

A photograph of a tree-lined path in autumn, with trees showing yellow and orange foliage. The path leads into the distance under a soft, hazy sky.

## Autumn 2026

### From the Chair

by Fiona Johnson: ArtsNational Perth Chair

This year I have paused on several occasions to reflect on the evolution of ArtsNational Perth. I think I stand in a pretty good position having served on the committee since inception in July 2018. This year, now our 8<sup>th</sup> year of operation, has seen us soar to heights I could only dream of back in February 2019 at our inaugural lectures. Membership is at venue capacity, we are financially stable, we have an active and collegial committee, and we have waitlists. This is telling me we survived COVID19 and its closed borders disrupting our usual business (and income) and we are now thriving. There is no doubt that our achievements are the result of many, but I think it timely to pause, reflect and now change gears. We are no longer a young organisation finding its feet but an organisation with presence which strives to serve its members, and ultimately the community, through our philanthropic endeavours. When I see the many faces at lectures smiling at, and with, one another I know we are doing it right: *connecting, enriching and inspiring.*

With maturity also comes new issues to resolve, and the Susan Kay-Williams lectures on 21 March saw record guest ticket sales, mostly from WA Embroidery Guild members eager to learn more on the subject. Several of our members who had not registered their attendance were disappointed they were unable to attend the *History of Embroidery* lecture, and I apologise for that.

In the past, guest ticket sales have assisted us to generate a financial emergency buffer and to pay for increasing operational costs particularly where we outsource activity. It was never previously an issue as roughly 25-30% of members have not attended lectures due to travel, illness or other personal circumstances, allowing an easy buffer of guest tickets available for sale.

As our membership numbers have now reached venue capacity, I encourage you to register your attendance **early** for all lectures you will attend, and let us know if you subsequently become unavailable by emailing [perth@artsnational.au](mailto:perth@artsnational.au). This allows us to better manage space and ensure all members wanting to attend lectures have available seating.

**Membership entitles you to attend lectures at no charge, but this does require you to register your attendance.** I think you know the drill by now ... and if you don't, please email [membership@artsnationalperth.au](mailto:membership@artsnationalperth.au) and we will assist you.

**I look forward to welcoming you to a lecture soon.**

## Behind the Scenes

On Sunday 15 March we were delighted to meet the 20 or so new members who attended the **New Members Morning Tea** in the marquette room of Sculptures by the Sea at the Seaview Golf Club. Thank you Kay Campbell, our former Chair, for arranging the event and serendipitously arranging for four (yes, four!) artists to discuss their artwork, creative journeys and the practicalities of how and why they created their sculptures.



Fiona Gavino spoke expertly on her Swan Theory which was essentially a love ode to the majestic swan and the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River), celebrating it as a beautiful living entity. Local sculptor and scientist Anton Lord spoke to Golden Fields (originally intended to be green grass but space paint doesn't come in green) a large-scale kinetic installation. Anton discussed the intersection of science and art, encouraging us all back for a sunset viewing of Golden Fields.



South Korean sculptor Sangsug Kim discussed her marble and granite works with themes of memory, comfort, and the human connection to the landscape. Iraqi-born artist and sculptor, Ayad Alqaraghooli discussed his journey migrating to Australia from Iraq (via Jordan) in 2005. He had studied sculpture at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad, and subsequently at Curtin University in Perth. He said his work (now internationally acclaimed) spoke of themes of freedom, peace and love he found in Australia.

It was so nice to meet so many of you and answer your questions. Remember if you need any assistance registering for lectures or if you have any queries, please email Di Ingelse, membership secretary at [membership@artsnationalperth.au](mailto:membership@artsnationalperth.au).

Please don't forget the **Annual General Meeting at 12.30pm on Saturday, 2 May** (immediately prior to the lecture by Dr Stefano Carboni). Please come along and hear about our activities, and make your voice heard. This is your opportunity to contribute to the way the Society is run and ask questions of our office-bearers. To ensure we have a quorum, we would be grateful if you could register your intention to attend on TryBooking – [here](#).

If you're looking for something different, you might like to take a trip to the **Wanneroo Regional Gallery**, which has partnered with the **British Museum** to bring the work of one of the United Kingdom's true artistic innovators to Australia for the first time.

**The Botanical World of Mary Delany** runs until 9 May, showcasing 21 high-resolution images of Delany's pioneering and inspirational "paper mosaiks" of plants and flowers. Often mistaken for watercolours, these works are in fact meticulously constructed paper collages – a striking fusion of art and science.

The gallery is open Wednesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and is closed Monday, Tuesday, Sunday and public holidays.

[https://www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/info/20252/arts/334/wanneroo\\_regional\\_gallery](https://www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/info/20252/arts/334/wanneroo_regional_gallery)

**Fiona Johnson and Di Ingelse**

## ArtsNational Annual Conference March 2026

### **Nancy Hourani: ArtsNational Perth Committee Member and Youth Arts Award coordinator**

It was with great anticipation that I attended the ArtsNational conference in Sydney in March, along with Vice-Chair Di Ingelse. It was a great opportunity to find out more about the National body and meet people around Australia involved in promoting and supporting the Arts.

The conference was opened by the ArtsNational Chair Sally Louw, who did a great job of leading the conference throughout the three days.

The keynote speaker was the ArtsNational Patron Julian Bickersteth AO. Julian spoke on a topic about which I am very passionate: Slow Looking. You may be familiar with slow food, slow travel and slow living; Julian introduced us to the slow looking concept; one in which I was already partaking but didn't realise it had a name. Slow looking is the movement of taking time to look and focus on one or two paintings in an art gallery, without the need to look at every piece. Quality over quantity. He suggested focusing one or two works of art and analysing the piece for at least 20 minutes. Asking yourself why the artwork caught your attention, look very closely at the detail of the art and contextualise it. It allows you time to be still and really look at the art piece. He concluded with the message that art can enrich people's lives.

We also heard from Nadia Braad from Minter Ellison who spoke about copyright matters which is a very complex subject. We also had the opportunity to meet and mingle with other members over dinner. Our very own Di Ingelse, ably assisted by her partner Geoff Paull, presented on the streamlining process we use in Perth to manage members bookings and tickets. Lucy Costas the Youth Arts Awards National executive representative shared with us what other groups around Australia are doing to promote and support the arts within the youth. I got some great ideas which I hope to implement over the next year.



I was grateful to have experienced this opportunity and encourage anyone else considering volunteering to consider not only how they can give by volunteering but also what they will receive.

## Our Exciting Year of Lectures!

See <https://www.artsnational.au/societies/perth/> if you want information about all our 2026 lecturers and their presentations

### Saturday 2 May: Dr Stefano Carboni

Dr Carboni is a native of Venice and specialist in Islamic art, focusing on glass studies and the artistic connections between the Islamic world, Europe, and Asia. He has served as CEO of the Museums Commission, Saudi Ministry of Culture; Director of the Art Gallery of Western Australia; and Curator/Administrator of Islamic Art at The Met, New York. He currently lectures in Art History and Curatorial Studies at the University of Western Australia.



### **FROM CAIRO TO VENICE TO PARIS: The Journey of Enamelled and Gilded Glass**

**Saturday 2 May, 2.00-3:30pm**

**State Library of WA Theatre**

In the 13th–14th centuries, Syrian and Egyptian glassmakers mastered works decorated with enamels and gold, influencing Venetian glass, which peaked in the 15th–16th centuries. In the 19th century, renewed interest in this enamelled and gilded glass led to the original Islamic works becoming sought-after collectibles on the French art market

[Book Here](#)



### Saturday 30 May: Zara Fleming

Zara Fleming is a freelance lecturer, art consultant and exhibition curator specialising in the art and culture of Tibet, the Himalayan areas and Mongolia. Initially based at the V&A, she also worked with the Central Asian Department of Bonn University, the Orient Foundation, the Royal Academy, Tibet House, the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside and Asia House. She edited *Masterpieces of Mongolian Art: Vol 1* and published many articles in the field of Buddhist art and culture.



### **TIBET: The Roof of the World**

**Saturday 30 May, 1.00-2:30pm**

**State Library of WA Theatre**

An introduction to the history, art and culture of this extraordinary land, lying deep in the heart of Central Asia and surrounded by some of the highest mountains in the world. Despite its geographical inaccessibility, it developed a rich and vibrant Buddhist culture and artistic tradition. This lecture gives a brief overview of Tibetan history from the time of the great Tibetan Empire (6th – 9th century) to the present day; explores the fascinating art and culture inspired by Buddhism, introduced from India in the 7th century, and gives an insight into the current political situation

[Book Here](#)

### **BHUTAN: The Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon**

**Saturday 30 May, 3.00-4:30pm**

**State Library of WA Theatre**

This tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is known by its inhabitants as Druk Yul or land of the Thunder Dragon - a reference to the Drukpa tradition of Vajrayana Buddhism that permeates every aspect of

Bhutanese life. This lecture explores the history, art and culture of this extraordinary country, which for centuries has preserved its traditional Buddhist values. Over the last few decades changes; such as the introduction of roads, television and tourism challenges if Bhutan can maintain the fine balance between tradition and modernity without diminishing its unique culture?

[Book Here](#)



## **Saturday 25 July: Charlie Hall**

Charlie Hall is a passionate arts educator, lecturer, and guide, based in London and Italy. He is director of the John Hall Venice Course, tour lecturer and leader for Kirker Holidays as well as conducting independent tours in Italy. He is designer and host of a series of art talks and events for the Soho House group of private member's clubs and has designed and led courses for Christie's Education and The Serpentine Gallery Collector's Circle.



## **PEGGY GUGGENHEIM: A Life of Collecting**

**Saturday 25 July, 3.00-4:30pm**

**Venue Change – Location to be advised**

Describing herself by writing, "I am a museum", Peggy Guggenheim's life took a clear path. From setting up a commercial gallery in London, going on a single-minded shopping trip to Paris in the late 1930's even as the German tanks were rolling in, to escape to New York and the subsequent establishment of her museum (and Arts centre). Finally, with her purchase of the eccentric 'unfinished palazzo' in Venice, her collection remains one of the most iconic assemblages of twentieth century art in the world.

[Book Here](#)

## **Lending a Hand**

### **What I like about volunteering on lecture days**

#### ***Bridget Parker: ArtsNational Perth Volunteer and Event Coordinator***

I have been involved with ArtsNational Perth for four years, originally in the capacity of volunteer, and in more recently as Volunteer and Event Coordinator.

I love being involved with ArtsNational Perth. Working together as a team with a group of people who are similarly minded – who love the arts and enjoy seeing the pleasure other people receive from a well-organised event on a subject that appeals to them.

Volunteering is fun. You meet a wide group of people that potentially you would not be connected to. You help people – which is always rewarding.

The program this year is fabulous, and I try to get to every lecture; however, life does get in the way and there are a few that I cannot attend. The members of the volunteer group, being as it is, are quite comfortable to assist and cover for each other, so no matter who is away on the day, the other volunteers cover for them. It is all very flexible.

Depending on whether it's a double or single lecture, our volunteers arrive 45-60 mins before the lecture to help set up and organise the foyer and lecture theatre before members and guests arrive. Now with the QR code scanning in place, it is a very easy process to scan tickets and assist members as required. I try and move volunteers around the various jobs to provide diversity and interest – a volunteer might help selling raffle tickets (with all money going to our Youth Arts Award program), scan QR codes or help members with name badges and general questions. There is always something to do and many hands make light work.

Why not consider joining us?

[volunteer@artsnationalperth.au](mailto:volunteer@artsnationalperth.au)

## Special Members-Only Events and Benefits

### West Australian Ballet: **MACBETH**

**18 August** (5.15 pm): Behind the Scenes rehearsal preview at the WA Ballet Centre, Whatley Crescent, Maylands.

Cost \$25

**11 September** (6.30 pm): 'A' reserve seating at His Majesty's Theatre, Perth with WASO and Interval lounge access and a program.

Cost \$120

**Bookings must be made directly with WA Ballet**

**Call 08 9214 0707 to reserve tickets NOW**

**Quote ArtsNational**



### Our Partnerships



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## ArtsNational Margaret River

### by Kay Campbell: **ArtsNational Margaret River Chair**

Travelling down south in the coming weeks? Don't forget the reciprocal membership offer with ArtsNational Margaret River. Perth members can attend a lecture for only \$10. Lectures are held at The Heart Theatre Margaret River.

The Margaret River society has had an excellent start to its lecture series, and the recent discourses by Susan Kay-Williams, were as enthusiastically appreciated down south as were her two lectures in Perth.

On 11 May, Sandra Hill will reprise the talk she gave in Perth last year, when she spoke about her stories and her art in *Now and then: my journey, my culture, my art*. If you missed it then, here is another opportunity to take in this powerful story.

As part of the stolen generation, Sandra and her siblings were taken from their mother while her father undertook compulsory army training in the Eastern States. Living in an orphanage, Sandra found a voice through her artwork. During her long journey through life, art has been the only constant.

[Book here](#)

On Tuesday 2 June, Zara Flemming will present her overview of Tibetan history (details below), providing an opportunity to catch it if you aren't able to attend her Perth lecture on 30 May.

[Book here](#)

**SEE YOU AT THE NEXT LECTURE - WHETHER IT IS HERE OR THERE!**

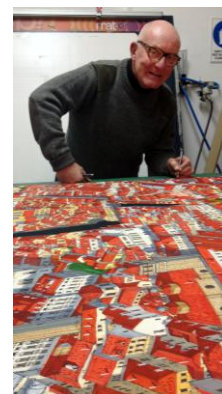
## Meet Our Members

### An Interview with Desmond Freeman AM

By Di Ingelse, Membership Secretary

From pioneering hospital interiors to shaping museum experiences, Desmond's career reflects a lifetime at the intersection of art, design, and human engagement.

Originally from Sydney, Desmond's path into design was anything but conventional. After studying at the prestigious Royal College of Art in London – where, after three years he became the first student to complete a master's by research in healthcare interior design – he returned to Australia to work on major projects, including Sydney's Westmead Hospital. At the time, it was one of the largest developments in the country, and the experience proved formative.



His move to Perth had marked the beginning of a groundbreaking chapter. Commissioned to work on the interiors of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, and Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, Desmond was recognised one of the first designers in Australia to specialise in healthcare interiors – an emerging field in the 1970s. At the time, there was no local expertise in Western Australia, prompting even parliamentary debate over his appointment.

Desmond met his wife, Christine, in Perth in 1980. They returned to Sydney for a work project, and then came back to Perth when he was working on a Royal Perth Hospital commission. His son (who now lives in New York) was born here, and in the 80's work commitments again took them back to Sydney. In 1984 Desmond concurrently commenced his tertiary teaching career culminating in his appointment as Head of School and Professor of Design at the University of Technology Sydney.

While healthcare design formed the foundation of his career, it was another shift in the 1980s that defined his legacy. Through a series of unexpected opportunities, Desmond moved into museum design, contributing to major institutions such as the Powerhouse Museum, and later working on exhibitions and galleries across Australia and internationally. Over time, he built an impressive portfolio spanning dozens of museums.

For Desmond, the essence of museum design lies not in aesthetics, but in interpretation. He emphasises that audience engagement – how visitors connect with and understand what they see – is far more important than colour schemes or layout alone. This philosophy guided his work on complex projects like the Human Mind and Body Gallery at the Melbourne Museum, where collaboration with scientific experts was essential. As museums and cultural institutions face increasing competition for attention, Desmond's message is clear: meaningful engagement, thoughtful storytelling, and intellectual rigour remain at the heart of great design.

His work has also extended beyond traditional spaces. From designing interiors for correctional facilities like the Silverwater Correctional Centre to contributing to heritage projects such as the Queen Victoria Building, Desmond has consistently explored how design can influence behaviour, wellbeing, and understanding.

In 2010, Desmond and his wife, a student of medieval history, 'retired' to Bowral in the NSW Central Highlands, but when his daughter – who had been living in Switzerland with her family for many years – had an opportunity to move to Perth, Desmond and Christine decided to join them here. As former active members of Arts National in Bowral we are very glad to welcome them into the ArtsNational Perth family. Also an experienced lecturer, Desmond continues to share insights from a career spanning six decades, and we look forward to tapping into his expertise as one of our local lecturers.

Desmond was included as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2026 New Year's Honours list for his significant contribution to interior design and to vocational education.

## Travel Tales

### On the Rocks: A Saint Patrick's Day exploration of inner-Sydney galleries. Geoff Paull - ArtsNational Perth member and volunteer

Sydney is a city that expresses light and colour in many forms: the billowing sails of the Opera House, the luminous spectacle of Vivid, the exuberance of the Mardi Gras and the dazzle of New Year's Eve fireworks. On Saint Patrick's Day, with The Rocks awash in green-clad revellers, I set out on a quieter quest – seeking colour and light not in street celebrations, but within the galleries of one of Sydney's oldest precincts.



An obvious starting point was the **Ken Done Gallery** in The Rocks (<https://kendone.com.au/>). For those of my generation, Ken Done's work is instantly recognisable: vivid colour, bold abstraction and a joyous re-imagining of Australian life. Housed in former harbour-related government offices, the spacious gallery functions as both museum and exhibition space, with an adjoining retail component. The setting provides an ideal backdrop for Done's unmistakable visual language – celebratory, confident and unmistakably Australian.



Just around the corner in George Street, in the historic former Coroner's Court, is the **Shazia Imran Gallery** (<https://shazia.com.au/>). The building itself carries echoes of Sydney's early history, once the site of inquiries into some of the city's grislier deaths. Inside, however, the atmosphere is contemplative and luminous. Imran's "*delicately multi-layered paintings explore connections between landscape, memory and the subconscious through texture and the interplay of light and dark*". Her work has been recognised through numerous Australian and international awards, exhibitions and commissions, and the gallery also presents works by other artists, creating a visually engaging and thoughtfully curated space.



Remaining in The Rocks—and carefully dodging Saint Patrick's Day street parties – my path led to the **Argyle Gallery** in Playfair Street (<https://www.argylegallery.com.au/>). This boutique gallery showcases art and craft exclusively by Australian artists, encompassing landscapes, fauna and topical imagery alongside a well-curated selection of Indigenous art. Spread over two levels, the upper floor – accessed via a very narrow staircase – is well worth the effort, rewarding visitors with both fine work and a sense of discovery.





Returning towards the centre of The Rocks, my next encounter was the **Matt Pearson Gallery** (<https://mattpearson.com.au/>). Here, photography takes centre stage, with images drawn from diverse regions across the globe. Pearson's aerial photographs, in particular, offer a striking perspective on colour and form, revealing patterns and contours invisible from ground level. Many of the vibrant coastal scenes provide a fascinating counterpoint to Ken Done's abstracted beach imagery—different mediums, but a shared delight in colour and rhythm.

Back on George Street, I noticed the **Julian Ashton Art School** (<https://julianashtonartschool.com.au/>), housed in another of The Rocks' historic buildings. Accessed through a narrow doorway and up several flights of stairs, the entrance is somewhat forbidding, marked 'staff and students only'. However, encouraged by the additional word 'Gallery', I ventured inside and a welcoming staff member, Edward,



offered to show me the studio spaces. We discreetly avoided a life-drawing class in progress and entered a bustling studio where students were sketching statues and busts arranged on shelves around the room. Established in 1890, the school has operated continuously since its founding by Julian Ashton, and the well-worn easels and fittings bear witness to decades of artistic endeavour. Its Certificate and Diploma courses are supported by scholarships and awards named for notable figures and institutions such as William Dobell, Brett Whiteley, John Olsen, Thora Ungar, William Fletcher and the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts—an enduring link between Australia's artistic past and its future.



No cultural walk through Sydney would be complete without a visit to the **State Library of New South Wales**, whose rotating exhibitions often evoke personal memories for me.

Last year it was POST magazine – in the day much too risqué for my mother who was definitely a Woman's Weekly sort of woman. This year's exhibition, **PIX** (<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/pix>), explores the history of a magazine that my mother would tolerate in the 1950s as being more about glamour than scandal. *Is it art?* Perhaps not in the traditional sense, but the exhibition compellingly documents cultural history, examining relationships between journalists, photographers, models, celebrities and dynamic social influences. Of particular interest was the story of Adelle Hurley (<https://halloffame.melbournepressclub.com/article/adelle-hurley>), "who started as a swimsuit model before switching to the other side of the camera and bagging hundreds of memorable shots for newspapers and magazines with a mixture of creativity, daring, mischievousness and skill - always in her trademark red lipstick". In her 30-odd years behind the camera, she became known as "Front Page Hurley". Her feminine presence in the engine room of the magazine would have softened my mother's impression of the publication.



In the end, it was not green beer but pigment, paper and photography that defined my Saint Patrick's Day. The exhibitions, historic venues and generous interactions with gallery staff (and coffee-shop proprietors) combined to create an energising day of discovery – proof that Sydney's true colour often reveals itself away from the crowds, in quieter spaces where art and history intersect.

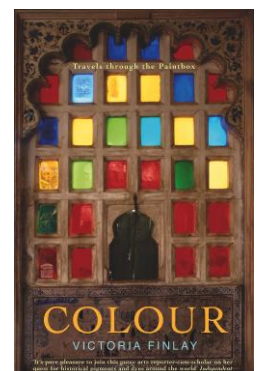
## A Book Review – something different

**Colour** by Victoria Finlay

Reviewed by ArtsNational Chair, Fiona Johnson

Looking for a book to read now the evenings are getting longer? Then look no further. Victoria Finlay, a British writer and journalist, had her first book published in 2002. *Colour: Travels through the Paintbox* is a vivid and captivating journey through the colours of an artist's paintbox.

Commencing with the beginning of the rainbow, *Colour* devotes a chapter to 10 separate colours, traversing time, place, and material to uncover 'stories of sacredness and profanity, of nostalgia and innovation, of secrecy and myth, of



luxury and texture, of profit and loss, of fading and poison, of cruelty and greed and of the determination of some people to let nothing stop them in the pursuit of beauty'.

How did the most precious colour, blue, travel all the way from remote lapis mines in Afghanistan to Michelangelo's brush? What is the connection between brown paint and ancient Egyptian mummies? Why did Robin Hood wear Lincoln green? Was yellow really the urine of cows in India fed mango leaves and vermillion the ground bodies of cochineal insects found on prickly pears in Chile? What natural material was used to dye Roman emperor's togas a purple colour, and where was logwood grown in the eighteenth century which was the source of black dye?

*Colour* is full of extraordinary people, events, and anecdotes – painted all the more dazzling by Finlay's engaging style. My copy of the book is now dog eared and thumb marked from the numerous times I have lent it out, each time receiving it back with praises for both the writer and her subject matter.

Packed with stories, anecdotes and adventures, this is the story of the efforts of artists and artisans to reproduce the rainbow – and the impact their work has had on the world.



### Want more by this author?

Victoria Finlay's latest book *Fabric: the Hidden History of the Material World* has recently been reviewed by the Lane Bookshop's Gabi Oldfellow. Read the review and order the book [here](#):



Official ArtsNational Perth raffle prize provider

## ARTSNATIONAL PERTH: CONTACTS and INFO LINKS

We trust you've enjoyed this edition of our newsletter. Any comments, queries or suggestions please contact [membership@artsnationalperth](mailto:membership@artsnationalperth)

Catch up on past event images [here](#).

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### ARTSNATIONAL PERTH INFORMATION

This newsletter is published quarterly and can be found on the ArtsNational website [here](#).

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*ArtsNational Perth is a wholly volunteer-run organisation. If you would like to help, please [get in touch](#) as many hands make light work.*

#### Contact us:

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