



ARTSNATIONAL
Canberra



ADFAS Canberra Inc
ABN 65 303 903 455

ARTSNATIONAL CANBERRA NEWSLETTER 2 2024

WINTER



A Word from our Chair

Dear Members,

March is the time of our Association's Annual Conference and AGM, and this year was the first held under the name of ArtsNational. It was also the first time the Keynote Address was delivered by our new Patron, Julian Bickersteth, AO. The Canberra Society was ably represented by Margaret May and Myra Croke.



Julian is the founder and CEO of International Conservation Services. He is deeply networked within the conservation profession and the wider cultural heritage sector both nationally and internationally. He regularly writes, speaks and commentates on conservation matters and museum policy. Julian has a particular interest in the interface between conservation and the context in which artefacts, collections and buildings are placed. This involves interaction with a wide range of associated disciplines and sectors. He is passionate about the conservation profession and the work conservators undertake. Since 2014 Julian has played a key role in promoting sustainability in the conservation sector, including leading discussions on environmental guidelines in museums and galleries and running climate action workshops on achieving Net Zero.

Down below, we have an edited excerpt from Julian's address. Brief as it is, I'm sure you'll agree it hits the mark.

With best wishes,

Sue Healy OAM

Chair

ArtsNational Canberra

From the Patron

by ArtsNational Patron, Julian Bickersteth

As for our **Mission:**

We are firm believers in the transformative power of the arts to enhance lives. Our mission is to serve as a beacon of inclusivity and influence as we educate, support and advocate for the arts across Australia, fostering a vibrant and diverse cultural landscape.



We believe that the arts can enrich people's lives and we aim to be an inclusive and influential educator, supporter and promoter of the arts Australia-wide.

I think we are getting closer to why we are here.

Let's see what our mother ship, as it were, The Arts Society, formally NADFAS in the UK, has to say on the matter.



The Arts Society is a leading arts education charity with a global network of local Societies which bring people together through a shared curiosity for the arts.

Our events provide welcoming places to hear expert lecturers share their specialist knowledge about the arts. We preserve and contribute to our artistic heritage through volunteering and grants.

Our strength is our people, joined together by a passion for the arts which can nourish and empower us all. *Our work creates a better, healthier and more connected society.*

Our vision is the belief that the arts have the potential to enrich people's lives and is at the heart of everything we do.

So that's it – we are doing this because at the heart of everything we do we have a belief that the arts have the potential to enrich people's lives.

And what I can tell you is that there is now scientific proof to back up this belief.

Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross last year published ***Your Brain on Art***, which quickly became a New York Times best-seller.

Science is now proving what artists have known for millennia namely that our brains and bodies are wired for art. Today we genuinely stand on the verge of a cultural shift in which the arts can deliver potent and accessible proven health and well-being solutions to billions of people.

Let me briefly outline the science as I understand it. Four core concepts underpin the neuro arts as they're called:

- **Neuroplasticity**, the amazing ability of the brain to form and reorganize neuronal connections consistently and constantly and to rewire itself;
- **Enriched environments** where surroundings that enliven our senses through colour, shape, smell, pattern, touch and sight can increase our brain mass (the ultimate enriched environment being nature);
- **The aesthetic triad**, a theoretical model that depicts how our sensorimotor systems are reward systems and our knowledge and meaning making all intersect to form aesthetic moments – moments of deep meaning in our lives;
- And finally, **the default mode network** – that part of our brain now believed to be the neurobiological basis of the self, the quiet daydreaming, mind-wandering, meaning-making place.

In a world where nearly 1 billion people struggle with their mental health, with depression being a leading cause of disability and a generation of adolescent young adults are experiencing epidemic levels of mental stress, accumulating evidence indicates that the arts are a powerful and potentially scalable way to foster youth mental health and well-being.

Research has shown that engaging in an art project for as little as 45 minutes can reduce the levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, and participating in just one art experience a month (hello ArtsNational) can extend one's life by 10 years.

. . .

So, I now leave you to your deliberations and wish you well with them. But I ask you all to do so in the context of our mission. Our belief, now scientifically proven, that what we do has the potential to enrich people's lives and to make those lives both happier and healthier.

Getting to Know Your Committee

In this Newsletter, we introduce Cathy Johnstone.



As is the case for so many ArtsNational members, I joined the Canberra society after my friend and fellow committee member, Myra, invited me to attend a lecture. My first lecture was in early 2022 — Dr Annette Gero's *War and Pieced: Wartime Quilts*. Quilts aren't really my thing so I went along with minimal expectations. How wrong I was. I was blown away by how interesting the lecture was, how much history was intertwined with the craft of the quilts that Dr Gero talked about, and just by the sheer quality of the lecture itself. I became a member and joined the committee at the end of 2022.

ArtsNational Canberra came along as I moved into retirement after a 30-year diplomatic career and then about 8 years as a freelance editor. As a diplomat, I had postings in Malaysia, Mexico, New York and finally in Mauritius as High Commissioner with accreditation to Madagascar, Comoros and the Seychelles. The latter posting was a challenging but fascinating four years. After that, I was happy to return to Canberra and take up editing a wide range of books and academic articles.

ArtsNational Canberra seems to be a perfect way to explore the world of art and beyond and to answer questions, even those I didn't know I had! I also volunteer at Booklovers Lane, the Lifeline bookshop at the Fyshwick Markets. The breadth of topics that Canberrans are interested in never ceases to amaze me; people leave the shop with such joy when they find their particular treasure, quite apart

from their invaluable support of Lifeline. It is the same with ArtsNational, when a lecture works, when it is presented with enthusiasm and great skill, the lecture theatre just fizzes with excitement and questions. It is rewarding to be able to help bring our society's lecture program to life each year and to work with the society's wonderful members.

The Winter Season

Winter is the coldest and darkest season of the year in polar and temperate climates. The tilt of Earth's axis causes seasons; winter occurs when a hemisphere is oriented away from the Sun. According to most in Australia, the dates are Saturday 1st June to Saturday 31st August. Option A.

It's controversial. If indeed it's the tilt of the axis that matters, then winter begins on the winter solstice, the day of the year with the fewest hours of sunlight. The winter solstice in the Southern Hemisphere in 2024 is on Friday 21st June. Option B.

Why does it matter to ArtsNational Canberra? If you subscribe to Option A, then your program is:

3 June 2024 – Gemma BLACK

THE BOOK OF KELLS: ITS HISTORY, ITS MYSTERY AND ITS WONDER

8 July 2024 – Vivienne LAWES

**THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND EAST–WEST TRADE:
CHINTZ, CHINESE EXPORT AND CHINOISERIE, 1600–1800**

5 August 2024 – *Andrew HOPKINS*

THE PERFECT HOUSE: ANDREA PALLADIO'S VENETIAN VILLAS

6 August 2024 – *Andrew HOPKINS*

Special Interest Morning

- The Vanderbilts: The Glamour of Gilded Age Extravagance
- The Rockefellers: A Dynasty of Art Collectors

If Option B, then you miss the *Book of Kells* but pick up *Picasso*:

16 September 2024 – *Alan READ*

PUZZLING OUT PICASSO

The only way to satisfy both parties is to offer the lot.

3 June 2024

THE BOOK OF KELLS: ITS HISTORY, ITS MYSTERY AND ITS WONDER

Gemma BLACK



Bio

Gemma is a calligrapher, artist and teacher. Her love of calligraphic history and the evolution of the western alphabet from Roman times has led to research and teaching around the world. A recipient of a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship to study in Europe, Gemma's work is in private and public collections including the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the European Parliament, Letterform Archive San Francisco and Parliament House in Canberra. Gemma is a Fellow of the Calligraphy & Lettering Arts Society, UK.

Lecture

In the year 2000, when Ireland's national treasure — *The Book of Kells* — made its highly acclaimed visit to Australia, Gemma was invited by the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) to present this lecture on the Book. Gemma looked at its background, as well as the calligraphy and illumination, pigments and tools therein. Since the NGA's *The Book of Kells and the Art of Illumination* exhibition, Gemma has presented this lecture to audiences around the world. Drawing on images from the lecture, this talk allows the audience to delve into some of the history and mystery of this astonishing manuscript.



Illumination from The Book of Kells. Image provided by Gemma Black.

8 July 2024

THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND EAST–WEST TRADE: CHINTZ, CHINESE EXPORT AND CHINOISERIE, 1600–1800

Vivienne LAWES

Bio

An art historian, art market analyst and curator/writer, Viv Lawes combines a hands-on career in the art business with research and teaching in higher education at several London-based universities. Her courses include The Art Market, History of Western Art and Design 1350–1970, and Asian Art. Viv has curated numerous exhibitions of Southeast Asian contemporary art in London and Singapore. She writes for many publications and private clients, for both academic and general readership.



Lecture

This lecture explores how the East India Company developed its methods of trade and facilitated the increasingly sophisticated and profound exchange of ideas between East and West. It focuses on textile design, but also includes wallpaper, porcelain and furniture, as well as the vast commercial trade in spices and tea. Concentrating at first on the 17th century textile trade with India, Viv then turns to the 18th century and the trade with imperial China. The distinction is drawn between export trade and evolving Western culture.



The East India Company's Yard at Deptford, c. 1683. (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich).

Image provided by Vivienne Lawes.

5 August 2024

THE PERFECT HOUSE: ANDREA PALLADIO'S VENETIAN VILLAS

Andrew HOPKINS



Bio

Previously Assistant Director of the British School Rome (1998–2002), Andrew has been a professor at the University of L'Aquila since 2004. Part of his PhD was awarded the Essay Medal 1996 by the Society of Architectural Historians (GB). Andrew was a Fellow at Harvard's Villa I Tatti in 2003–2004 and the Paul Mellon Senior Visiting Fellow, Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC in 2009.

Lecture

Andrea Palladio's villas are his most celebrated accomplishment because of their beauty, practicality and, in cases such as the Villa Rotunda, its iconic image. The villas were also known through the woodcuts that illustrated Palladio's treatise *The Four Books of Architecture* (1570), which meant that they were copied and imitated in Britain and America. This talk examines why his villas have such enduring appeal.



Villa Almerico Capra, Vicenza (UNESCO World Heritage Site) designed by Andrea Palladio.

Source: [File:Larotonda2009.JPG - Wikimedia Commons](#)

6 August 2024

Special Interest Morning

Andrew HOPKINS

• THE VANDERBILTS: THE GLAMOUR OF GILDED AGE EXTRAVAGANCE

Until her death in 2019 Gloria Vanderbilt was the most celebrated heiress of this extraordinary family, whose founders during their lifetimes had been the richest living Americans. Their astonishing residences designed by leading architects of the day were filled with art treasures and exemplify the long-lost gilded age of East Coast America.



Louise Vanderbilt (1854–1926), studio portrait. Image provided by Andrew Hopkins

• THE ROCKEFELLERS: A DYNASTY OF ART COLLECTORS

Much richer than the Guggenheims, the Rockefellers — even today the richest and most powerful family in the USA — not only amassed one of the greatest art collections of the 20th century, including superb impressionists, but also donated their 9-storey New York townhouse on Fifth Avenue to found the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). An incredibly private family, the Rockefellers



mostly avoided scandal, but during Andrew's time at one of Harvard University's research institutes, he gained some insights into this powerful family's history.

*The Rockefeller Center, New York
(commissioned by John D Rockefeller).*

*Source: [Rockefeller Center | Parks
\(pps.org\)](https://parks.org)*

16 September 2024

PUZZLING OUT PICASSO

Alan READ

Bio

Alan holds a master's and first-class honours degree in History of Art from Birkbeck College, London. He has been a gallery guide at Tate Britain, Tate Modern, the National Portrait Gallery and for Frieze Masters. He also regularly lectures at the NPG, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Plymouth City Art Gallery as well as other galleries in the UK. He also works as a London Blue Badge Guide and a City of London Guide.



Lecture

How can you best understand one of the most prolific, complex and influential painters of the 20th century? By taking just ten of Picasso's paintings, this lecture will examine his life and attempt to explain the evolution of his painting styles through a career that spanned more than seventy years. Looking at the



genesis of each work, examining its biographical meaning, its moment in history and its significance in the canon of modern art will reveal the truth behind this most enigmatic and powerful artist.

Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)
'Avignon,
by Pablo Picasso.

*Image provided
by Alan Read.*



The Three Dancers by Pablo Picasso.

Image provided by Alan Read. Also at www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picasso-the-three-dancers-t00729

Patricia Robertson Fund Mid-Career Scholarships 2023

Many of our Members are keen followers of the Society's support of deserving candidates. Here's a photo of the winner of the ArtsNational Armidale Mid-Career Scholarship winner, Harpreet Tandy. She has been working on the use of hydrogels in the conservation of a wide range of historical artworks: paintings, mural paintings, paperwork, wooden objects, plaster and stone surfaces. Her work was recently recognised by her attendance at a workshop in the city of Reggio Emilia, Italy, in September 2023.



Harpreet Tandy on the job.

Assessment of a mural painting with portable microscopy. *Image courtesy of H Tandy Delta Conservation.*

Another high achiever was Dr Celia Cramer, the recipient of the ArtsNational Mid-Career Scholarship for 2023. Celia received \$2000 which she put towards attending the Infrared and Raman User Group (IRUG) conference in Tokyo in September this year.

Celia Cramer is a heritage professional with nine years of practical experience as a Conservator specialising in painted surfaces with a sub-specialisation in paper. Her experience is supported by several years working as an Archaeologist, initially in excavation and later in object processing. She has a strong working knowledge of chemistry and degradation interactions and a proven capacity to achieve outstanding conservation treatment outcomes.



Image courtesy of Dr Celia Cramer

Closer to home is Vera Olbrycht, the winner of the 2023 AICCM/ArtsNational Outstanding Conservation Student from the University of Canberra. Vera is a student member of AICCM. She is highly committed to becoming a conservator and has already started working in the profession in addition to her studies which she completed in 2023.



Image courtesy of Vera Olbrycht

Some examples of Vera's work can be found at [Conservation & Philanthropy \(PRF\) - ArtsNational](#). Unfortunately, they can't be reproduced here – technical issue.

And, finally, we have Jo Luggens, winner of the 2023 AICCM/ADFAS Mornington Peninsula Outstanding Conservation Student from the University of Melbourne. Jo completed her Masters by Coursework in Cultural Materials Conservation this year. She has a particular interest in queer and women's heritage in fine art, and the issues involved in securing and strengthening queer identity through the conservation of queer cultural heritage. Jo is a member of AICCM and is currently Secretary of Student Conservators at Melbourne (SC@M).



Image courtesy of Jo Luggens

Our Raffle

The foregoing pieces about creators and conservators remind us of the importance of our Raffles which we conduct after each lecture. The funds raised go directly to ArtsNational Canberra's support for Canberra Glassworks a dynamic, professional glassmaking facility, dedicated to artists' working in contemporary glass art, craft & design. There's nothing quite like it anywhere else in Australia. Our prizes aren't to be sneezed at either.

The Art of Everywhere Else, by Dr Sam Bowker

Free Online Lecture Series for ArtsNational Members

Dr Sam Bowker is the Senior Lecturer in Art History and Visual Culture at Charles Sturt University and an ArtsNational lecturer.



Sam has made a very generous offer to all ArtsNational members to access his streamed series of 12 lectures on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm for 1 hour, free of charge. The series covers the period from 9 July to 8 October. The lectures cannot be saved to view later, so set your alarm or you'll miss out!

This is a MEMBERS ONLY offer so please DO NOT SHARE the code. People can sign up to do the course as a paying student. It costs around \$3,000 and offers saving of the lectures, course work and assignment feedback.

Please don't attempt to contact Sam yourself. Questions should be directed to Fran Maitland who will pass them on. Fran's email is auslecturers@artsnational.au

[Sign up here](#) or use the QR code below:

2024 Lecture Series

- 9 July** Foundations: Museums and Rock Art
- 16 July** Ancient Mediterranean: Egypt, Greece, Rome
- 23 July** European Renaissances: Centre or Periphery?
- 30 July** The Americas: Beyond 'Manifest Destiny'
- 6 Aug** African Art: Textiles, Power and Museums
- 13 Aug** Maghreb: Across the Sahel and Sahara
- TWO WEEK BREAK**
- 3 Sep** The Middle East (South West Asia)
- 10 Sep** Silk Roads: Turkey, Iran and Central Asia
- 17 Sep** South Asia: India, Pakistan and the Himalaya
- 24 Sep** Nusantara: South East Asian Art
- 1 Oct** East Asia: China, Korea, Japan
- 8 Oct** Oceania: A Third of the World



The National Library

As you know, we hold our lectures in the National Library of Australia. It's a perfect site with facilities ranging from an ideal theatre to free and ample after-hours parking. We thought a little history of this remarkable institution would be of interest.

The origins of the NLA go back to the early years after Federation in 1901, when the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library served both Federal Parliament and the nation. In 1927 the Library was moved from Melbourne to Canberra with the relocation of Parliament.

An Act of Parliament formally separated the National Library from the Parliamentary Library and a new building for the growing collection and services was opened on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, in August 1968 by the Prime Minister, John Gorton.

In 2001 the Library celebrated its centenary by publishing *Our Nation's Album*, a history portraying the Library's first one hundred years in text and pictures. It can be found at www.nla.gov.au/history/index.html - Trove

The current Director-General of the Library is Dr. Marie-Louise Ayres.



The National Library of Australia

Food for Thought

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.” – Pablo Picasso

“The true use of art is, first, to cultivate the artist’s own spiritual nature.”
– George Inness

“The principles of true art is not to portray, but to evoke.” – Jerzy Kosinski

“Great art picks up where nature ends.” – Marc Chagall

La belle dame sans merci

In John Keats’ ballad, a line pops into my head every time I’m out for my daily constitutional.

“The sedge has wither’d from the lake, And no birds sing.”

The speaker says that the marsh plants have all died out from around the lake, and “no birds sing.” So I guess that it’s autumn or even early winter since all the birds have migrated, and the plants have “withered.” And that’s the gloomy context of this comment. But salvation is readily at hand (or in ear) through **Podcasts** on Spotify. These can be educational or entertaining and detract from the boredom and drudgery of the obligatory walk. My current listening includes:

- *The History of English*. Self-explanatory.
- *The Rest is History*. An extraordinary range of topics. Just finished Martin Luther, Lord Byron, RMS *Titanic*, the first Chinese Emperor, Man on the Moon.
- *Something Rhymes with Purple*. Also about the English language.

And of course lots of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. The possibilities are endless. If the sun’s shining, it’s a delight to be out and about in such delightful company.

Please let us know if you
have any particular favourites.

