



Art Gallery Society of New South Wales

An Overview For 2019

For the year ended 31 December 2019

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Presidents Report 2019

The Art Gallery Society of New South Wales

The Art Gallery Society of New South Wales (AGS) was established in 1953 as an independent body with a mission to provide support to the Art Gallery of New South Wales (the Gallery). Since then, the AGS has proudly delivered on this mission in a variety of ways: sponsoring exhibitions and programs, providing scholarships for staff, raising funds for acquisitions and cultivating a core audience of art and culture lovers for the Gallery through a diverse range of programs and events.

In 2019, membership numbers and member engagement continued to grow as members embraced the variety of programs on offer, deepening their understanding of art through a range of cultural experiences. The AGS welcomed many new members and further developed the relationship with existing members, a large portion of whom have been with the AGS for more than twenty years and some of whom have maintained their membership for fifty and even sixty years! The AGS is extremely grateful to our members for their continued loyalty and support.

The Year in Review

2019 was a very successful year for the AGS. We recorded membership growth and excellent attendance at events, some of these being well established favourites and others we were trialling for the first time. The AGS attracted 29,992 members across 20,325 memberships; an excellent result achieved through the hard work of staff and volunteers, the implementation of many marketing campaigns, and a unified approach to membership recruitment across the Gallery. These efforts saw our member retention rate increase to 69%.

The Vice Regal couple; Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC QC and her partner Mr Dennis Wilson, honoured the AGS with their dual patronage in 2019. The Vice Regal couple attended a special event to celebrate their patronage and Her Excellency took the opportunity to speak of her long-term relationship with the AGS and the Gallery.

We were surprised and somewhat humbled to receive a \$1,000,000 bequest from former member and Task Force volunteer, Elizabeth “Betty” Fyffe. The bequest is directed to the acquisition of Australian paintings.

The second *Memorandum of Understanding* between the AGS and the Gallery was executed in 2019, once again formalising this partnership and laying the foundation for the growth and development of the AGS and its contribution to fulfilling the future vision of the Gallery.

The portfolio of benefits to members was expanded to ensure that an AGS membership remained relevant and continued to provide numerous advantages to those who join. These benefits include the establishment of a members' discount parking rate with the Wilson Domain Car park, more free members-only events such as film screenings, and the recruitment of new partners for the *Gallery Plus* program - which provides AGS members with discounts to a wide range of arts organisations (such as The Australian Ballet, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Belvoir St Theatre, Opera Australia and the Sydney Dance and Theatre companies). Benefits to Country members now include being able to visit touring Art Gallery of NSW exhibitions in Australian regional galleries for free.

Members Programs and Events

In 2019 the AGS continued to deliver long-established and much-loved programs which drive the loyal and longstanding membership body, including the *Art Appreciation* and *Learning Curve* lecture series and the *Resonate* concert series. 2019 was also a year which saw the trialing of new event programming with a variety of pilot events, refreshed event formats, masterclasses, events aligned with the Sydney Modern Project and the segmenting of the Young Members Program to target a Young Professionals audience.

The AGS presented 481 members events (458 paid events and 23 free, exclusive members-only events). A total of 49,814 participants attended these events with 41,989 attending the paid events and 7,825 attending exclusive members-only free events. The lecture program - including Art Appreciation, Learning Curve and short courses - made up 70% of total AGS event bookings. Over 119 lectures were attended by 29,372 participants. 219 art-making workshops were programmed for children, teenagers and adults with a total of 2,399 participants.

The average event booking capacity was 82%, with 50% of all events sold out. Many new programs were successfully piloted (and sold out) in 2019, including *The Whiteley Art Bus*, the *Art for Starters* lecture series and the *Young Professionals Monthly Meetup* series during Art After Hours. *The Artist Speaks* lecture series and *Masterclass* workshops featured previous winners and finalists from the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes.

The highly popular *Resonate* concert series celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2019, with programming that explored a diverse range of musical genres including world music (Monsieur Camembert) and a nod to the past with artists from the first series returning to the stage (Geraldine Turner, Jane Rutter and Simon Tedeschi). The anniversary series also piloted a new concept – the 'special event' concert combined with a sit-down dinner. This event, featuring the highly popular Emma Pask, was sold out and received incredibly positive Member feedback.

Members continued to embrace the many learning opportunities offered through our programs. Highlights included, characteristically, the flagship *Art Appreciation* series, themed *Being human: the figure in art*. The *Learning Curve* lecture series' *Ancient Treasures: Objects*

of desire with Iain Shearer and *1001 nights: Magnificent Tales from the Near East* with Julian Droogan were well attended, as were shorter series such as *Queens of Antiquity* with Iain Shearer and a new lecture program, *Art for starters*, an introductory overview of European art history with Lorraine Kypiotis.

The third *Learning Curve* lecture series of 2019 - *The Art of Architecture: Directions in gallery design*, introduced a fresh face to the program with Professor Anthony Burke of the University of Technology, Sydney. The series was extremely popular, attracting excellent feedback for Professor Burke and the overall theme. One of the lectures included an introductory overview of the Sydney Modern Project (SMP), delivered by Gallery Director, Dr Michael Brand. AGS event programming aims to highlight the SMP as the project progresses.

A collaboration with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Cultural Office of the Consulate General of Italy) resulted in the sold-out symposium *500 years: The legacy of Leonardo da Vinci*. Other collaborations between the AGS and AGNSW Curators and Public Programs teams included *Invoking the divine*, a lecture series seeking to unveil the iconography of the figure in Asian art, and the *Phenomenal Beings: spirits in Japanese art and culture* lecture series (in association with the Japan Supernatural exhibition).

Once again, members displayed their talent for revelry during both the Archibald and end of year parties, featuring high energy band the Glass Breakers, resulting in a well-worn dance floor and much merriment. The two sold-out *Jazz at the Gallery* concerts; with the Dan Barnett Big Band and Monica Trapaga and James Morrison, were both enthusiastically received by our music loving members.

Free member exhibition viewings were successfully expanded into a whole day experience, giving members the opportunity to visit the exhibition at the time of their choice during 9am-5pm (with the first hour being a members-only exclusive timeslot). Offering a full day for free member viewings provides a greater degree of flexibility for visitation and almost doubles the previous viewing time available to members.

Post event surveys were successfully implemented in 2019, providing valuable member insights and feedback. A total of 40 surveys were distributed with 5,757 event-attendees surveyed. Events achieved an outstanding 8.97 out of 10 average net promoter score rating against the key question: Would you recommend AGS events?

Travel Draw

In 2019, our annual *Travel Draw* fundraising campaign included ten luxury prizes packages from 37 supporters. The first prize was a luxury holiday to Moscow for one lucky winner and a friend which included Business Class flights with Singapore Airlines, seven nights' accommodation in Moscow and St Petersburg and transfers courtesy of Renaissance Tours

and a \$1,000 transactional account courtesy of Arab Bank Australia. We sold 31,976 tickets and thank our members for their incredible support.

Communications

One of the changes members would have noticed was the refreshed AGS logo, created in concert with the Gallery's Creative Studio and which has resulted in branding that is much bolder and aligns more closely with the Gallery's.

Look magazine delivered a wealth of stimulating articles by curators and specialist writers, providing members with insights into Gallery exhibitions, events and acquisitions as well as AGS events and programs. The *Look* supplement *At the Gallery* provided a regular, concise guide to these events. A limited selection of *Look* articles continued to be published on the Gallery's website, providing accessible material for distribution and expanding the AGS presence across social media platforms.

The two-regular email distribution marketing (EDM) channels: *Members* and *Young Members*, continued to provide up to date information on AGS programs. The *Members* EDM was distributed every three weeks to the approximately 29,000 members who subscribed to receive email communications. This EDM provided information on members' programs and events, Gallery exhibitions, benefits fundraising efforts and helped promote special offers and competitions. The *Young Members* EDM was distributed every three weeks to nearly 9,000 subscribers, with a range of content directed to a younger age demographic of 18–40 years. Our broader digital campaigns have reached over 2.3 million users across email and social media channels.

The Gallery distributed the regular *Artmail* EDM to approximately 185,000 subscribers in 2019. The AGS was well represented in this popular e-newsletter, with a dedicated section to promote AGS programs and events, gift memberships, and key fundraising campaigns, such as the Collection Circle Acquisition Program and the members' Travel Draw.

Throughout 2019, the AGS increased our Facebook following by over 30%, making Facebook one of the AGS's key marketing platforms.

World Art Tours

2019 was the most successful year for the World Art Tours (WAT) program since its inception more than thirty years ago, building on the extraordinary growth experienced in 2018. This year, AGS members were offered a choice of 24 tours plus 6 pre/post tours. The 2019 WAT program encompassed a diverse selection of tours to over 31 different countries - captivating destinations, from the familiar such as Southern France, Italy and Spain to less travelled regions of the world including eastern Turkey, Tunisia and Algeria. In 2019, the tour program also featured two highly successful small ship cruises, chartered exclusively for our members,

with the renowned *Volga Dream* cruising from St Petersburg to Moscow, while the luxurious *MS Amadeus Provence* meandered along the Rhône River from Arles to Lyon.

Over the past 10 years the WAT program has gone from strength to strength. It offers AGS members a unique opportunity to travel with deeply knowledgeable and experienced tour leaders, many of whom are familiar to members through the AGS Art Appreciation and Learning Curve lecture programs. Tour leaders worked closely with our travel coordinator, Liz Gibson, and with our trusted travel partner, Renaissance Tours, to create fascinating itineraries featuring some of the world's most outstanding art, architecture and archaeological sites, and exploring wide ranging histories, religions and distinctive cultures. Importantly, the tours also provided a rare opportunity to travel with a group of like-minded people, many of whom become lifelong friends.

The AGS continued to work with Renaissance Tours, the proud partner for the World Art Tours program since 2002, and a supporter of our Travel Draw's First Prize since 2015.

Administration

A number of enhancements were carried out on the AGS database over the year, and these contributed to data entry efficiencies and process improvements for members. Thanks to the Gallery, a month-long pro bono collaboration with the consultancy firm *Re:* (part of the M&C Saatchi network) explored how design can improve the visitor experience. *Re:* instigated interviews across the AGS and Gallery and captured footage of the visitor experience from entry through to the Members Lounge, with a focus on improving AGS visibility at touchpoints throughout the Gallery and externally.

Volunteers

Once again, the AGS and members benefitted from the generous support provided by the dedicated Task Force volunteers, volunteer guides and Young Members volunteers. Task Force volunteers staffed the Membership Desk, assisted with programs and events, and provided a range of support in the Members Lounge, including the Wine Bar and the AGS Library. Volunteer guides provided many informative tours at our new members evenings as well as coffee morning tours of major exhibitions. The Young Members Committee provided valuable assistance in the development of the program and Young Members volunteers provided frontline assistance at events and programs including the Young Professionals Meetups and a range of art-making workshops.

The key recommendations of the review of Task Force operations, led by external pro bono consultant Julie Thompson, were implemented in 2019 to align the Task Force with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. A Volunteer Coordinator position was introduced to centrally administer all volunteers across the Gallery and AGS. A *Volunteer Management Committee* was established, its members including the Gallery Visitor

Experience Manager, two volunteer coordinators, a representative from the AGS Council and Executive, and a Gallery Human Resources Advisor.

The AGS is particularly grateful to the Task Force Committee, led by Councillor Sue Dadswell, for their hard work and commitment, and for maintaining the excellent support and services throughout the transition.

Sydney Modern Project

On 8 November 2019 a ground-breaking ceremony was held to celebrate the commencement of construction of the Sydney Modern Project (SMP). This expansion will see a new building and public garden next to the existing Gallery, which will also undergo substantial renovation. The AGS Council are proud to support the SMP, which will enable the people of NSW to enjoy viewing more of the institution's outstanding art collection; increase the Gallery's ability to attract and present major international art exhibitions; and offer new opportunities for the AGS to grow its membership. The SMP's innovative and sustainable design, with a mission to provide "*more art for more people*", is scheduled for completion in 2022.

Members Lounge

Once again members took advantage of the quiet reprieve offered by the Members Lounge, and in 2019 we welcomed 62,681 members and guests to the Lounge, a more than 10% increase on visitation compared to 2018. Given the Lounge's seating capacity of 80, the Yiribana Gallery foyer was utilised as an overflow area, particularly during the many sold out lectures where over 300 members were often in attendance. Many special small-scale exhibitions were curated for the Lounge to partner with the Gallery's exhibition program, these receiving a very positive response from members. The Lounge will be refurbished as part of the SMP, and the AGS is working closely with the architects and the Gallery to ensure the result is an enviable Lounge for our members.

Support for the Gallery

In 2019 the AGS continued the annual \$250,000 sponsorship of the Gallery's Wednesday evening *Art After Hours* program. This vibrant and popular program attracts an eclectic demographic and provides broad recruitment potential for new members. The AGS provided a further \$566,000 in support of exhibitions and other programs. As there was not a recommendation from the curatorial team, the AGS did not fund an art acquisition during the year but has approached the Gallery regarding a suitable future acquisition.

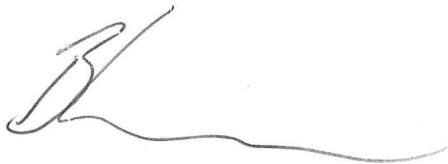
Sponsorship

Support from our sponsors enables the AGS to provide members with an expansive program across many platforms. Tour Partner *Renaissance Tours* expanded their support to include sponsorship of the 2019 *Art Appreciation* lecture series, once again *Arab Bank* sponsored the *Learning Curve* lecture series and *Drapac Financial* the *Resonate* concert series. Faber

Castell supported the AGS's workshops and the much loved annual *Kids Club Prize*, Manly Spirits' contribution greatly assisted the growth of the Young Professionals program and Ball & Doggett and Whirlwind Print assisted with our printing and publications. The *Jazz at the Gallery* concerts continued to be sponsored by Pat Corrigan and *Aurecon*. The AGS is incredibly grateful for this longstanding support and we continue to work with the Gallery to seek sponsors for new as well as existing programs.

Art Gallery Society Staff & Council

In 2019, the AGS continued to offer members stimulating, high quality events and memorable cultural experiences at the Art Gallery of NSW and far afield. These programs, greatly enjoyed by members, would not have been possible without the hard-working staff of the AGS, whose enthusiasm and commitment under the exceptional leadership of Executive Director, Ron Ramsey, and Assistant Director, Joseph Alessi, has resulted in a successful year with numerous outstanding achievements. I would also like to acknowledge the many contributions of the AGS Council, volunteers whose dedication and input continue to advance the objectives of the AGS.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Greenacre', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Greenacre
President, Art Gallery Society of New South Wales

Position Holders

Patrons

Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, Governor of New South Wales and
Mr Dennis Wilson

Honorary Life Governors

The Hon Bronwyn Bishop
Peter Flick
Dorothy Holt
Raymond Kidd
Joan Levy
Max Sandow AM
Carolyn Ward
Leslie Walford
Diana Walder OAM

Distinguished Service to Council

Prue Allen
Nancy Cash
Robyn Flick
Inge Grant
Annette Jameson
Adam Johnson
Brian Ladd
Christine Liddy
Les Moseley
John Pearson
Natasha Serventy
Ross Steele AM
David Stewart-Hunter
Caroline Storch

Councillors 2019

Brian Greenacre *President*
Paula Latos-Valier AM *Vice President*
Sue Jackson *Treasurer*
Anastasia Economou
Sue Dadswell
Jenny Green
Brian Ladd
Edward Palmisano (until March 2019)
David Sharpe
Jo-Ann Smith
Ex-Officio
Dr Michael Brand
The Hon Ashley Dawson-Damer AM

Honorary Lawyers

Allen & Overy

Task Force volunteers

Task Force Committee 2019

Coordinator

Susan Dadswell

Assistant Coordinator

Judy Embrey

Secretary/Treasurer

Ruth Attwood

Registrar

Lea Clarke

Members Desk Roster Officer

Georgina Gye

Functions Roster Officer

Ine Harrison-Latour

Concierge Roster Officer

Rex Secombe

Family Activities Roster Officer

Jenny Parker

New Members Officer

Margaret Symes

Assistants

Ruth Olsen

Lynda Vaculik

Task Force Volunteers January – December 2019

Melanie Anderson

Greta Archbold

Mara Ashmore

Ruth Attwood

Bridget Austin

Meredith Aveling

Chris Baines

Julia Baldo

Kaye Barrett

John Bartholomaeus

Sandra Beesley

Diana Berlyn

Georgina Blythe

Lorraine Boyer

John Buchanan

Geraldine Bull

Jennifer Carey

Nelli Carrel

Susan Charlton

Lucy Cherkasov

Stephanie Chinneck

Annie Clarke

Lea Clarke

Judy Cormack

Linda Cox

Susan Dadswell

Beverley Darby

Francine de Valence

Gail Dendle

Susan Denenberg

Diane Devine

John Doherty

June Donsworth

Jutta Dubiel

Catherine Duggan

Gordon Elliott

Judy Embrey

Jean Fairfax

Coralie Fergus

Phillip Forsyth

Christopher Gingell

Monique Gingell

Phillip Good

Linda Gough

Patricia Governor

Maria Greene

Mary Grice

Georgina Gye

Aiko Hagiwara

Sue Hancock

Ine Harrison-Latour

Jennifer Hayes

Fran Hellier

Ann Henderson

Madeline Hunter

Teresa Jakubowski

Felicita Jennings

Teresa Jirsch

Krystyna John

Nita Jones

Vere Kenny
Juliette Khouri
Ursula Knight
Triny Lademann
Brenda Lee
Kesini Madanayake
Grace Malanos
Margaret Marshall
Jane Matkovich
Glen McLellan
Marlene McPherson
Emma Mendelsohn
Hilary Moxon
Colleen Mulvey
Alexandra Nugent

Deborah Oong
Ruth Osen
Jenny Parker
Cynthia Pretty
Judy Proudfoot
Marie Puntigam
Zorica Rapaich
Deanna Richardson
Annette Searle
Rex Secombe
Neerja Shastri
Cassie Sheehan
Lesley Somerville
Judith Stefanek
Marsha Swenson

Margaret Symes
Anne Taylor
Susan Tompkins
Judy Tribe
Ursula Ure
Lynda Vaculik
Adriana Vellar
Beverley von Lucken
Jeffrey Wai-Yee
Norma Warman
Jennifer Watt
Jenni Wood
Sergio Zampatti

Young Members

Young Members Committee 2019

Stavroula Adameitis
Catherine Baxendale
Philippa Cordi
Joel Gratiaen
Brian Greenacre
Anthony Hodgkinson
Taimika-Lee Lewis
Irene Jiatong Li
Christine Luo
Timothy Nicol-Ford
Elizabeth Robertson
Emily Rundle
Carol Sin
Peter Wieland

Young Members Volunteers 2019

Louise Adamson	Madeleine Gracie	Elizabeth Playoust
Mariana Arroyo	Melissa Hammond	Naomi Qu
Andres Basso	Skadi Heckmüller	Sue Roberts
Julian Black	Hanna Hong	Ivana Saderova
Phoebe Boyle	Jane Hoskyn	Emily Sinclair
Rachel Bryant	Sarah Johnson	Clare Stace
Andrea Cabello	Rebecca Johnston	Laura Stevenson
Felicity Carton	Marcel Juillard	Gregory Story
Philippa Cordi	Lauren Kauffman	Joy Tang
Rose Cox	Nikki Khedoori	Henry Tilly
Jannelle Cruz	Lynne Lancaster	Shuyao Wang
Liz Driscoll	Hongbei Li	Sally Whittleston
Millie Elsmore	Alison McDonald	Jillian Zarate
Gina Francis	Nell O'Grady	
Kersoshin	David O'Sullivan	
Govender	Sarah O'Sullivan	

Sponsors and Partners

January - December 2019

Arab Bank Australia

Aurecon / Pat Corrigan

Ball & Doggett

Bluestar Print

Drapac Financial

Faber-Castell Australia Pty Ltd

Hutchings Pianos

Manly Spirits

Renaissance Tours

Robert Oatley Wines

Whirlwind Print

Art Gallery Society Staff 2019

Executive

Executive Director Ron Ramsey

Assistant Director Joseph Alessi

Executive Assistant Batsheva Abrahams

Finance

Finance and HR Coordinator Roanne Papas

Management Accountant Clare Vu

Look Magazine

Look Editor John Saxby

Deputy Editor Susannah Smith

Marketing

Marketing Manager Natalie Matar

Membership and Events

Membership and Events Manager Katrina Jones

Membership Officer Rachel Rodd

Membership Assistant Cathy Shen

Ticketing Manager Jamie Mackenzie

Senior Events Coordinator Sarah Maxwell

Events Coordinator Joey Hesper (until October 2019)

Art Programs Coordinator Dot Kolentzsis

Events Assistants Kristy Stewart, Lisa Tarbuck

Members Lounge

Members Lounge Manager Fiona McIntosh

Reception Assistants Maria Basile, Lucy Boyle, Ally Martin, Danielle Salvemini, Martyn Reyes, Louise Smart

Additional Support

World Art Tours Coordinator Liz Gibson