



WINTER 2026

From the Chair

Fiona Johnson: ArtsNational Perth Chair

As we move into the second half of the year, there is much to celebrate at ArtsNational Perth. Our organisation continues to go from strength to strength, with membership now at a record 217 members and, for the first time, a waiting list. As reported at our Annual General Meeting in May, we are also in a strong financial position, providing a solid foundation for future growth and an expanding philanthropic program.

Our success is made possible by our members' participation in our activities, and of course the dedication of our volunteers. As our activities have grown, so too has the workload, making volunteer-wellbeing a priority. I am delighted that our committee has expanded to nine members, bringing fresh ideas and shared responsibility. Please join me in welcoming our new Treasurer, Shirley Vine, and Marketing Chair, Terri Starceovich. We are also pleased to welcome Desmond Freeman AM, and welcome back Peter Farr who were elected at the AGM as general members.

This year I have the privilege of serving in two roles—as Chair of ArtsNational Perth and National Vice Chair. **I am incredibly grateful for the support of Vice Chair Di Ingelse and her partner Geoff Paull**, whose generous assistance over the past six months has made this possible. My thanks also go to **Bridget Parker** for coordinating our lecture-day volunteers, **Nancy Houraini** for leading the 2026 Youth Arts Award, and **Debbie Thornton** for curating next year's outstanding lecture programme.

As we continue to grow, **we are looking for a Secretary to join our committee**. If you enjoy organisation, communication and working as part of a friendly team, or are willing to learn, we would love to hear from you. The role primarily involves preparing committee meeting agendas and recording and distributing meeting minutes. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact us at perth@artsnational.au.

Another opportunity to become involved is helping us reintroduce refreshments at our lectures. This has long been a popular topic of discussion and, with a small team of three or four volunteers to assist with purchasing, serving and packing away refreshments, it could once again become a valued part of our lecture experience. If you would like to help foster the social side of our organisation, please get in touch.

We also continue to look for new ways to enrich the ArtsNational Perth experience. Upcoming **Members Only activities** include special visits to the WA Pulse exhibition at AGWA, and a proposed Art and Architecture visit to WA Museum Boola Bardip (dates for these will be communicated as soon as they are finalised). Members are also invited to a private behind-the-scenes viewing of the West Australian Ballet dancers rehearsing for *Macbeth*, with a special offer to attend a performance at His Majesty's Theatre in September (details of both offers below). These experiences offer wonderful opportunities to deepen our appreciation of the arts while enjoying the company of fellow members.

Whether you have been with us for many years or are reading our newsletter for the first time, thank you for your interest in ArtsNational Perth. We particularly look forward to welcoming you to our next lecture, which is to be held at the UWA Social Sciences Lecture Theatre. The subject, *Peggy Guggenheim: A Life of Collection*, explores Guggenheim's life and work and promises to be a fascinating insight into the woman and her collection (many of you will recall the *Peggy Guggenheim: A Collection in Venice* exhibition held at AGWA in 2010). Given the larger capacity auditorium, there is plenty of room for members and guests (booking details below). However, if you are attending, please arrive early to allow time for parking, and perhaps take the opportunity to visit the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery or enjoy a coffee at the UWA Club Café before the lecture.

Finally, our commitment to philanthropy continues to grow (see below for updates on the 2026 Youth Arts Award, and our contribution to Perth Symphony Orchestra's *Women on the Podium* program). We are always interested in hearing about individuals or organisations making a positive contribution through the arts, so if you have a suggestion for a future philanthropic initiative, please contact us at perth@artsnational.au.

Here's to an inspiring and enjoyable second half of the lecture year. I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event.

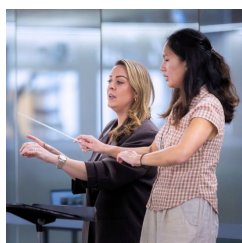
As our membership numbers have now reached venue capacity at the State Library theatre, I encourage you to register your attendance **early** for all lectures you will attend, and let us know if you subsequently become unavailable by emailing perth@artsnational.au. This allows us to better manage space 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 and we will assist you.

I look forward to welcoming you to a lecture soon.

ArtsNational Perth in Action

ArtsNational Perth's Youth Scholar for 2026



At our 30 May lecture we were delighted to introduce **Aerin Chai**, who in March had been awarded the ArtsNational Perth Youth Scholarship for Perth Symphony Orchestra's **Women on the Podium (WOTP)** Program. Those in attendance at the lecture were invited by Catherine Henwood, CEO of Perth Symphony Orchestra to witness Aerin and the other 2026 WOTP scholars at a conducting symposium the following week, under the direction of internationally **renowned Perth conductor, and WOTP Ambassador, Jessica Gethin.**

This is real-world, professional conductor training, and the only program of its kind in Australia!

Aerin is pictured here with Jess, and those present were impressed with Aerin's potential. More information on PSO's Women on the Podium program can be found [here](#).

Youth Art Awards 2026 Art Competition

Nancy Hourani



It is with great excitement that I announce our 2026 Youth Art Competition. The competition is open to all children in years 5 and 6 in State Primary Schools, it is an online competition where students' artwork can be uploaded. The competition is now open and closes on 1 st September 2026, winners will be presented on our final lecture 31st October 2026 at the State Library. There are six categories, with a total of \$4500 in vouchers to be won. I encourage you to share this information with your family and friends; they can find out more about the competition by clicking this [link](#). There are already a few submissions but there is plenty of time before the competition ends. If you would like to have a look or even vote for your favourite piece you can do so by clicking this [link](#).

I am quite passionate about supporting our youth in the arts, and understand firsthand the impact of encouragement, support and nurturing our young artists. Our son's artistic talent was recognised by his Year 2 schoolteacher and she suggested we encourage and support his talent. When he was 10 years old, he entered a competition at the Perth Royal Show and won first place. His artwork was of a cat called Pip. At age 18 he commenced a 3-year Degree in Florence at The Florence Academy of Art and then went on to complete a Masters at the Kings Foundation School of Traditional Art in London. He is currently aged 27 and completing further studies in Rome. So, you just never know what journey lies ahead with support and encouragement. You can see some of his work at www.yusefhourani.com.



If you have any questions, please email youtharts@artsnationalperth.au or we can have a chat at the next lecture.

Support our Youth Arts Award through this special fundraiser

We are delighted to announce a wonderful fundraising initiative in support of the **Youth Arts Award (YAA)**, thanks to the generosity of ArtsNational Perth Committee member **Desmond Freeman AM**.

Desmond has pledged to donate **\$30 from every sale** of his award-winning *Great Cities of the World* books to the Youth Arts Award. These beautifully produced, 80-page hardbound volumes feature his exquisite pen-and-ink drawings of **Venice, Paris, Rome** and **New York**, accompanied by carefully chosen quotations and poems that enrich each collection.



Available exclusively to ArtsNational members, their friends, and lecture attendees for **\$90 per book**, the series has received international acclaim. The **Venice** volume won the **Gold Medal for Best Independently Produced Art Book** in New York in 2017, and this month the **New York** volume received the same prestigious **Gold Medal at the 2026 awards**.



Also available is a luxurious boxed set of **20 full-colour postcards** featuring artwork from the *Venice, Paris* and *Rome* books. Priced at **\$45**, these make an ideal gift, with **\$15 from every set sold** also donated to the Youth Arts Award.

Books and postcard sets will be available for purchase at all upcoming ArtsNational lectures. Every purchase directly supports the next generation of young artists through the Youth Arts Award.

Our sincere thanks to Desmond for this generous contribution to our fundraising efforts.

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 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.



PEGGY GUGGENHEIM: A Life of Collecting

Saturday 25 July, 2.00-3:30pm, Venue Change – now UWA Social Science Lecture Theatre



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](#)

Saturday 29 August: Tessa Boase

Tessa Boase is a freelance journalist, author, lecturer and campaigner with an interest in uncovering the stories of invisible women from the 19th and early 20th-centuries. She is the author of three books on social history.



FASHION, FEATHERS AND FEMINISM: Women's Fight for Change

Saturday 29 August, 1.00-2:30pm State Library of WA theatrette



This lecture shines a light on the intriguing story of women's love affair with plumage.

Moving from a polite Victorian tea party to an egret hunt in a Florida swamp; from a suffragette 'monster rally' to a milliner's dusty workshop - a world where every woman, of every class wore a hat.

[Book Here](#)

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S TALE: The Women Who Really Ran the English Country House

Saturday 29 August, 3.00-4:30pm, State Library of WA theatrette

Working as a housekeeper was one of the most prestigious jobs in the 19th and early 20th century. However, the real-life housekeeper was up against capricious mistresses, low pay, no job security and gruelling physical labour.

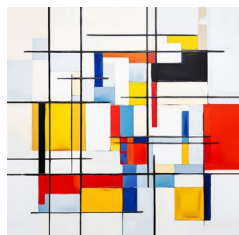
Delving into secret diaries, unpublished letters and service archives of our stately homes, Tessa Boase tells poignant and dramatic stories about some of Britain's most prominent households.

[Book Here](#)



Saturday 26 September: Mariska Beekenkamp-Wladimiroff

After graduating with her BA and MA in Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Arts, Mariska started her company, Art Historical London, offering art historical lectures, museum visits, courses, tours, travel and events from Amsterdam, London, New York and online. She also teaches on the public program of the Dulwich Picture Gallery and for the New York Adventure Club in the USA.



MONDRIAN'S EVOLUTION INTO ABSTRACTION

Saturday 26 September 2.00 – 3.30 PM, State Library of WA theatrette

Mondriaan is forever known in history as the artist who created the extremely recognisable elementary colour field paintings. He started creating these kinds of paintings around 1920. What many do not realise is that by then he had already 30 years of being a figurative artist under his belt. This lecture follows this evolution, his self-discovery, and his belief in a new world order.

[Book Here](#)

Saturday 31 October: Dr Graham Jones MBE



Dr Jones retired from the British Army as Senior Director of Music, Household Division; and Director of Music, Coldstream Guards. He pioneered a music education program with the University of Salford for military musicians resulting in a new Master of Music in Performance degree. He was made a Member of the British Empire for outstanding service to military music in 1993.

THE MUSIC OF THE CARIBBEAN

Saturday 31 October 2.00 – 3.30 PM, State Library of WA theatrette

The effects of colonialism have played an intrinsic part in the musical culture of the Caribbean.

They are a synthesis of African, European, Indian and indigenous influences. Each island has its own complex rhythm patterns and styles. This lecture reveals origins of calypso on Saint Kitts, jwé on Saint Lucia and much, much more in a lighthearted insight lecture full of the sounds of the Caribbean.

[Book Here](#)



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

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by Kay Campbell: ArtsNational Margaret River Chair



As in Perth, **Charlie Hall's** double lecture on 27 July marks the start of the second half of our 2026 program, and we're delighted to be welcoming him. Based in London and Venice, Charlie brings with him a genuine love of art history, and infectious enthusiasm; qualities that make his lectures a pleasure to attend.

His first talk, *Florence and the Italian Renaissance*, explores the factors that led to Florence becoming the centre of the Renaissance, offering insight into one of the most transformative periods in art. [CLICK HERE](#) for tickets.

This is followed by *Peggy Guggenheim – A Life of Collecting*, tracing Peggy's journey as she began collecting in Europe before World War II and went on to build an extraordinary legacy, still celebrated today in both New York and her beloved Venice. [CLICK HERE](#) for tickets.

These promise to be two fascinating and enriching lectures.

We're also pleased that our next visiting international lecturer, **Tessa Boase**, will present *Fashion, Feathers and Feminism*. This talk looks at how a fashion trend had a profound effect on birdlife, and how a determined women's movement brought about change. [CLICK HERE](#) for tickets.

If you missed these lectures in Perth and are down south or would like to experience them again, we are very happy to welcome ArtsNational Perth members to join us. Perth member tickets are just \$10. Or maybe you know a "Down South" local who would enjoy the lectures so please share. Guest tickets are \$30. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Meet Our Members

Our New Committee Members

Terri Starcevich



My passion for the arts has been constant throughout my life. It led me to join the committee of Arts National Perth, where I enjoy supporting and promoting the appreciation of art, culture and lifelong learning with the community. I also have extensive experience in marketing, having worked for Frank Baden-Powell Enterprises, New Idea magazine, Ansett Airlines and through the successful promotion and development of my own businesses.

As a seventh-generation Western Australian entrepreneur, inventor and business executive, I bring a strong legacy of innovation, leadership and community service to the committee.

As Managing Director of StarStaff International Recruitment, I have built a reputation for excellence in executive recruitment, strategic workforce solutions and business development. Inspired by my aunt, Coralie Condon OAM, a pioneering Western Australian theatre and television entrepreneur, I have developed a career focused on connecting people and creating opportunities.

My family heritage includes the pioneering Starcevich and Sweeny families, whose contributions helped shape Western Australia's Mid-West and Wheatbelt regions, and my ancestor, James Patrick Sweeny, accompanied John Forrest on the landmark 1874 expedition to the Overland Telegraph Line.

An internationally recognised, award-winning inventor, I received a Gold Medal at the International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva. I am also deeply committed to philanthropy and humanitarian service and have been appointed an Officer of the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem.

Shirely Vine

I'm the new ArtsNational Perth Treasurer, an artist and art aficionado. I was so pleased to attend my first lecture, The History of Self Portraiture, and even more pleased when it was announced that the society needed more committee members.

I have seven years' experience as Treasurer for the largest cycling club in WA and for a WA RSL Branch. I've been on many committees in varying roles including Chair of the Special Olympics, Vice Chair and Secretary of the East Perth Community Group, and I recently ran for Lord Mayor of Perth.

My background spans 20+ years as a commercial lawyer and executive manager (MBA) in varying sectors and settings. I am looking forward to assisting the committee governing the organisation, and generally adding to the collective knowledge built up over the past few years.



Desmond Freeman AM

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

You can **read more about me** in a feature article on page 5 of our [Autumn Newsletter](#).



Peter Farr



I joined the inaugural ADFAS Perth Committee as Treasurer (2019–2022), helping develop our Constitution and many of our start-up policies and financial procedures. Our first event, a sold-out double lecture by Hilary Kay, marked an exciting beginning for ADFAS Perth. I was elected back on to the ArtsNational Perth Committee at the 2026 AGM and am enjoying contributing once again, as we have a great team.

In 2021 I was elected to the national Executive Committee and served as National Treasurer from 2022 to 2025 - the first Perth member elected as a national office bearer. I also chaired the Rebranding Working Party (RWP), and it is most satisfying that the RWP developed our new name, ArtsNational, the tagline Connect • Enrich • Inspire, and that the beautiful surrealist inspired logo and other branding tools (which were produced in by a local Subiaco firm), were adopted across the organisation from December 2023.

On a national level, **I led the establishment of the ArtsNational Philanthropic Fund**, securing Tax Deductible Gift Recipient status from the ATO in 2023, and am delighted to announce that the Fund's first initiative, the **ArtsNational Emerging Artist Prize**.

Open to professional visual artists and tertiary art students aged 18–35, the prize recognises excellence in artistic practice rather than a single artwork. Applicants will submit three works, an artist statement and a proposal outlining how they would use the **\$20,000 prize** to advance their careers.

The judging panel features respected arts professionals Ron Ramsey, Kate Elsey and Leigh Capel, and the finalists and winner will be announced in early October.

This Fund has to date raised \$48,000, with the long-term goal of becoming self-sustaining. It also strengthens ArtsNational's commitment to supporting emerging artists and connecting them with a national network of informed and enthusiastic art supporters.

If you know an eligible artist, please encourage them to apply. Full details are available on the [ArtsNational website](#).



What's On

The **Margaret River Open Studios** event is being held 12-23 September - <https://mrropenstudios.com.au/>. 154 Artists in the region are opening their studios – We can certainly recommend a visit to the region over this time and enjoy the myriad art on offer.



Once Known Exhibition Tour @ Old Perth Boys' School

Fri, 24 Jul, 11am - 12pm AWST John Curtin Gallery, 139 St Georges Terrace

Free registration, but [Get Tickets Here](#)

An opportunity for those who missed our tour earlier in the year. *Once Known* presents reproductions of the delicate and culturally significant artworks created by Aboriginal children forcibly taken from their families and detained at the Carrolup Native Settlement in the 1940s.

This unique collection of artworks was lost overseas for more than 40 years, and returned home to Noongar Boodja in 2013. The works stand as a testament to the creativity and resilience of the Carrolup children, offering a glimpse into their lived experience and their enduring connection to Country. *Once Known* reminds us that each child had a name, a family and a story.

Through the beauty of art and recognition of place and time, these tours will offer a glimpse into the past and remind us of our journey together on a path of reconciliation. Tours will encompass the history of the Old Perth Boys' School in the context of its colonial history, and highlight the story of the Carrolup Child Artists and the purpose of the *Once Known* exhibition.

Tour led by Wajarri Nyarlu/Menang Yok Patricia Ryder, JCG Community Engagement Coordinator.



Opera is full of stories about adversity, doubt and social pressure, and this **uplifting documentary film** brings those themes together beautifully. It follows the true story of two Samoan/New Zealand boys as they move from singing in the village church choir to winning international acclaim — a genuinely inspiring journey, and one that may well have you reaching for a handkerchief. Coming to Luna Leederville (<https://lunapalace.com.au/>) from 23 July, this is a highly recommended film where opera, theatre and human interest come together in a memorable way.



Watercolours WA's next exhibition is the **Annual Awards Exhibition** at Perth City Farm from 7 - 9 August 2026. Part of the Perth 'Cultural Calendar', showcasing the very best in contemporary Western Australian watercolour painting. www.watercolourswa.org.au

A Book Review



May We Feed the King by Rebecca Perry Reviewed by Peta Beasley

An unnamed curator and archivist, a king and a 750-year-old castle may not seem like the ingredients for a gripping novel, but Rebecca Perry brings them together superbly in her debut novel *May We Feed the King*. In the final pages the Curator warns the awaiting visitors to the castle to "[l]isten for everything and, above all, pay attention." It's advice which readers needed right at the beginning! This is a novel which requires your full attention to every tiny, even seemingly insubstantial detail. Like the Curator, we need to be fully immersed in piecing together the life of this unnamed King who, we discover, while only being a footnote in history, was in fact a person who loved and felt and longed, just as we do.

Approaching the 750th anniversary of a medieval castle, an unnamed, non-gendered Curator overcoming some recent personal grief is tasked with dressing each room, recreating 'just left the room' scenes for public viewing. The castle Archivist, also unnamed and non-gendered, is appointed to assist the Curator with sifting through the extensive historical records to find a 'gateway' to unlock the gap between then and now.

May We Feed the King is a tactile, sensual novel narrated in short vignettes. An award-winning poet, Perry creates prose that's evocative and lyrical. Her narration is also oblique: nothing is fully revealed; instead, we are encouraged to peer through keyholes, curtained windows, doors slightly ajar. Characters are obscured by shadows, conversations are heard in snippets, letters only partly revealed. Like the Curator and the Archivist, we must find a way of 'knowing' the King: his likes, dislikes, predilections, desires and what makes his life meaningful. The King's reign is short; in fact his reign occupies just a single page of text in the castle archives. The Curator tells us that '[i]t's important to say that I cried, I wept, when I saw it. What a reduction of a life.' But there is something in this brief record which spurs the Curator's imagination. Moreover, this King begins to be more than a shadowy figure lurking in the shadows; he becomes a physical reality for the Curator. Boundaries begin to blur; the past becomes vividly present. What happens in the King's final days, however, remains a mystery. Like the Curator, we are left without a resolution. But this is far from being an unsatisfactory ending; as the review in the *Guardian* puts it: 'The vacuum where an ending should be is what keeps his [the King's] memory alive and breathing.'

One of the novel's most powerful metaphors is that of food. As the novel's title suggests, while this young King is powerless to do anything of his own accord or without surveillance, his one weapon is the refusal of food. The King has no appetite for ruling, no appetite for deciding the fate of his subjects, no appetite for being a pawn in the Court's gambit. But instead of being a symbol of his confinement, the control of his appetite ultimately becomes a symbol of the nourishment needed for his survival.



Like the genre of poetry, what remains unsaid in the novel is vital; it is within those quiet gaps and silences that we as readers find the bridge to understanding. As I read the final sentence, I took a deep breath and realised that I needed to have listened to every single clue and paid attention to each detail, no matter how perfunctory they seemed. A challenging read, but entirely worthwhile.

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

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

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ARTSNATIONAL PERTH INFORMATION

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For more regular news, subscribe to our eNews [here](#) and/or join the ArtsNational Perth Facebook group [here](#) where you will also find our events' social photos and local arts news and views.

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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Website: www.artsnational.au/societies/perth/



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