts.

An analysis of *Weeping Woman* (1937) by Pablo Picasso, a postscript to the artist's condemnation of war immortalised in *Guernica* (1937), inspires dialogue about the causes and effects of conflict, allowing students to make direct links with texts such as *The Quiet American* (Greene, 1955) and *Paradise Road* (Burke & Beresford, 1997), that are addressed in the VCE Study Design, 'Encountering conflict.' The 'unrealistic', Cubist influenced style of the painting and its possible interpretation as a self-portrait depicting the emotional turmoil of the artist's personal life, promotes discussion about the nature of reality and the existence of multiple realities as explored in the prescribed texts for "Whose reality?" Students in Year 12

who have engaged in a discussion about how the theme of 'Encountering conflict' relates to this painting, write immediate and powerful responses to the prompt: "The innocent suffer most in war," such as:

> Her world is wrought with distress. The effects of war have distorted her, peeling apart the fabric of her existence to reveal the overwhelming conflict within that is burdening her mind. The seams of her life have come apart, revealing her broken nature.... forced upon her by the war that has belittled her existence.
>
> (E. Ioannou, Year 12, University High School, Melbourne)

Evidently, kernels of bigger ideas are born providing the inspiration for mature, finished pieces of creative writing. Students enjoy immersing themselves in different moods conveyed by romantic Eurocentric colonial landscapes, and evocations of the Australian bush by Modernist Australian painters such as Russell Drysdale, which can convey isolation, alienation and human struggle. Photographic landscapes in the sublime tradition by contemporary artists including Bill Henson resonate in particular with the students. Through engagement with these works they can respond to the prompt, "How does the physical nature of the landscape and our relationship with the land shape who we are?" and come to appreciate how landscape can be used as a metaphor for feelings or experiences, thus exploring themes in both 'Issues of identity and belonging' and 'The imaginative landscape' respectively.

The powerful, imaginative, emotional and metaphoric responses elicited by original artworks can extend understanding of concepts similarly explored in prescribed written or cinematic texts studied at school. A participating student at MacRobertson Girls' High School voiced how the Gallery visit supported her study in an evaluation conducted by her teacher:

> Art created a whole new world of resources that could be used to understand and contextualise [the Context] 'Whose reality?' Until then, I had mostly only considered written and film texts, which while great, I felt did not provide the mature symbolism that pieces of art were able to . . . I especially liked that the interpretation was up to the viewer – fitting exactly with [the Unit] 'Whose reality?' (Student survey, April 2014).

Literature programs are also designed for teachers wishing to make links with specific texts or particular movements, which have occurred in both art and literature. Students studying literature by T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf for example, can compare the features of Modernist writing with Modern art and be inspired to write. An English teacher who took part in this program explained, "The tour was a wonderful introduction to our unit and really helped students to build a visual chronology of events that led up to the modernist movement" (J. Isaac, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

Notably, participating school teachers have benefitted from the literature programs, particularly noting how the programs support students' varying learning styles. For example, a participating English teacher states:

> I have found these sessions to be highly valuable, allowing visual learners, who at times struggle to fully appreciate the texts being studied within the Context, to develop a greater grasp of the ideas being explored. Discussions about the art works, both at the Gallery and when we return to the classroom, provides all students (and teachers!) with an opportunity to expand their understanding of the Context, to explore concepts from a new and different perspective (R. Kafka, personal communication, August 1, 2013).

Professional Learning programs for teachers of English

Museums can provide professional development opportunities for teachers – these serve to strengthen connections between the classroom and museum. The NGV offers professional development sessions aimed at highlighting how artworks can be used to engage students and enrich their learning. All sessions address the Australian Curriculum for English and/or the VCE Contexts. The primary purpose of the programs is to support teachers' confidence to use artworks as a stimulus to develop students' writing, particularly in the context of excursions to the Gallery. As Griffin reinforces, teachers often feel inadequate in unfamiliar environments which deal with knowledge outside their subject expertise (Griffin, 2011). Hence, it is important that gallery educators ensure that teachers are informed of what museums have to offer and that they are provided with the necessary knowledge and teaching strategies to increase the effectiveness of school visits and also to enhance their teaching in the classroom. According to Griffin (2011), it is vital to provide pedagogical preparation for teachers in

order to enhance the potential of learning opportunities provided by a gallery; very few teachers perceive a difference between learning strategies used in the classroom and in informal settings.

NGV Educators regularly deliver full-day programs for teachers of the VCE English Contexts at the Gallery. Run in conjunction with the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE), the programs explore each of the Contexts described in the VCE English Study Design, and are designed to model practical strategies for using art as an additional text for deepening understanding of each theme and for inspiring writing within the Context. The sessions are delivered by both NGV Educators and a practicing English teacher recommended by VATE. Evaluations from the participating teachers indicate that the sessions have proven to be particularly valuable for teachers who were reluctant to work with art due to a perceived lack of knowledge in this area. In addition, feedback from English teachers attending Gallery programs with their students suggests that they are learning effective strategies for using art in their classroom practice.

In order to ensure that teachers from a wide range of geographical areas can access the professional development, NGV Educators present about the creative writing and poetry programs in subject association conferences, online professional development and in journals and magazines. This contributes to an increase in awareness among English teachers, of the advantages of bringing students to the Gallery and/or how to incorporate the Gallery's resources into school-based activities. This has also attracted new graduate teachers: "the presentation was very insightful . . . the program sounded amazing and creative when I first heard of it – I was determined to get a class to take part and I am glad I did" (English teacher, University High School, teacher survey, April 22, 2011).

ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MUSEUM LEARNING FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The previous section demonstrates the variety of pedagogical methods that are used to enhance the teaching of English and Literature in the Gallery. This section will summarise the particular advantages of engaging secondary school students of English and Literature with original artworks to develop visual literacy skills and inspire student writing. Findings from continual program evaluations (responses from participating teachers and students) will be used as evidence to validate the key benefits described, in-

cluding results from a formal evaluation report conducted about the NGV's English programs (Ruanglertbutr, 2011). Collectively, these findings will also highlight the advantages of learning in the unique environment of the museum as opposed to engaging with image reproductions in the classroom.

The NGV English and Literature programs are evaluated on a regular basis using qualitative and quantitative measures to allow for a comprehensive understanding of what students learnt, of their emotional involvement, aesthetic appreciation and of their intentions to apply their gallery-learning in school and life. There is a clear understanding between teachers and museum educators about the objectives and intended outcomes of a program to ensure these can be evaluated and inform future sessions. Data from the evaluations is analysed by comparing the experiences and learning outcomes of students and teachers with the programs' goals and objectives.

Specifically, the evaluations of the programs aim to:

- Determine student learning outcomes by identifying changes in student knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.
- Identify teachers' perceptions of the program, including whether the program met their expectations.
- Understand the strengths of a program.
- Maximise the quality of programs by identifying areas for improvement.
- Understand how pre-visit activities, gallery activities and post-visit activities are integrated into classroom-based teaching and learning.

The following qualitative data obtained by the authors of this article, were used to evaluate the English and Literature programs:

- Publications of student writing produced in response to NGV English programs.
- Student writings completed during a program that were reviewed by peers, English teachers and NGV Educators.
- Audio and filmed recordings of student and teacher interactions during the program.
- Anecdotal documentation by facilitators during the program.

Additionally, the following qualitative methods were used:

- Written evaluations from participating students and teachers, including formal surveys.
- Informal and formal group and individual interviews with school teachers and students in the museum.

The above collection methods take root in the disciplines of sociology, ethnography and anthropology, emphasising the use of observation, documentation, interviews and descriptions of case studies with "thick narrative accounts" (Hein, 1994, p. 307) in order to understand the relevance and impact of the programs through participants' own words. They embrace spontaneous expressions and differing perspectives. Data was usually collected at the conclusion of each class, typical of "summative evaluation" (Korn, 1994) that aims to assess the overall effectiveness of a program and its lesson components.

The evaluation reveals insightful observations into the effectiveness of using visual art to develop visual literacy and student writing. The most prominent benefits are outlined below.

1) *Benefits multiple intelligences*

Teachers participating in the programs acknowledged that students benefit from group discussion in front of an artwork where they experience a previously unseen visual text as a community in which all participants are 'reading' the same work simultaneously and learning from each others' comments and interpretations. This process naturally develops interpersonal learning skills. Many students acknowledged they enjoyed sharing their writing with others; "It was fun to open up and respect other people's opinions and ideas" (Student, Melbourne Grammar School, student survey, May, 2011). "Considering that at least 15% of all students are weak verbally" (Olsen in Jester, 2003, para 6), learning to write figuratively inspired by art is particularly fruitful for students who are visual learners. Jester writes of the importance of making "connections between sensory images in both verbal and visual texts" (Jester, 2003, para 7). Moving away from her emphasis on print-only learning in the English classroom, she discovered that engaging with art "helped her students generate lively writing and discussion" (Jester, 2003, para 1) and convinced her of the value of analysing art with students. One participant in the program stated, "The NGV's Context

program provides us with the opportunity to ensure a wider range of students has access to a way of learning which suits their individual style" (R. Kafka, personal communication, August 1, 2013).

2) *Develops critical and divergent thinking skills*

Many teachers agreed that the process of visual analysis and the inquiry-based learning activities conducted in the Gallery involved students in higher order critical and creative thinking, which cultivated their ability to synthesise ideas and form opinions. Students stated they learnt how to "think outside the box." For example, when a group of students responded to Mark Rothko's painting, *Untitled (Red)* (1956), an animated discussion about the nature of art, prompted by first impressions of the apparently 'simple' abstract work, quickly subsided as prolonged looking revealed multiple possible meanings in the canvas of hovering red mists. Inspired by the challenge of describing the various hues in the painting, students clamoured to share their descriptions of 'rose quartz' 'salmon', 'lipstick', 'watermelon', 'fire', 'seas of passion', 'tulips', 'cherry wood' and 'warm wine.' An atmosphere of wonderment pervaded as a kaleidoscope of readily volunteered and sometimes startling personal memories, associations and interpretations followed:

> The deep red of rage slowly ascending and leaving my body
>
> . . .
>
> Crimson blood stored in bags ready to infuse.
>
> . . .
>
> I see blood rivers and streams. The gore surrounds my feet. I am disgusted by this massacre.
>
> (Year 8 students, Fitzroy High School, Melbourne)
>
> My way of looking at it is that it presents confusing, confronting ideas – it involves me in the simple feeling of curiosity, (a quality), which got us (mankind) here today, which drives us.
>
> (Year 9 student, Melbourne Ladies' College, Melbourne).

3) *Improves language skills*

Participating teachers expressed that visual stimuli elicited responses from

students who were generally reluctant to contribute in group discussions, demonstrating the impact of this strategy on visual learners who "come alive" in discussions in the gallery, surprising peers and teachers with their changed behaviour. One secondary school English teacher noted, "Two boys in particular gave fabulous, extended and fluent responses, whereas in class they rarely participate" (teacher survey, Melbourne Grammar School, May, 2011). This supports research that reveals how describing works of art in detail develops a rich and diverse vocabulary and experimentation with language (Walsh-Piper, 2002). The opportunity to look at and describe art can also assist those students who are disinterested in writing. The problem of reluctant writers who write poorly can be attributed to the fact that "they won't commit themselves to detail. Their language is often sparse and they don't play around with language in an interesting way..." (Hawthorne, 2002). Foster & Prevallet acknowledge that "tangible and colourful, with shapes and images to grab onto, visual art inspires students to write using details that are lively because what is emphasised is the "I" looking" (Foster & Prevallet, 2002). A key result was the increased confidence that students demonstrated in using literary devices. Teachers noted that the Gallery Educator encouraged students to explore metaphor, simile and writing poetry 'in the moment'; they built descriptive vocabulary as they explored the artworks.

A participating teacher stated:

> The presenter I was with had the students exploring metaphor and simile and writing poetry on the spot, and she had them building descriptive vocabulary as they explored the artworks. Even my weakest students were able to join in and produce some creditable responses (G. Reynolds, Box Hill Secondary College, personal communication, February 22, 2012).

Teachers are provided with the opportunity to observe their students in an alternative environment outside the classroom, which can lead to new insights into the way individuals learn and perform. Moreover, teachers attributed improved language skills to the questioning techniques used by the Gallery Educator to challenge and encourage students to think in depth about artworks.

For example, when questioned about the artwork, *Weeping Woman* (1937) by Pablo Picasso, painted in response to the atrocities of the Spanish

Civil War, a group of Middle Years' students eagerly suggested a string of powerful adjectives to describe the mood of the distorted and semi-abstract female face gazing out at them. The words 'contorted', 'disorientated', 'distraught', 'confused' and 'anguished' naturally led to a meaningful discussion about how the artist had used his visual language of 'jagged lines', 'sickly greens' and 'a claustrophobic' setting to create the distressing meaning. The sense of deep engagement with the picture was palpable as students proudly jostled to share similes and first drafts of poems, such as the example below.

> Her eye is like a decaying fruit leaking tears down her face.
>
> ...
>
> Her eye is like a cracked photo frame.
>
> A woman who has lost her child grieves in silence.
> Tears run like rivers coarsing down her cheeks.
> In a dark room a woman cries alone
> The grief consumes her innocence.
>
> (Year 8 Students Fitzroy High School, Melbourne)

4) *Stimulates inspiration for writing*

The ideas and descriptive language generated in the Gallery provide a springboard for students to write imaginatively in a variety of genres. Students indicated that the programs inspired new ideas for writing by (1) developing word associations – "It creates a starting point in your head" (Student, University High School, student survey, March 23, 2011) (2) developing rich imagery, and (3) providing focus and detail for their writing. One student said, "the works inspired ideas I would never think of without going to the NGV" (Student, University High School, student survey, March 23, 2011). Inspiration was also derived from listening to other students' opinions and "deep thinking that helps with your own self-expression" (Student, Melbourne Grammar School, student survey, May, 2011).

5) *Increases appreciation of art*

Students were exposed to a range of art styles, both contemporary and historical, resulting in students understanding "how different things can be called Art" (Student, Melbourne Grammar School, student survey, May, 2011). Students also discovered the value of art appreciation: "I normally find art quite boring and writing poetry about art opened my eyes more" (Student, Melbourne Grammar School, student survey, May, 2011).

6) *Increases enjoyment in creative writing*

Students indicated that their enjoyment in writing was heightened by responding to works of art: "It was like a mystery and you had to find what the artist was trying to get across to the audience" (Student, University High School, student survey, April 3, 2011). Additionally, they found the connection between art and writing fascinating: "I always admired people that could put their imagination into a painting and after the excursion, I realized creative writing is another form of this imagination" (Student survey, 2011).

Overall, 77% of the students who participated in the NGV English program in 2011 recommended a visit to a museum such as the NGV to facilitate the writing process. Reasons included: (1) the inspiration that works of art provide – "It is a place where inspiration is easily found" (Student, University High School, student survey, April 3, 2011); (2) the narrative inherent in artworks stimulates writing – "There are some amazing paintings on display, they all tell a great story" (Student, University High School, student survey, April 3, 2011); (3) the themes addressed in the artworks; (4) the language prompted by original works of art – "When you first see the picture, your mind will automatically think of words and metaphors" (Student, University High School, student survey, March 23, 2011); (5) the atmosphere of the NGV as a place to inspire writing – "It's a quiet and peaceful place where you are able to feel emotions and have ideas like you wouldn't believe" (Student, University High School, student survey, March 23, 2011); (6) writing programs inspired by art provide a positive and "enlightening" experience; (7) the experience of being "up-close" with the NGV's diverse collection of contemporary and modern art that is not offered in the school classroom allows "a different perspective on things and evokes emotions you wouldn't discover otherwise" (Student, Melbourne Grammar School, student survey, May, 2011).

7) *Enhances learning outcomes*

Teachers saw many learning outcomes being enhanced through their gallery visit, including: increased repertoire of analytical thinking and reflection techniques; greater consciousness of the powerful relationship between word and image; deeper understanding of themes studied in class such as Australian identity; and development of creative writing. In addition to meeting language and thematic goals, the programs were seen to link clearly with the Language, Literacy and Literature strands in the Australian Curriculum for English. Teachers were positive about how the program built on the ideas discussed in class prior to the visit, enabling students to make meaningful and relevant connections between learning in the classroom and the Gallery. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to negotiate content of the session with the Gallery Educator beforehand. Moreover, teachers emphasised the overall pitch of questions, activities and selection of works of art were appropriate for the broad spectrum of students, "The Educator worked well with the students' responses to gauge and respond to their level" (Teacher, Melbourne Grammar School, teacher survey, August, 2011). Having an Educator to make connections between works of art, literary devices and students' own lives was perceived as very effective in keeping students interested and in encouraging and valuing their participation.

8) *Develops visual literacy and interpretive skills*

The importance of visual literacy skills in a complex world increasingly saturated with visual forms of communication such as advertisements, digital media and the built environment cannot be stated more strongly. Anecdotal evidence has revealed that students on arrival at the Gallery rarely perceive art as text. However after taking part in English programs at the NGV they comment on the importance of understanding issues and arguments through engagement with multiple texts including art. Year 12 students visiting the Gallery to investigate key ideas associated with the VCE English Context, 'Whose reality?' for example, remarked that:

> Viewing the artworks prompted me to consider different approaches to dealing with rather abstract themes such as 'the nature of reality' and memory'. They served as a springboard for personal exploration and brainstorming. (Student evaluation survey, Macrobertson Girls High School, April 2014).

CONCLUSION

This paper strongly indicates that inquiry-based Gallery programs can improve students' skills in the areas of English curricula. Evaluation findings emphasise the effectiveness of utilising original works of art in English and Literature teaching to inspire and enhance the quality of students' writing, particularly creative writing and poetry, within the context of an art museum. The evaluation of the NGV literacy programs demonstrated strong benefits for the students and teachers involved: **Visual literacy and creative writing skills were improved through engaging with original art and writing experiences at the NGV.**

The implications for teachers of English are that by introducing students of all ability levels to writing in the museum, they discover additional modes of understanding and communicating their thinking. They learn to organise their thoughts more coherently, leading to a greater confidence in articulating their individual and often highly insightful ideas. By raising awareness of museums' potential for interdisciplinary learning directed at school audiences, art museums could be more widely used as a resource for teaching core subjects such as English. This case study also validates the importance of a social constructivist model of learning in the museum environment towards the empowerment of visitor narratives.

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EVALUATING THE INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL CAMERAS IN GALLERY LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The *Ways of Seeing* project was a collaborative project between young people, aged between 8 and 12 years, teachers and gallery educators that was designed and enacted together to highlight how a digital camera can be integrated into gallery learning experiences, to support engagement with art and art spaces. Through Bamford & Glinkowski (2010) Effect and Impact Tracking Matrix (EITM), this paper shares the impact of sharing young peoples' voices via digital photographs. Findings highlight young people as capable photographers; the value of integrating technology into gallery education, and the benefits of being able to access photographs of a gallery visit to further inquire beyond a visit with teachers, peers and family.

INTRODUCTION

A pilot project was initiated and enacted that sought to understand what young people (any individual between the ages of 0 and 18 years of age) think, see and experience at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) during their NGV Schools experience. This project was titled *Ways of Seeing* to support the notions of different ways of seeing art, the gallery, and learning from each other. Honouring the voice of young people was a key driver of this project, as too the aim to look at young people aged between 8 to 12 years and how they use digital technology (specifically mobile digital technology such as digital cameras and/or smartphones) to record their learning in a gallery-based learning program designed to enhance engagement with art knowledge, understanding, meaning making and the NGV as an art space. Of particular interest to the gallery educators was an alternative reflective practice strategy that integrated digital cameras and offered opportunities for young people to pair their voice with photographs they would generate during learning opportunities (Lemon, 2008; 2010).

Young people can take meaningful photographs and are capable users of handheld digital technology such as a digital camera (Lemon, 2008; 2010). When these photographs are paired with their narrative (thus creating visual narrative), an intertexutality is presented whereby the voice is honored (Lemon, 2014). The voice of young people is powerful and when respected by adults and not driven by their ideas of right or wrong, can support the sharing of honest and true expressions, feelings, thoughts, and ideas about what is experienced (Lemon, 2008). In the gallery space this is a new endeavor, especially when honoured in the education programs that are primarily designed, booked and planned by adults for young people. In accordance to the NGV Schools strategic planning (2011-2013), this pilot project aimed to establish possibilities for young people to use digital technology to record their learning as visual narratives (see Figure 1).

The project sought to understand what young people think, see and experience through the generation of visual narratives (digital photographs paired with reflection). The digital camera in this sense, is seen as a digital technology to record learning in gallery-based learning programs that aim to enhance engagement with art knowledge, understanding, meaning making and the Gallery as an art space (see Figure 2). The digital photographs generated subsequent reflections to form the visual narratives and

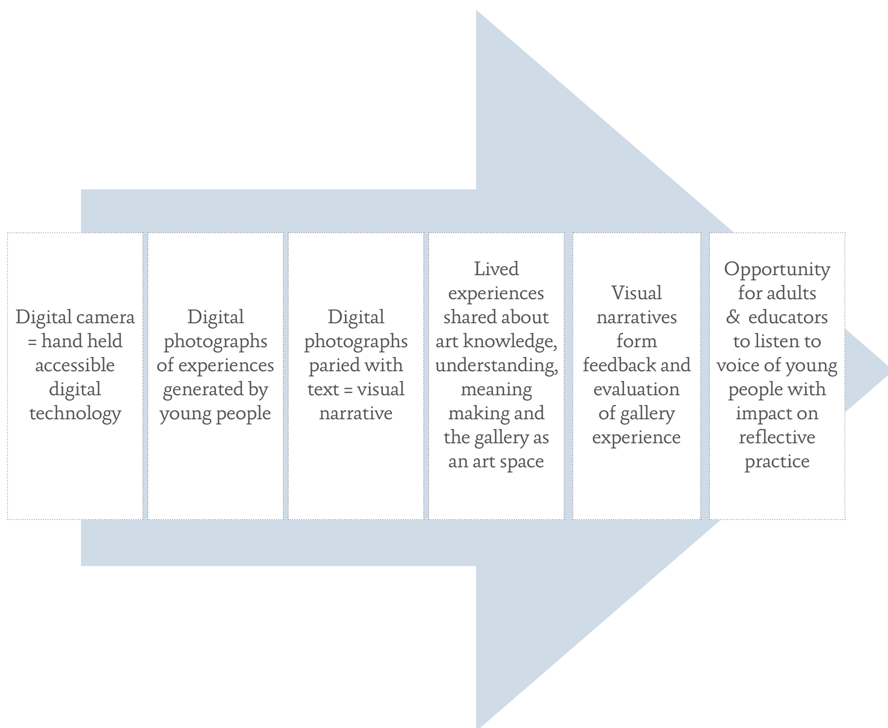

Figure 1. Digital camera embedded into the Ways of Seeing pilot project.

are viewed as an alternative reflective strategy (Lemon, 2008; 2010; 2013b) to support engagement, inquiry, communication and metacognitive thinking. Most importantly, hearing the voice and opinion of young people highlighted an impact upon the gallery education staff, teachers who organised school based excursions to the gallery, and the students themselves. While integrating the digital camera into learning opportunities with the gallery, learning with each other was highlighted and also promoted sharing, discussions, inquiry and questions with and amongst each other. This approach ignited learning across spaces (school, gallery, and home) as well as amongst young people and adults over time, forming a community of practice.

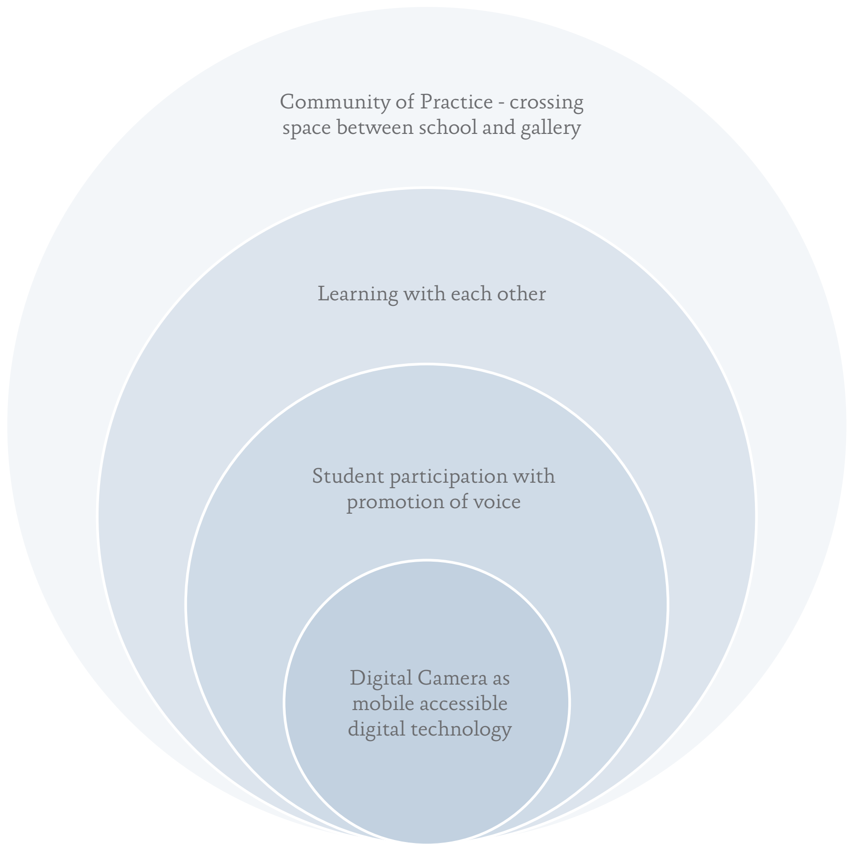

Figure 2. Model for the digital camera to be seen as a mobile accessible technology for young people in the gallery space.

This paper uses Anne Bamford's Effect and Impact Tracking Matrix (EITM) that has been formulated from a number of factors that have been identified through international research in arts education, in order to present some of the findings (Bamford, 2006). The matrix has been applied to evaluate the project and specifically the students' use of the digital camera (Bamford & Glinkowski, 2010, p. 18):

1. *Personal impact*, described as the development of confidence, aspiration, enjoyment, fun and happiness.
2. *Social impact*, described as the fostering or development of networks, collaborations, partnerships and contact webs.
3. *Cultural impact*, described as changes prompted at an organisational level, changes in external perceptions, changes in profile and influence.
4. *Educational impact*, described as new knowledge, skills development, conceptual development, professional education, education of the broader field or community.
5. *Ethical impact*, described as addressing social problems or minority issues or audiences, promoting changes in attitudes, or contributing to sustainability.
6. *Economic impact*, described as value for money, changing spending patterns, income generation.
7. *Innovation impact*, described as talent development, the development of new pedagogic techniques, processes or products and the instigation of debates or new discourse.
8. *Catalytic impact*, described as flow-on effects, changes in direction, transformations and journeys.
9. *Negative loss impact* described as elements that had to be sacrificed, or else negative consequences of some other kind that arose, including opportunity costs, talent loss, personal loss, unhappiness, loss of enjoyment, and loss of creativity.

(Bamford & Glinkowski, 2010)

EITM supports an 'inductive' analysis of data, whereby themes are allowed to emerge from rather than being predetermined. This way of working with data is widely understood to offer a suitable approach to impact evaluation in the field of arts and creative learning (Bamford & Glinkowski, 2010). The EITM's nine categories are not seen as linear or isolated, but rather as interweaving with complex interrelationships (Bamford & Glinkowski, 2010). For the *Ways of Seeing* project, EITM provided a framework to critically look at the impact of the digital camera's integration into the gallery education program. The voices of the gallery educa-

tion staff, primary teacher, young people, parents, and researcher could be presented and analysed with respect to impact across the categories.

GALLERY AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The way individuals behave in a gallery is not fixed and thus informs continued recalibrating in response to the emerging internal and external priorities, including those placed upon by addressing the needs of young people. Modes of walking and looking have had to be re-tuned in accordance with changing practices of curtaining displays and inviting viewers to engage with, and at times interact with art works (Leahy, 2012; Simon, 2010). The gaze of the viewer can be prolonged, disinterested, focused, aloof, detached, quick or even one that captures the viewers' interest for multiple views from a variety of standpoints. Not one of these is right or wrong, but in acknowledging this, there have been many indoctrinations with respect to how people are judged when viewing art and interacting in an art scape (Leahy, 2012). Even more challenging is how young people are perceived when they view art and indeed use technology to observe, inquire and participate in gallery spaces (Lemon, 2013a).

Young peoples' visits to galleries are not fully researched, especially in the Australian context, with focus usually on children from middle childhood and adolescence (Lemon, 2013a; Piscitelli, McArdle & Weier et al., 1998). There has been a strong appeal and steady growth in popular demand for cultural activities across Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Interestingly, in the 5–12 year age group, there has been a significant growth in cultural participation over three years during 2006–2009, with 1.9 million children (71%) attending at least one museum, gallery, library or theatre event outside of school hours (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Nonetheless, the attention that young people generate when they are in the gallery can be viewed as fascinating or as hinderous (Lemon, 2013a; 2014). This paper presents one way of interacting in the gallery based on the way young people did when invited to a major national gallery. The model presented reaffirms what others such as Falk & Dierking (1992), Paris (1998), Perry (1993), and Piscitelli et al., (1998) propose in regards to how young people learn in the gallery; that is, gallery educators building on constructivist approaches (Kelly, 2002). Paris (1998) affirms that in order to facilitate meaningful learning, museums need to encourage exploration and enable meaning to be constructed through choice, challenge, control and collaboration.

When considering learning opportunities in the gallery setting, digital technologies offer opportunities to build on sociocultural views of learning. The use of a digital camera in education is not new (Lemon, 2008), but in the gallery setting it is a renewed digital technology (Chamberlain, 2011; Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport, 2011; Johnson, Adams & Witchey, 2011; Lemon, 2013a; 2013b; 2014; McIntyre & Murphy, 2011). With online technologies becoming an integral part of everyday life through devices such as smartphones and tablets, increasingly galleries are being challenged to incorporate online media to enhance audience engagement (Russo & Peacock, 2009; 2010). With this in mind, digital technologies are just beginning to play a vital role in the work of galleries (Chamberlain, 2011; Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport, 2011; Johnson, Adams & Witchey, 2011; McIntyre & Murphy, 2011) and are shaping new ways in which gallery education is presented and experienced. Griffin (2011) argues that the changes brought by emerging technologies can improve the quality of programs offered in galleries overall. The impact of these changes for gallery education staff in this space is: acknowledgement of potential and allowance for new and innovative exploration (Chamberlain, 2011; Lemon, 2013a) including integration of technology such as the digital camera (Lemon, 2014).

RESEARCH DESIGN

> In the search for understanding how young people engage with gallery spaces, it was important to collect data that focused on young peoples' voice for this research. In this project, the young people were seen as capable photographers and operators of digital cameras, and thus were invited to capture their gallery visit as part of a school organised one-day excursion. Paralleling the student voice are reflections from gallery educators, a primary school teacher, and parents who helped during the visit. The research question was: How can we understand what young people see, think and experience at the NGV during their NGV Schools delivered experience, through the generation of digital photographs paired with reflection, to create visual narratives?

Within the context of an interpretivist paradigm (intention of understanding "the world of human experience" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36), with a focus on "participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), this study used qualitative data to provide rich understandings of the phenomenon (Yin, 2003). The project was delivered

in two cycles in 2011 and 2012. Within each cycle there were five clear stages (see Table 1). A participatory action research method was employed to allow for a collaborative, locally controlled approach to outcomes-based planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Creswell, 2003). The participants included gallery education staff (N = 3), a primary teacher (N = 1), young people aged from 8 to 12 years of age (N = 54), parents in the role as helpers during Stage 2 (N=19), and a teacher education researcher (N = 1). Each time, the project was delivered by the same gallery education staff and teachers from an inner southern Melbourne metropolitan government primary school, but involved different students from multiple grade levels (grades 3 to 6) to support mixed aged interactions.

Table 1. *The five stages of the 'Ways of Seeing' project*

Stage	Event	Content
Stage 1	Pre-visit preparation at school	• Invitation to participate • Parent helpers invited to assist with Stage 2 • Teacher and gallery educators discuss how Stage 2 will look with site specific needs addressed • Cameras sourced (school, researcher & young people/ family) • Camera familiarisation workshop at school
Stage 2	School visit to NGV (one day excursion that placed the digital cameras as a mobile technology accessed throughout the gallery learning experiences)	• Cameras are accessed and prepared for gallery use • Permanent exhibition access only – no flash when using camera. • Three full day sessions organised: ==> **Session 1** - 'Ways of Seeing': Camera Exploration Session - 90 minutes guided by gallery educator. 25 minutes on a floor/gallery space with guided area to see (15 minutes photograph what is important and 10 minutes reflection to provide immediate feedback). Artwork selected student centered as moving across floors. ==> **Session 2** – 'Ways of Seeing': Introduction to Collection Session - 90 minutes with gallery educator to guide discovery of artwork and reflections as per normal running of programs. Art work gallery educator selected. ==> **Session 3** - Whole group reflection in Art Studio with Art Teacher. Share one thing right now you want to communicate back. This becomes a trigger for further work during Stage 3 back at school.

Stage 3	Post visit (back at school) preparation of visual narratives	• Students download their photographs, adding narrative (verbal or written) to the photographs to share the story or stories of that photo or series of photos. • Visual narratives created (4 – 6 weeks).
Stage 4	NGV visit school Listening to the voices of the students	• Evaluation and feedback of how the gallery is experienced by young people (half day). • Visual narratives presented to gallery educators.
Stage 5	Evaluate Pilot Project and impact on NGV education programs and pedagogical decision	• Reflective practice for gallery educators and teacher on impact of programs and pedagogical decisions when engaging with young people, art, and gallery (6 months). • Evaluation of use of digital camera in gallery space

Throughout these stages, the participatory action research methodology highlighted the transferring of learning between all participants. Specifically that learning does not occur in one place, rather in multiple sites at multiple times and thus influences action and reflective practice from a variety of perspectives in all participants. Stage 5 in the first year of the project (cycle 1) influenced the second year (cycle 2) in terms of reiterating the importance of young people being given opportunity to explore the gallery from their interest as well as being given opportunity to use digital technology to inquire. The gallery educators visiting the school to hear the voice of the young people, was also of significance to this project, as discussed under catalytic impact category.

Data collected for this project occurred over two years and included written reflections, visual narratives, digital photographs, field observations, and focus group interviews. All participants were given a pseudonym. In consultation with the young people, permission was granted by guardians and parents for participants under 18 years of age for data from this pilot project to be published and shared.

The collaboration between young people, gallery educators and teacher shared throughout this project, is one where all are seen as learners and whereby mutual respect underpins these relationships. As a collective, young people and adults formed agreements on how to work with each other, and this included:

1. Open communication
2. Mutual respect and no judgmental put downs/negative comments
3. Sharing of voice where opinion is always explained
4. Choice is always available in approach
5. Listening to each other

These guiding principles were especially important in the action and reflection cycles connected to the participatory action research method and for respecting and honouring young peoples' voices (Lemon, 2008; 2013a; 2014).

DISCUSSION: THE DIGITAL CAMERA INTEGRATION INTO THE GALLERY SPACE

This section of the paper presents the discussion about the integration of the digital camera into the gallery space to highlight young peoples' voice about their learning experiences. The data and discussion is constructed through the use of Bamford & Glinkowski (2010) EITM and displays the possibilities, tensions and celebrations of integrating digital cameras into the gallery learning context. Interwoven are the visual narratives and reflections of the young people, gallery educators and the teacher who respect the artists' work and gallery protection agreements.

Personal impact

Personal impact refers to the development of confidence, aspiration, enjoyment, fun and happiness. This project acknowledged that not all young people had prior experience with digital cameras. Although presumed a generation of "digital natives" there are not always opportunities provided within educational contexts that allow for use of digital cameras and thus assumptions of being experienced were challenged (Lemon, 2014). The students were asked to share their prior experience with using a digital camera, and these experiences were built upon by the teacher. In order for the students to be successful with their use of technology throughout this project, they participated in a camera familiarisation session with a classroom teacher who had a background in photography (in Stage 1 of the project). This session enabled the students to become confident with the digital camera as a tool to capture their way of seeing. The students not only had a "how to use" lesson and practised using the technology, but they also had

the opportunity to learn how to construct photographs with discussions centering around composition, focus, foreground, background, close ups, and pixilation. Part of this session also acknowledged gallery etiquette in use of cameras, specifically focusing on how to turn off the flash and why.

Figure 3. A student using her digital camera in the gallery to capture what she sees at the National Gallery of Victoria (November, 2011). Reproduced with permission.

Gallery educators expressed the usefulness of the session, stating for example:

> The students were prepared for their visit to the NGV in that they knew they were undertaking challenges and using cameras to document their experience in the gallery, as well as investigating artworks and making a visual response. The prior training with cameras meant that students were able to engage in the program without being distracted by equipment or technical difficulties. (NGV educator, post reflection, November, 2011).

The digital camera provided an alternative strategy for reflection about visiting a gallery and the artwork interacted with. This strategy enabled an honouring of an intertexuality in sharing voice; student generated photographs paired with narrative produced through verbal or written communication. In scaffolding the students for success, the familiarity of the camera was key, as was the openness to share and reinforce that their voice

was truly being sought with no right or wrong answer. The introduction of the camera across learning sites (gallery and school) enabled students to capture what interested them and to return to these images for continued reflection and metacognitive inquiry later, for example at home in discussions with family, and at school in the preparation and presentation of their visual narratives.

Figure 4. A grade six student expressed, "I really liked that the gallery teacher sat down at our level when she was talking to us. It really showed she did want to hear what we had to say; usually the adults stand above us." (Niles, November, 2011). Reproduced with permission.

It was vital for the gallery education staff to make pedagogical decisions that supported the collaboration agreements (mentioned in the research design section), and to genuinely value voice and perspectives shared. The most significant personal impact for the students was being valued for their opinion. The capacity for the students to inquire, share their voice, engage in choice, and be curious about art, artists' intentions and the gallery space "heightened one's thirst for knowledge and learning" (Johnson & Rassweiler, 2010). For the students (November, 2011), taking photos and telling their story to adults (teachers, gallery educators, parents and family) meant the following sentiments:

"I can express what I like and disliked in paintings and they can see why I felt that way." (Lizzy, Grade 5).

“[I could] ask questions so that I can get extra info and can give my opinion.” (Niles, Grade 6).

“I can show mum and dad pictures at the NGV.” (Mike, Grade 3).

“I can explain how I feel about the photo.” (Robert, Grade 4).

“The best excursion ever…we got to choose, we were listened to, we had freedom…I’ve never had that before.” (Malcolm, Grade 4).

Social impact

Figure 5. A grade three student stated about this picture, “I like how we were explained [detail] at each painting as we went along. [We were told about] how you would explain how [as] an artist, [you] would see the world differently and that’s the same as everyone.” (Matilda, post reflection, November, 2011). Reproduced with permission.

This project enabled a school, gallery, teachers and students to work together collaboratively to inquire about art, art spaces and the use of technology. In this approach the social impact was unpacked as the fostering or development of networks, collaborations, partnerships and contact webs were discovered. Each person involved inquired and reflected on various aspects of the project and how it connected to them and impacted others. For the young people, they responded positively to being trusted to use a digital camera in the gallery space to support inquiry (Lemon, 2014). The project established learning opportunities throughout the gallery that scaffolded inquiry about art and artists (see Figure 6). The social element

of these learning experiences enabled the young people to interact with each other, their teacher and the gallery educators. The student centered teaching approach in these experiences also supported student choice as to whom they engaged with and how they engaged with them. The students indicated that one of the most exciting parts of the visit to the gallery was the opportunity to communicate with peers across grade levels and with each other throughout the stages of the project. Peer and social interactions were encouraged, as was asking questions and having conversations with the gallery educators to inquire and enact higher order questioning of the arts and artist intentions.

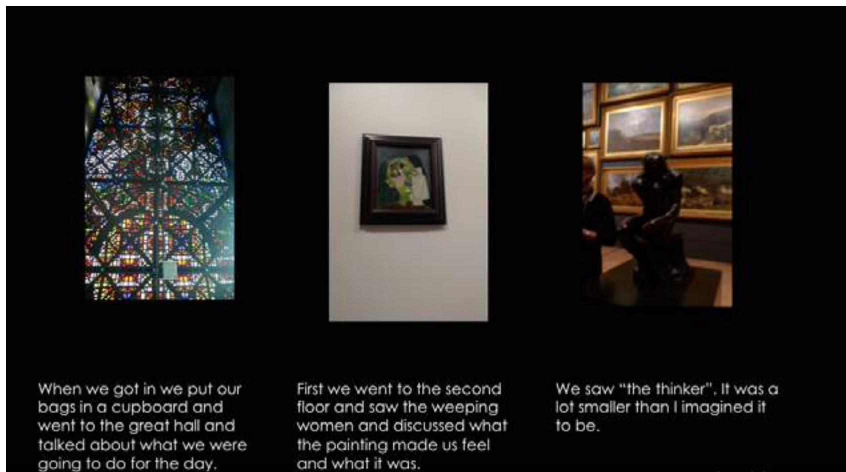

Figure 6. Visual narrative by Matilda, Grade 3 student (November, 2011) that shares insights into the gallery visit and impact of the art work explored. Reproduced with permission.

The students indicated they were very excited about the gallery educators visiting them at school to hear their voice and engage with their visual narratives (Stage 4). This supported the ongoing social impact for all involved in the project as everyone, especially students, need time to process and see how the gallery art and exhibits connect to their own lives, thoughts, and beliefs (Simon, 2010). The integration of the digital camera supported this inquiry over time. The digital camera also was a device for which relationships could be developed during the gallery visit (Stage 2) to be further explored over time (Stage 3) and during the gallery visit to the school (Stage 4). Throughout these stages the students were honored for

their voice, as too conversations between the teacher and the gallery educators. A Grade five student reflected, "Yes! It felt nice they listened" (Neal, post reflection, November, 2011).

Additionally, a Grade 3 student expressed, "Mum ignores me and talks about what she thinks so it is nice to have adults listen to us, and they are busy at the gallery so even more special they listen" (Tim, post reflection, November, 2011).

Cultural impact

Cultural impact is described as changes prompted at an organisational level, changes in external perceptions, changes in profile and influence. In relation to the *Ways of Seeing* project, cultural impact was explored through shifting the place the digital camera can have in the gallery as a digital technology to support and enhance learning opportunities.

Figure 7. "We caught a train to the NGV. I sat next to Eva and Bradley" (Sally, Grade 3, visual narrative, November, 2011). Reproduced with permission.

Perceptions of the use of the digital cameras in the gallery space was seen as innovative by some (a new idea, integrating handheld mobile digital technology, considering new ways of learning) and invasive by others (what about the flash? Are the students old enough? We don't take photos in galleries? The students will snap away at everything like paparazzi). This challenge of *who* can use and *how* digital technology can be integrated into gallery education programs was innovative and pushed the boundaries

of what is possible within this learning space (Lemon, 2014). With the support of the primary school and teacher, the digital camera was used at school and in the gallery with a holistic vision to support young people to inquire into art as well as communicate their experiences and questions over time. Most importantly, the gallery was seen as a learning space that could be engaged with in innovative ways. Together, processes were established for successful integration to apply a renewed use of an accessible handheld and mobile technology. Through this approach the gallery became a cultural asset for the young people, a space as it is intended, as it became accessible and meaningful. The students had not used digital technology in this space before and had interpreted they were unable to. The digital camera in the project became a mobile technology that enabled them to explore art, artists and exhibitions without the boundaries of assumptions, judgments, and preconceived perceptions of who can and should be capable photographers and thus communicators of lived experiences.

Challenging how the students were perceived to interact with the artwork, gallery space and digital camera was encapsulated in the teacher's post reflection:

> I guess that many adults would see the quick snapshots taken by the students and the fast movement through the gallery space to mean that they are not really engaging or seeing the art, that they are not taking the time to think deeply therefore it has little value. But I think this is the way that the young people of today are wired and we as educators need to work with that – it is why the *camera is such an important tool* because it can be *used by the child to further engage with the art* – to share with others and to later use in reflection over a period of time not just during the gallery visit. Young people need their learning chunked because they find it difficult to focus for extended periods of time. In this project the meaningful part of the learning experience should be viewed as a timeline so it starts at the gallery and expands and grows during the reflection and response activities (even the talking they do with their family, class teacher and friends post visit). I think what is important is by visiting the gallery they get to actually look at the art in the real world (not through virtual or reproduced images) to see its size, form; to maybe begin wondering; to absorb art in a specially designed space that creates its own atmosphere; to act as a stimulus to wanting to further explore and respond to art; to maybe plant the seed that galleries can be interesting and exciting and create

> a desire to return or go to other galleries. If we honour the way that they want to explore then I think it is more likely that these things will occur. (Teacher, post reflection, November, 2011).

Educational impact

In the *Ways of Seeing* project, educational impact described as new knowledge, skills development, conceptual development, professional education, education of the broader field or community, was explored through the planning and enactment of such an endeavor.

Figure 8. "We can trust young people to move around the gallery in constructive ways. We can build more opportunities into school programs and our learning sessions that enable young people to find their own journey of discovery though the art on display as part of their school program and visit." (NGV educator, post reflection, November, 2011). Photo by researcher, Narelle Lemon. Reproduced with permission.

Challenging traditional ways of learning, which have often been teacher centered, was an aim of this project. The digital camera was seen as a technology that was familiar and readily accessible within the school

context. It was also a mobile and portable technology, easily transported and renewed in the gallery setting where policy had previously hampered use. For this project, the digital camera was purposefully integrated into designed learning activities to engage Grades 3 to 6 students. This approach was seen as a new movement towards acknowledging the needs and wants of young people to incorporate digital technologies into their gallery learning; to support the gallery in integrating a technology that could be supplied by the school; to demonstrate how integrating technology can be student centered; and to demonstrate how accessing digital technology in the gallery space supported renewed use of commonly used technology in schools to support learning. This educational impact was reinforced by a teacher's post reflection:

> I think that taking the time to try different approaches is vital to helping us understand how young people see, think and experience the gallery. It is only through experimenting with different approaches and strategies that we can determine what works and achieves the most effective outcomes. (Teacher post reflection, November, 2011).

Ethical impact

When considering the ethical impact of this project, thought was taken into account of social problems or minority issues or audiences, promoting changes in attitudes, or contributing to sustainability. Consideration of transforming the learning experience in the gallery with the digital camera had to take into account arguments for why the digital camera had been unused. Simon (2010) reports there are five main arguments for restrictive policies that have long hindered the potential integration of digital cameras into gallery education experiences. These include: intellectual property; conservation; revenue streams; aesthetics of experience, and security. Of particular ethical impact upon this project was the acknowledgment of both intellectual property and conservation. Intellectual Property must respect diverse intellectual property agreements with donors and lenders of particular artworks and collections. In institutions where some artworks can be photographed and others not, it is often easier to use the most restrictive agreements as the basis for institutional policies. In the situation of the NGV, careful consideration had to be made of contemporary art works in the collection specifically related to the visual narratives the young people generated to talk about their experiences. This consideration can be seen in the sharing of visual narratives in this paper whereby some

images have not been included in order to protect the intellectual property of artworks the students interacted with.

> Well it was good but my camera was really old and it kept . . . every time I switched it on the flash went on . . . I got told off once as I didn't know it had come back on . . . so I took heaps of shots of my shoes so I knew it was off. (Simon, Grade 5 student, November, 2011).

Conservation is particularly relevant in the gallery setting as artworks may be damaged by flash photography. Some conservators argue that if non-flash photography is permitted, light levels in the galleries may be increased to accommodate visitors' cameras, which damages the artworks indirectly (Simon, 2010). Visitors to the NGV are permitted to take photographs with hand-held cameras in non-restricted areas for personal use, however these cannot be reproduced or displayed on personal websites. Restricted exhibitions have signage to indicate no photography, and the gallery does not allow the use of tripods, flash or additional lighting when photographing. This project respected these requirements; the young people were given instructions for no flash during their camera introduction session prior to the gallery visit, and were reminded during their visit. The digital camera was seen as innovative use of technology to support learning and to extend program delivery and pedagogy.

Figure 9. Using technology to capture their experiences was very engaging for students.

They appeared to take many, many photographs. Initial problems with flash, still photo/video were overcome after the first 30 minutes or so (NGV educator, in action gallery reflection during Stage 2, November, 2011).

Photo by researcher, Narelle Lemon. Reproduced with permission.

Economic impact

In the planning and enactment of the *Ways of Seeing* project careful attention was made to the economic impact, particularly the value for money. The logistics of each child having a camera was vital to the success of the project and to valuing each child's individual voice. A Grade 3 student mentioned that "if I was sharing a camera I wouldn't always get to take photos that I wanted to" (Imogen, post reflection, November, 2011) and that this supported her being able to remember and create the visual narratives on her return to school (Stage 4). Economically, specific decisions had to be taken into consideration for the success of integrating technology. The gallery did not own digital cameras nor have the capacity to purchase a kit of cameras without enacting a project such as this to provide evidence of meaningful purpose. This situation meant that the school, researcher and parents were called upon to access as many digital cameras as possible to enable each child to use over time. This was successful with several spare cameras available for unforeseen moments.

When galleries are considering innovative educational practices, economic impact of access to resources should be taken into consideration, and could even be perceived as a potential negative impact if schools do not have access to the amount of technology. Changing perceptions of integrating technology into gallery and education experiences is highlighted in this case study and provides evidence to encourage innovative ways of connecting to new and renewed mobile digital technology.

Innovation impact

The *Ways of Seeing* project was seen as innovative as it encompassed the development of new pedagogic techniques, processes or products and the instigation of debates or new discourse.

The interaction with the gallery, especially within its exhibition spaces, challenged ways of how a school group would usually interact with exhibits. It is common for it to be more organised and teacher driven with (semi) structured questioning associated to specific art works (Fortney & Sheppard, 2010) while the students are led through the gallery. The etiquette of no running, no touching and no loud voices is upheld and it is unusual for students to wander by themselves or in small groups. The pushing of boundaries and perception on how young people can interact with

artwork during a gallery visit was confronted. The NGV was fascinated with how working this way could engage the students further while in the gallery. One gallery educator reflected, “the opportunity to engage with the students added another dimension to reflecting on the teaching and learning associated with the session, as it provided the opportunity to see how students had processed the experience of the Gallery” (post reflection, November, 2011).

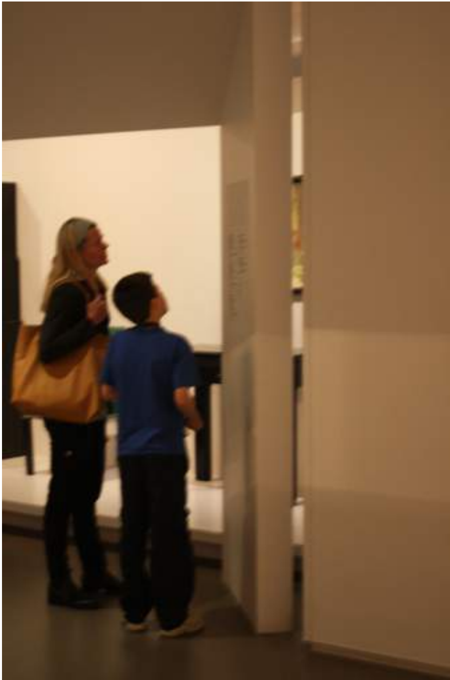

Figure 10. A student inquiring into the art work being observed with a parent helper during Stage 2 of the project.

Photo by researcher, Narelle Lemon, November, 2011. Reproduced with permission.

Highlighted in cycle 1 (2011) and cycle 2 (2012) is the collaborative efforts of this case, especially as they relate to the design of learning opportunities for and with young people. The learning space was envisaged across multiple sites where formal and informal learning opportunities have a tradition. The opportunity to move flexibly across the gallery during their visit (Stage 2) assisted the students to capture *their* lived experiences with their digital cameras. The narratives and reflections emerged from these moments captured and offered insights not only to the gallery educators but also to the teachers, parents and other adults who were also in the gal-

lery space to uncover insights about art and how they experienced this type of excursion (Stage 4).

Figure 11. Getting up close and personal with digital camera while respecting the artwork and gallery etiquette. Photo by researcher, Narelle Lemon, November 2012). Reproduced with permission.

For the students, working in this way supported an authentic learning experience that sparked interest for further visits. The young people had to decide within parameters of what they wanted to do and how they would use the digital camera. In doing so, they felt trusted both in their movement around the exhibition spaces and in use of the technology. They were "immersed in the site all day . . . allowing them to slow down and take ownership of their surroundings" (Kydd, 2007, p. 117). Most importantly, throughout the collaboration the young people experienced fun, enjoyment and learning and teaching moments that were open and allowed them to inquire and explore, igniting many future areas to further discover.

Catalytic impact

Catalytic impact is described as flow-on effects, changes in direction, transformations and journeys. The *Ways of Seeing* project unveiled many of these areas from the perspective of stakeholders involved.

Figure 12. Teacher interacting with a student during Session 3 of Stage 2. Photo by researcher, Narelle Lemon, post reflection, November 2012. Reproduced with permission.

The visit to the gallery and then the gallery visiting the school ignited much curiosity in the students in how excursions can work very differently to past experiences. The ongoing relationship allowed for continued dialogue and questioning, often not possible with education visits. This was a significant catalytic impact that pushed both gallery educators and teachers to rethink what is possible when engaging with excursions, curriculum, and learning experiences (see Figure 10). As reiterated by the teacher:

> Young people do need to be challenged to question and to take the time to think more deeply but at what moment should that happen. The great thing about the gallery visit is that it gives the students exposure to art in a dedicated space and it hopefully begins a desire to spend time in galleries, to go to exhibitions, engage with public art. The use of the digital cameras facilitated this over time and across our classroom to the gallery and back again, plus the added bonus of conversations happening at home and in classrooms with their generalist teacher. (Teacher, post reflection, November, 2012)

Parents were invited to attend the gallery visits as helpers and 19 parents took this opportunity across the two cycles of the project. All parents and guardians heard stories about the visits and use of the digital camera upon the students returning home. This project enabled the gallery educators to

be aware of this, where previously they did not have opportunities to be aware of the catalytic impact beyond the physical time spent at the gallery. When the gallery educators visited the school in Stage 4 of the project, they were greeted by the students and parents who were intrigued to see the students' visual narratives and to engage in dialogue about art works, artists' and further opportunities to visit (see Figure 13). The "flow on" effects meant that the project improved possibilities for the value of the digital camera and to honour students as capable photographers and communicators of their lived experiences. Considerable after effects also took place at home (conversations and plans to revisit as a family) and with the teachers in regards to pedagogical ideas for future use of the digital camera, integration of galleries into the curriculum, and seeking alterative reflective strategies to support student inquiry.

Figure 13. Student presentations of their visual narratives to NGV educators, parents and peers at school. Reproduced with permission.

Negative loss impact

Negative loss impact involves consideration of elements that had to be sacrificed, or else negative consequences of some other kind that arose, including opportunity costs, talent loss, personal loss, unhappiness, loss of enjoyment, and loss of creativity.

There were a few negative loss issues in regards to the use of the digital camera in this project over the two cycles. In cycle one (2011), flat batteries were an unexpected negative consequence when the students used some

of the digital cameras in the gallery. This was addressed in cycle two upon the realisation that students had left the digital cameras on throughout the entire day even when they were not being used during morning tea and lunch breaks.

Figure 14. Visual narratives created by Sally, Grade 3 student (November, 2011), that captures the experience in integrating digital cameras into students' visit to the NGV while also acknowledging a comment made by a security guard. Reproduced with permission.

Individual gallery constraints were highlighted at times throughout this project. Tensions emerged between security staff either being supportive of the young people maneuvering through the gallery space with more freedom, versus preempting potential challenges when interacting with artwork space or expecting there would be problems and undesirable etiquette (see Figure 14). It is interesting to note that there was no misbehavior by the students or etiquette issues that interfered with acceptable viewing of artwork, but rather, there was a high level of engagement.

CONCLUSION

The *Ways of Seeing* project is one example of how a national gallery is taking a proactive stance to consider the possibilities of successfully integrating mobile digital technology, such as a digital camera, into their educational programs. The participatory action research approach invited possibilities to carefully reflect about many aspects and intricacies in challenging meaning making and interaction with the gallery space and subsequent art-

works. Throughout this project, the student centred approaches to gallery learning experiences were built around exploration to engage young people and stimulate generation of questions about art, artists and art spaces while also motivating inquiry into art making. At the primary level of education, art making is a key focus for young people and a way to support reflection, exploration, and responding.

This research, although small scale, does provide a framework for how gallery educators can invite schools, their teachers and students to work with them in partnership to explore their exhibitions and space. The integration of the digital camera has been one digital tool that enables both discovery of art works and artists guided by purpose, connected to curriculum of a visit to a gallery, while also providing valuable insights into the student experience by listening to their voice. Through analysing this project by engaging with Bamford & Glinkowski's (2010) Effect and Impact Tracking Matrix, explicit links to a variety of impacts that address both educational and life long learning layers for all stakeholders emerges. What comes to the forefront is how meaningful purposeful integration of the digital camera can be in giving agency to young people to both inquire into art, artworks, artists and art spaces. Their subsequent photographs when paired with reflections from a visual narrative that makes tangible for others what was gained in regards to learning, understanding the gallery space and especially the impact of gallery educators being a part of the process throughout all stages. For the gallery educator, significant impact of being involved in a project such as this, is an invitation to consider how young people can engage with the gallery space through open and closed ended learning activities while reflecting upon pedagogical decisions that support student centred inquiry. Both the catalytic and educational impact have been influential in future collaborations with schools, listening to student voice and how partnerships formed between all stakeholders can ignite far reaching connections with the gallery beyond just one visit. For the gallery educators, student voice and the importance of listening in more formal means has remarkable impact on future educational program development and individual pedagogical decisions.

Further research into how we build on reflective skills in primary aged students when engaging in arts education is required, especially when it becomes evident that reflection in the moment is important during post gallery viewing and when just using words (spoken or written) can be limiting in depth and metacognitive thinking. The pairing of student-generated

photographs with narratives is a strong alternative reflective practice strategy and offers much potential in supporting continued conversations and inquiry. For all involved, future questions lead to: can this research and project design be replicated for future schools, teachers and students, and how can student voice be more formally acknowledged within the gallery education strategic planning?

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This special edition of JACE brings together authors from across Australia discussing issues central to the ongoing development and importance of education within museums. The authors present a wide array of case studies from Australia and examples from their institutions and their research, providing practical and invigorating discussions on the purpose, pedagogy and practice of museum education.

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