



Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art

8 August 2007

Ms Tamara Winikoff
Executive Director
NAVA
PO Box 60
Potts Point NSW 1335

Dear Tamara

You may know that Chris McAuliffe recently wrote to Virginia Hollister with some critical comments about the paper, 'Best practice for artists and publicly funded galleries', developed by NAVA and Museum Australia. A copy of his email exchange with Virginia is attached.

Chris's initiative to write to Virginia – and the opinions expressed in his email – followed discussion about her paper among the loosely affiliated group of Australian University art museum directors, myself included, who have established a network to encourage exchange of projects and a dialogue within this sector. As explained in Chris's email to Virginia, we found significant omissions and factual deficiencies in the paper, not only with respect to the University art museum sector.

I am now writing on behalf of this group of University-based art museums to propose that the paper be considered only a 'draft', until all the relevant publicly-funded galleries, including the University art museums, the Indigenous arts centres and also artist run initiatives, are comprehensively and expertly addressed.

Significantly, University art museums now comprise about 26% of the national total of art galleries/museums and bring considerable experience and expertise to the sector. This consolidation has also seen substantial capital investments made by Universities in their museums of art over the past decade, notably the Samstag Museum of Art, University of South Australia; The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne; The John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University of Technology; Queensland University Museum of Art located in The James and Mary Emelia Mayne Centre; ICON Gallery at Deakin University; RMIT Gallery; UTS Gallery, University of Technology Sydney and; QUT Art Museum and Creative Industries Precinct, at the Queensland University of Technology.

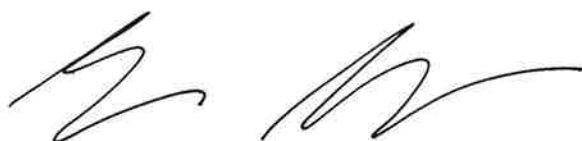
New museum buildings or major upgrades are also in the pipeline for the University of NSW, Monash University and Charles Darwin University; the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at the University of Western Australia is having a major upgrade this year. It should be noted that University art museums become all the more important as public galleries dealing with contemporary visual art culture, the further one is from the major east coast population centres. In several states (SA, WA and Tasmania) they are the primary public art museums, other than state galleries.

The University art museums consider their growing contribution to the visual arts and the standard of their professional practice as significant. If NAVA and Museums Australia are seeking to develop policies for 'Best practice for artists and publicly funded galleries' on behalf of the visual arts and public galleries sector, it is desirable that these policies – and especially the associated research and discussion papers – are fully developed and inclusive in their consultative process. In effect, the process of the development of public policy should itself adhere to 'best practice' principles, particularly given the potential impact of such a policy initiative on the sectors that the policy presumes to encompass.

My colleagues and I recognise the positive intent of this NAVA/ Museums Australia initiative. We would be more than happy to assist you towards further development of 'Best practice for artists and publicly funded galleries' policy.

We thank you for your further consideration.

Kind regards



Erica Green
Director, Samstag Museum of Art, University of South Australia
and on behalf of:

Dr Chris McAuliffe
Director, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne

Nick Waterlow
Director, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of NSW

John Barrett-Lennard
Director, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia

Professor Ted Snell
Dean of Art, John Curtin Centre, Curtin University of Technology

Stephen Rainbird
Senior Curatorial Advisor, Queensland University of Technology

Max Delany
Director, Monash University Museum of Art

cc Bernice Murphy, National Director, Museums Australia
PO Box 266, Civic Square, ACT, 2608

cc Virginia Hollister, c/- NAVA