

21st
CENTURY
CAOS
A Forward Plan for
Contemporary Art

CAOs = Contemporary Art Organisations Australia

- 1 24HR Art
- 2 Artspace Visual Arts Centre
- 3 Australian Centre for Photography (ACP)
- 4 Australian Experimental Art Foundation (AEAF)
- 5 Canberra Contemporary Art Space (CCAS)
- 6 Centre for Contemporary Art of SA (CACSA)
- 7 Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP)
- 8 Contemporary Art Services Tasmania (CAST)
- 9 Gertrude Contemporary
- 10 Institute of Modern Art (IMA)
- 11 Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA)
- 12 Performance Space

- 3,000,000+ separate audience visits since 2007
- 43 CAOs exhibitions tour to regional galleries since 2007
- 42 international exhibitions of Australian artists' work 2006–2009
- 6,000,000+ web visits each year
- 1500+ Australian artists exhibit new work each year
- 200+ exhibitions each year



Contemporary Art Organisations Australia (CAOs) is a national network of twelve independent art spaces triennially funded by state and federal governments. CAOs organisations produce, present and interpret artwork created by living artists.

CAOs is a twenty-five year old self-sustaining network representing an unparalleled collective experience of contemporary art practices and audience engagement around Australia.

21st Century CAOs—A Forward Plan for Contemporary Art emerges from a year of significant reflection, research and debate—a process of prioritising issues, and planning for change.

This publication introduces CAOs as a network, its member organisations and its place in the ecology of the Australian visual arts. It documents some of the collective successes of the CAOs organisations through statistics and case studies. And it presents five urgent recommendations addressing INCOME AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTS, and AUDIENCE DIVERSIFICATION AND ENGAGEMENT.

CAOs gives artists the space to play, to experiment, to take risks. To meet their audiences face to face in a flexible, rigorous and supportive environment. Without it Australia would lose its breeding ground for experimentation, and endanger its capacity to generate the 'new'.

Tracey Moffatt, Artist

- Inspiring audiences with great contemporary art, new ideas and experiences.
- Supporting diverse Australian artists throughout their careers.
- Building national and international markets and opportunities.

I can experience innovations in contemporary art years before it's collected and exhibited by the larger art museums.

Canberra Contemporary Arts Space audience member

Contemporary Art, Culture & CAOs

Contemporary art is work created by living artists engaging with their social and cultural surrounds. Often collapsing the boundaries between conventional artistic disciplines, it combines variations of sculpture, photography, moving image, live art and sound.

Great contemporary art is innovative, challenging participants and audiences to shift their perceptions. This fosters new ways of thinking at both individual and broader societal levels, contributing to building creative communities—adept at risk-taking, problem solving and committed to life long learning.¹

The past decade has seen enormous global growth in interest and support for creativity with contemporary art increasingly recognized as being key to economic and community revitalization, the development of regional identity and the building of a creative workforce. Healthy, flourishing cultures are those where community aspirations of creativity and innovation are manifest.²

As the media and market place have embraced new forms of artistic practice and presenting institutions have engaged audiences more vigorously, Australians now perceive the arts as being “more inclusive, more accessible, and less elitist.”³

The CAOs sector has been profoundly effective in generating opportunities for artists to produce new work through commissions, residencies and exhibitions Contemporary art generated through CAOs organisations feeds into the broader visual arts arena—including the commercial sector, regional and state galleries and museums and of course, Biennale events both here and abroad.

David Elliott, Artistic Director, 17th Biennale of Sydney

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Contemporary Art, Culture & CAOs | 3 |
| Recommendations: | |
| 1 Fair Fees for Artists | 9 |
| 2 Career Pathways for Artists | 11 |
| 3 Expanding Horizons—Markets & Opportunities | 13 |
| 4 Getting the Word Out | 14 |
| 5 Engaging Audiences | 16 |
| Addressing Equity | 19 |
| Investing in Success | 21 |
| Artists Income & Careers | 22 |
| Engaging Audiences | 25 |
| CAOs Across the Country | 28 |

¹ The emerging field of Neuroesthetics suggests both creating and interpreting art stimulates synapse activity and creates new cognitive connections

² Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2002

³ *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts*, Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney, 2010, p.14

A complex ecology

With one winner being selected for the Qantas Foundation Art Award from each of Australia's states and territories, CAOs has played a key role in identifying emerging talent throughout Australia... It has been ideal to partner with eight of the members of CAOs in recognition of the fact that many Australian emerging contemporary artists had their first professional exhibition experience with such members.

Shirley Davies, Chief Executive,
Qantas Foundation

Contemporary Art Organisations support artists in a way that is different to the support from State and regional galleries, who are concerned with looking after collections and developing exhibition programs. This makes CAOs extremely unique in terms of its charter and very important for artists across Australia.

Karen Quinlan, Director,
Bendigo Art Gallery

Contemporary art in Australia exists within a complex ecology of social, economic and organisational relationships. The strength of this ecology depends on diversity—diversity of practice, diversity of audiences, and diversity of interaction between artists and the organisations that support them.

Artists sustain their practice by maintaining simultaneous productive relationships across the ecology—with peer networks, art schools and universities, and producing and presenting organisations that connect their work with audiences and new markets. Many artists have interdependent relationships with both not-for-profit and commercial parts of the sector, recognizing that each relationship contributes to their career development and income generation in quite different ways.

Within the visual arts, CAOs organisations are key to generating new work, building a context for that work and connecting artists with audiences.

As a network, CAOs offers a forum for collaboration across the country—for knowledge sharing, peer support and for the strategic development of ideas.

Individual CAOs organisations (see pages 30–33) facilitate production, exhibition and interpretation of work by living artists. Working across installation, video, photography, performance, sound and interactive media they are independent, non-collecting and not-for-profit organisations.

Active hubs in their own locales, each organisation has a gallery or galleries where audiences experience new artworks and engage in public programs—talks, tours, forums and special events. Some have studios where artists create work onsite. Some present off-site events. Some have a café, a bookshop, or other social spaces. Others run regular open courses and workshops. All produce catalogues to accompany exhibitions and some publish regular critical writing on broader cultural issues.

Some CAOs organisations are the only public gallery, outside of the state-based institution in their city.

The benefits CAOs offers to Australian artists and audiences—is its diversity. Each CAOs organisation operates in a different geographic, physical, stylistic and conceptual space, enriching the development of arts and culture as well as a range of communities.

Changing landscape

Since the distribution of additional funds through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy (VACS)—an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, in 2004 and 2008, the entire visual arts sector has enjoyed increased growth, stability, visibility and audience engagement. Between 2004 and 2008, CAOs organisations have successfully:

Increased audiences by 114%

Increased direct support for artists by 51%

Increased philanthropic investment by 99%

Produced more ambitious professional programs

Diversified and deepened audience engagement

Extended and developed international networks



Since 2004 the landscape has changed, exposing some gaps and opportunities in the current visual arts ecology. Artists Run Initiatives are more resourced to offer hands on exhibiting opportunities to artists. Biennales and spectacle-based events have programmed more work by Australian artists. Independent of VACS, some local governments have made substantial investments in contemporary arts infrastructure and programming.

Capitalising on the growth and learning during this period, CAOs is poised for change. Prompted by increased audience demand, artists' expectations and growing international interest—these changes are key to the health and profile of the Australian visual arts sector.

Without strategic change, Australia will begin to experience real losses.

In contrast to professions requiring a similar amount of study and training, who have experienced substantial increases, visual artists' incomes have remained static in real terms since 1993.⁴ The risk of failing to invest more in artists' fees and careers is the loss of our brightest and best mid-career artists to other countries and contexts.

Without enhanced reciprocal international partnerships, our artists will not access the markets and opportunities required to sustain a viable and vibrant practice and Australia's cultural production and international image will be diminished.

Without engaging diverse audiences further, Australia will miss the opportunities offered by the current wave of interest in creative arts and social media, especially by young people. Connecting Australians with local and regional contemporary art, artists and public programs is an investment in the nation's creativity and innovation.

CAOs has the collective experience and capacity to drive this strategic national agenda—delivering more to artists and audiences across the country through efficient and responsive member organisations in each state and territory.

The ANU School of Art has enjoyed productive relations with our local CAOs organisation—Canberra Contemporary Art Space (CCAS) for many years. Like other CAOs organisations, CCAS provides practical experience, advice and opportunities for graduates wishing to develop viable careers in the visual arts.

Gordon Bull, Head, School of Art
Australian National University

⁴ Throsby, David, Anita Zednik, *Do you really expect to get paid?* An economic study of professional artists in Australia, Australia Council for the Arts, 2010, Sydney (Table 76)

Recommendations

Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy, Primary Producers, Performance Space 2007 Photo: Liz Ham, Artists represented by Gallery Barry Keldoullis, Sydney

Fair fees for Artists

Paying fair artists' fees is a priority for all CAOs organisations. Fees have increased since 2004, but not across the board—and not yet meeting the benchmarks recommended by National Association of Visual Artists (NAVA).⁵ The limited capacity of the smaller⁶ and/or geographically disadvantaged organisations, to pay artists' fees is a major issue, with negotiations around project resources often resulting in fees being eroded in favour of production.

CAOs members value artists' work and urgently prioritise increasing and benchmarking their fees across the country. To avoid reducing current investment in the other critical areas of support for artists—production, transport, exhibition and publishing costs, this requires additional funding.

Recommendation 1: Fair Fees

The CAOs sector is supported to pay Artists' Fees of at least \$2,500 per exhibition⁷ delivered in a tiered process:

- the nine small and/or geographically disadvantaged organisations are subsidised for the full costs of artists' fees in addition to current levels of funding⁸
- the three remaining organisations are offered a negotiated amount calculated on subsidizing 'the gap' between current investment in fees and the new CAOs benchmark.⁹

Investment: \$455,000 per annum¹⁰

⁵ Artists' Scales of Fees & Wages, NAVA, Sydney, 2009, p.13
⁶ Those in receipt of less than \$200,000 funding from Visual Arts Board of Australia Council
⁷ Just above 2009 NAVA recommended fees of \$2,300, for galleries not engaged in selling work
⁸ 24HR Art, AEA, CACSA, CCP, CAST, CCAS, Gertrude, Performance Space & PICA
⁹ Artspace, ACP & IMA
¹⁰ 152 exhibitions at full subsidy \$2,500 & 60 exhibitions at gap subsidy of \$1,250

Career Pathways for Artists

Established artists typically work between CAOs organisations, regional galleries, commercial spaces and the larger state based museums around the country. Early and mid-career artists do not have such visibility, mobility or networks.

To address the lack of formal career pathways for artists, CAOs prioritises a series of development commissions of \$35,000 per annum for two years.

Six commissioned artists would be supported to develop a fast-tracked career-advancing program that would leverage resources from both within and beyond CAOs. The programs will allow talented Australian artists to be supported and promoted by three or more CAOS organisations and their communities around Australia. The pathways will be specifically negotiated with each artist and may involve studio residencies, inclusion in group exhibitions, the presentation of solo exhibitions or projects, participation in public programs and the production and distribution of a publication.

What might take an artist ten or more years to broker themselves will be undertaken in two years using this new collaborative program aimed at advancing our most promising artists.

Recommendation 2: Career Pathways—Development Commissions

CAOs is funded to support the career development of six artists on two-year Development Commissions with the aim of increasing the artists' mobility, profile and networks across Australia. Commissioned artists would be supported to undertake residencies away from home, create and exhibit new work and produce a catalogue.

Investment: six commissions over four years, each at \$35,000/yr for two years.

Totalling \$105,000 per annum



Expanding Horizons

New Markets & Opportunities

Given the size of Australia's population and therefore small domestic market for contemporary art, it is imperative to enhance Australian artists' careers by brokering international opportunities and generating new markets for their work.

Offering artists international contexts for the production and presentation of their work contributes to their income and broadens their conceptual realm. It builds new audiences and markets for that individual artists' work, and for Australian visual arts and culture more broadly.

Over the last decade, CAOs members have regularly worked with international peers to host residencies, exchanges and exhibitions, pioneering many new international relationships deployed in biennales and other major art events.

Brokering partnerships with peer organisations in other countries takes years of research and negotiation. Reciprocity is critical to success. Negotiating bilateral initiatives is currently hampered by a lack of lead-time and capacity to match partner countries' investment. This has a negative impact on international relationships and perceptions.

Building arts organisations' capacity to initiate and respond to international invitations and partnerships quickly—albeit strategically, is crucial to generating and sustaining international opportunities for artists and expanding the markets for Australian artists and their work.

CAOs recommends a series of initiatives to enhance the capacity of both member organisations and the broader visual arts sector to develop artists' careers and expand the market for their work.

Recommendation 3A: Visiting Curators

CAOs is supported to drive a collaborative Visiting Curators Program to kick-start new and deepen existing strategic relationships. CAOs will strategically prioritise across regions, areas of practice and scale of institutions—inviting a range of guests from biennale directors to early career curators and cultural producers. This national approach will be efficient, collegiate and inclusive of peers beyond the CAOs network. It will fuel longer-term visits and relationships and increase capacity to deliver artists new career opportunities and markets.

Investment: \$120,000 per annum

Recommendation 3B: International Opportunities Fund

The Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council's Significant International Opportunities Fund is increased by \$300,000 per annum (to \$500,000) to support a greater diversity of International projects.

Investment: \$300,000 per annum

Recommendation 3C: Strategic International Focus

The Australia Council introduces a new tier of support for International cultural exchange and market development,¹¹ by offering longer-term support to ten VACS clients in the small to medium sector to pursue a strategic international focus. Offering sustained support of \$40,000 per annum to each organisation for four years will facilitate increased opportunity to expand international markets for Australian artists and leverage philanthropic and international investment.

Investment: \$400,000 per annum

¹¹ Modelled on Market Development and Theatre Board's 'International Status' program for triennially funded theatre companies

Getting the word out

A rich array of publications on contemporary Australian art and artists is produced every year by exhibiting organisations across the country. However, currently there is no effective means for their national distribution.

The value of effective distribution is in the dissemination of contemporary art, culture and ideas and the support it provides in the development of artists' careers. Comprehensive national distribution of contemporary art publications is a priority—maximising the educational, promotional and development potential of this publishing resource.

CAOs proposes establishing a contemporary art publications distribution unit. Established and overseen by IMA and Artspace with their extensive publishing experience, it would be based at Artspace in Sydney. By building relationships with publishers and retailers in Australia and New Zealand, the unit will implement a comprehensive strategy for distribution.

Publishing organisations serviced by this distribution unit include contemporary art spaces, larger artist-run initiatives, media art organisations, university art galleries and museums, state galleries and major institutions, biennales, major events, and private foundations.

Recommendation 4: Publications Distribution Unit

CAOs recommends the Federal Government invest in a Publications Distribution Unit based at Artspace in Sydney, to strategically distribute contemporary art publications. Capitalising on the resource of existing and new publications created across the sector, this centralised distribution plan positions one part-time staff member in a major urban centre to maintain relationships with retailers around Australasia.
Investment: \$60,000 in year 1 & \$40,000 per annum for the next 3 years totaling \$45,000 per annum over 4 years.

Recommendations



Engaging Audiences

Over the last three years, more than three million Australians engaged with exhibitions in CAOs galleries around the country. 43 exhibitions produced by CAOs organisations toured to regional centres across all states and territories attracting audiences in excess of 400,000.

While CAOs organisations have longstanding relationships with loyal audiences who frequently attend programs and exhibitions, they also attract substantial new audiences each year (demonstrated by the 35% first time visitors between 2006 and 2008).

Audience expectations and engagement with all art is changing globally. Access to global digital content at home, along with the re-emergence of a Do-It-Yourself philosophy, has created an increased expectation of interaction and agency.

Developing strategies and programs for deeper engagement with diverse audiences is a high priority, requiring additional resources and staff.

CAOs is well positioned to undertake research, development and implementation of a range of bespoke approaches to audience engagement and public programs.

Individually, organisations may pursue innovations in areas of relevance to their audiences through public programs, digital distribution, social networking strategies, multi-lingual communication, participatory work, or immersion programs. As a network, CAOs provides an excellent peer forum for sharing research, identifying best practice and adapting programs across state and territory borders.

Recommendation 5: Audience Engagement Positions

CAOs recommends that the Federal, State and Territory Governments invest the equivalent of a full-time position and small project budget in each organisation to be dedicated to developing and implementing existing and new strategies for audience engagement specific to local circumstances and contexts.

Investment \$100,000 per organisation per annum totalling \$1,200,000 per annum



A case study Culture Trackers

No one has ever taught us, we just learn Bininj (Aboriginal) way, so this is a good opportunity... It's unusual just camping with Balanda (non-Aboriginal people), just learning and sharing, just relax and paint. I usually just do red ochre, this one I'm doing now has lots of colours...

Gabriel Maralngurra, Artist

In 2006, 24HR Art conducted an artist camp, *Culture Trackers*, near the remote Indigenous community of Gunbalanya in Western Arnhem Land. Participating artists were Graham Badari, Simon Badari, Gershon Garlmgarr, Linde Ivimey, Bardayal Nadjamerrek, Hanna Nawarridj, Roslyn Nawarridj, Nick Mangan, Gabriel Maralngurra, Kate Rohde, Peter Walsh, Guan Wei and arts writer Ashley Crawford. Camping together in the escarpment country for two weeks, the artists shared their approaches and influences, experimented with materials and ideas and produced new works in-situ.

For the Indigenous participants, it was an opportunity for artists living on a remote community to witness contemporary art practices from 'outside', to form relationships with non-Indigenous artists and to exchange methodologies and artistic concerns.

For the non-Indigenous artists, meeting Indigenous people and experiencing Kunwinjku art and culture on traditionally owned country was an exceptional experience that has permeated their work over time.

A rare agreement was struck whereby Gabriel Maralngurra and Graham Badari gave permission to Guan Wei and Peter Walsh to use some of their iconic motifs. This exchange informed Wei's solo exhibitions over the coming years including *Other Histories: Guan Wei's Fable for a Contemporary World* at the Powerhouse Museum, and *A Distant Land* at CACSA.



Graham Badari, Gershon Garlmgarr, Simon Badari, Steve Eland and Gabriel Maralngurra, a planning session at *Culture Trackers* artist camp in Western Arnhem Land. Image: Courtesy of 24HR Art

Addressing Equity

The heavy lifting of a vibrant visual culture is in the unsteady and the tumultuous, in spaces electric with the risk of failure and prickling with unease... CAOs is unparalleled in the provision of a rigorous testing ground for the development of new work.

Donal Fitzpatrick,
Head, School of Design and Art,
Curtin University of Technology

In addition to the five recommendations, CAOs acknowledges that our member organisations operate in disparate circumstances, receiving vastly different levels of investment in infrastructure from VACS, the Australia Council and State and Territory governments. The six smaller organisations: 24 HR Art; Australian Experimental Art Foundation; Canberra Contemporary Art Space; Gertrude Contemporary; Centre for Contemporary Art of SA; and Centre for Contemporary Photography are particularly vulnerable to ever increasing costs of basic operation.

Whilst they all perform efficiently and deliver outcomes outstripping the level of investment they receive, this situation is increasingly unsustainable. Basic operational issues such as being able to pay rent, turn on the gallery air conditioning in plus 40 temperatures, or employ someone to market the program are often beyond budget.



Chris Hanrahan, *Creation Science*, Installation view Gertrude Contemporary, 2010, Image courtesy of the artist. Photo: Andrew Curtis

A case study Shaun Gladwell on CAOs

My visibility as an artist increased significantly with the substantial publication and the broader public it attracted both at Artpace and when it toured regionally. There's no doubt it paved the way to my being chosen for the Venice Biennale.

Artist Shaun Gladwell

“Showing my work in CAOs spaces is where I get my critical engagement with audiences. There's a lot of crossover audience between CAOs, State Galleries and Museums and the commercial sector, but the CAOs audience is the most critical. They deliberately foster a critical community—which is particularly important in Australia—it means you can grow as an artist and have a greater understanding of the local, national and international context of your practice.”

Shaun's first encounter with a CAOs organisation was when he exhibited in *HATCHED: National Graduate Show*—Australia's most significant survey of emerging artists, in 1997 at PICA. “CAOs has offered me a series of ‘firsts’ throughout the different stages of my career. Showing at *HATCHED* was a formative experience—my first show outside of my hometown, and in a gallery that wasn't run by my peers.”

Shaun's first solo exhibition *Kickflipping Flâneur* was at Artpace in 2000 and he has since shown work at AEAF, IMA, PICA and Performance Space—sometimes solo and sometimes in group exhibitions showing a broader range of work from artists crossing mediums.

Shaun's last solo exhibition at Artpace in 2007 *In a Station of the Metro* showed some previous work alongside a new commission. “It was the first time I had an opportunity to see several of my works enmasse—in relation to each other, giving me a chance to reflect on a decade of practice. You don't get that opportunity elsewhere.”



Investing in success

CAOs organisations are funded by the Federal Government through the Australia Council—its arts funding and advisory body, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy—an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, and State and Territory Arts Departments.

They are supported by an enormous range of sponsors, philanthropists and donors—from personal donors to the middle range Private Ancillary Funds, to the larger national and international Foundations. These include: Pedro Meyer Foundation, Ishibashi Foundation, Ian Potter Foundation, Nelson Meers Foundation, Keir Foundation, Fogerty Foundation, Sidney Myer Fund, Gordon Darling Foundation, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Besen Family Foundation and Rio Tinto Foundation.

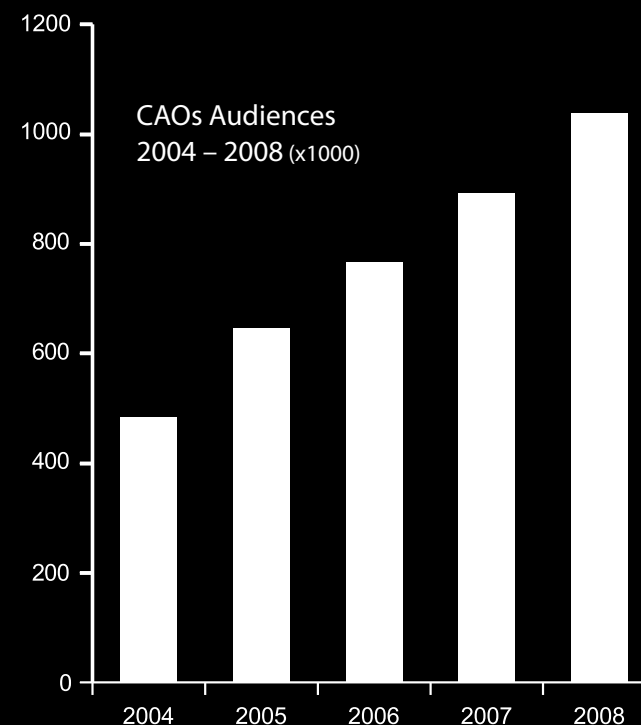
CAOs directors and staff maintain personal relationships with many of these partners offering close range engagement with artists and programs. Between 2004 and 2008, income generated from philanthropic partners increased by 99%.¹²

CAOs organisations are also particularly successful at securing support from international agencies including Alliance Française, Asialink, British Council, Bundeskanzleramt, Canada Council, Conaculta—The National Council for Culture and the Arts Mexico, Goethe Institute, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Japan Foundation, Mondriaan Foundation and Pro Helvetia.

All CAOs organisations have delivered substantial increases in audiences, more sophisticated programs and higher production values.

More than three million Australians engaged with exhibitions in CAOs galleries over the last three years. 43 exhibitions produced by CAOs toured to regional centres across all states and territories attracting regional audiences in excess of 400,000. CAOs organisations have both longstanding relationships with loyal audiences and attract substantial new audiences each year (demonstrated by 35% first time visits between 2006 and 2008).

It is clear that the CAOs organisations that received substantial additional resources increased their outputs exponentially¹³—leading to increased capacity to diversify investment and build audiences.



¹² Increasing from \$550,934 in 2004 to \$1,095,556 in 2008

¹³ Four CAOs orgs in receipt of substantial VACS assistance (Artpace, ACP, IMA & Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) who were a member of CAOS until 2010) account for more than 60% of audience and philanthropic increases

Artists' income & careers

Fair Fees & Career Pathways

CAOs curators identify and champion artists by producing and exhibiting their artwork in dynamic spaces of thought and feeling. They work with early, middle and late career artists—many over a lifetime.

Since 2004, CAOs organisations have significantly increased the number and scale of commissions for solo exhibitions.¹⁴ Higher artists fees and production budgets¹⁵ have enabled artists to increase both the conceptual and material ambition of their work, making them more competitive in the national and international contemporary art market.

A solo exhibition involves intensive long-term collaboration between curator and artist during research and production phases, to facilitate high quality work and innovative exhibition models. This speculative approach, that's simultaneously open and critical, has the potential to generate new ways of thinking and practicing. This is what attracts artists at all stages of their careers to work with CAOs organisations.

Public programs are produced around the work to promote it within and beyond the visual arts sector, building a context for the artist and their work. Catalogues ensure the exhibitions are well documented from a range of perspectives and assist in securing future touring and other opportunities for the artist.

The success of this deeper support is demonstrated by the successful national touring and major international opportunities offered to artists following CAOs solo exhibitions.

Examples include: Australian Centre of Photography's (ACP) regional tour of Trent Parke's *Minutes to Midnight* touring to Taree, Dubbo, Griffith, Geraldton, Newcastle and Mildura to an audience of 44,000; and Centre for Contemporary Photography's (CCP) tour of Anne Zahalka's *Hall of Mirrors*, touring to audiences of 50,000 in Warrnambool,

Ipswich, Bathurst, Mackay, Townsville, Riddoch, Wangaratta, Devonport and Gippsland with support from National Exhibitions Touring Support.

International opportunities include: Michael Goldberg 2009 Havana Biennial; Destiny Deacon 2008 Yokohama Triennale; Susan Norrie 2006 Busan Biennale South Korea & 2007 Venice Biennale; Callum Morton 2007 Venice Biennale; Philip Brophy 2006 Singapore Biennale; Ricky Swallow 2005 Venice Biennale; Craig Walsh & Shaun Gladwell 2005 Yokohama Triennale.

The critical success experienced by many CAOs artists is yet to be matched by the fees they are paid for their work. FAIR FEES FOR ARTISTS is a priority for CAOs with additional quarantined funding recommended to cover a minimum \$2,500 artists' fee for each exhibition.¹⁶

While there are many small and large organisations in the visual arts sector offering artists different kinds of opportunities, there are no formal CAREER PATHWAYS for artists. As a national network, CAOs is strategically placed to address this gap. CAOs prioritises a series of two-year DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS with the aim of increasing artists' mobility, profile and networks across Australia.

Connecting CAOs organisations with international partners has had profound impact on the development of intercultural understanding for artists and audiences. We have found this to be an extremely cost effective way of delivering big outcomes.

Allison Carroll, Director,
Asialink Arts

Expanding Horizons

CAOs members work strategically in the international arena, offering artists new contexts for the production and presentation of their work. This enhances their income and broadens their conceptual realm. It builds new audiences and markets for that individual artists' work, and for Australian visual arts and culture more broadly.

Working regularly with international peers to host residencies, exchanges and exhibitions, CAOs offers a diversity of regional, cultural and artistic approaches to international partners.

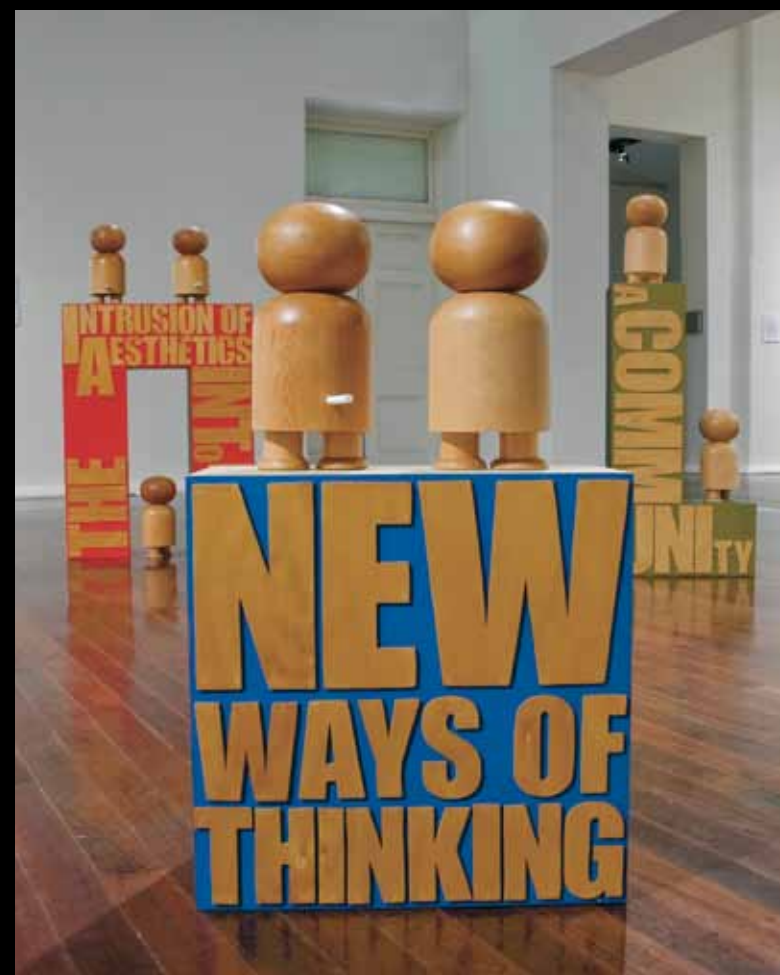
Between 2006 and 2009, CAOs organisations brokered 12 residencies and 42 exhibitions of Australian artists' work in 20 countries across Asia, the Pacific, Europe, North and South America.¹⁷ Developing international partnerships and projects takes years of research and collaboration. Always, reciprocity is critical to success. Negotiating bilateral initiatives is currently hampered by a lack of capacity to match partner countries' investment or by the time it takes to raise the funds to collaborate. This can have a negative impact on international relationships and perceptions.

CAOs prioritises a series of initiatives to enhance both member organisation's and the broader visual arts sector's capacity to match the investment of international partners in a timely fashion. This will be more efficient and will enable greater leverage of private monies.

Extending CAOs' capacity to initiate invitations to VISITING CURATORS, writers and cultural producers with the responsibility of hosting them around the sector will effectively develop new and deepen existing relationships.

Similarly, to facilitate more responsive and strategic bilateral project development, CAOs and other parts of the sector need to build the financial capacity to both initiate and respond to international partnership projects. CAOs encourages further investment in the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council's existing INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FUND and the introduction of a new tier of support in the Visual Arts that recognizes the leadership and capacity of organisations with existing STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL FOCUS.

Emily Floyd. Is art a truth procedure? Does it provide new ways of thinking about the world? 2004. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. Installation view of Better Places at PICA, 2008. Photo: Eva Fernandez



14 Group exhibitions increased by 17% since 2004, solo exhibitions increased by 44%
15 Artists fees increased 100% and production budgets by 17.5% between 2004 & 2008
16 Just above 2009 NAVA recommended fees of \$2,300, for galleries not selling work
17 Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Austria, France, Italy, Macedonia, Serbia, England, Ireland, USA, Mexico, Fiji, New Caledonia

A case study

The Independence Project

“The focus of this strategy is Asia, as we’ve keen to build stronger relationships in our region. By accessing regional audiences in a strategic and sustained way, we aim to build a stronger profile and identity for Australian contemporary art. The important flipside of these goals is that our projects will also encourage Australian audiences a greater familiarity with and understanding of the cultures of our regional neighbours.”

Alexie Glass-Kantor, Director
Gertrude Contemporary

Gertrude Contemporary has developed a long-term international exhibition and cultural exchange program *The Independence Project*. Providing Australian artists with greater international opportunities—it assists them to develop long-term and sustainable careers.

The Independence Project consists of a series of bilateral exchanges with partner arts organisations in cities throughout Asia. Each exchange encompasses exhibitions, residencies, education programs, forums, artists’ retreats and publications. Exchanges have occurred in: Kuala Lumpur (2007/08); Singapore (2008/09); Beijing (2010/11) and forthcoming in Seoul (2011/12).

A reciprocal project, with equal creative input and outcomes in both countries, *The Independence Project* enables artists to create and present new and innovative work and provides audiences with a richer understanding of the many cultures of our region. It offers professional development, encourages critical discussion and interrogation of cultural stereotypes, promotes future collaborations and stronger ties with other countries and increases the profile of Australian artists and culture.

Australian artists who have participated in *The Independence Project* are: Richard Bell, Brook Andrew, Newell Harry, Zehra Ahmed, Tim Silver, David Griggs, A Constructed World, Helen Johnson, Sally Smart, Rammey Ramsey, Rusty Peters and Boatpeople.org

Participating Australian artist, Zehra Ahmed commented, “Whilst so much can be known about a place through indirect sources, nothing can substitute the experience of actually being there... Australia and Malaysia are both countries grappling with issues of social, ethnic and religious diversity and what it means to belong. The experience gave me new perspectives on how to approach my art practice... tell our stories... our collective history.”

Engaging Audiences

The production of quality publications on Australian art and artists is... absolutely the most effective way of creating and expanding audiences. CAOs organisations already produce a range of excellent books, monographs and catalogues. Being so closely involved in artists’ practices they are uniquely placed to grow publishing programs and distribution strategies to circulate this work more widely and effectively.

Lionel Bovier, Contemporary Arts
Publisher,
JRP|Ringier
[Zürich]

Getting the Word Out

Australian exhibiting organisations produce a rich array of publications on contemporary Australian art and artists annually. However, with no commercial distribution company committed to contemporary Australian art, most organisations, including major institutions, self-distribute their publications with limited effect.

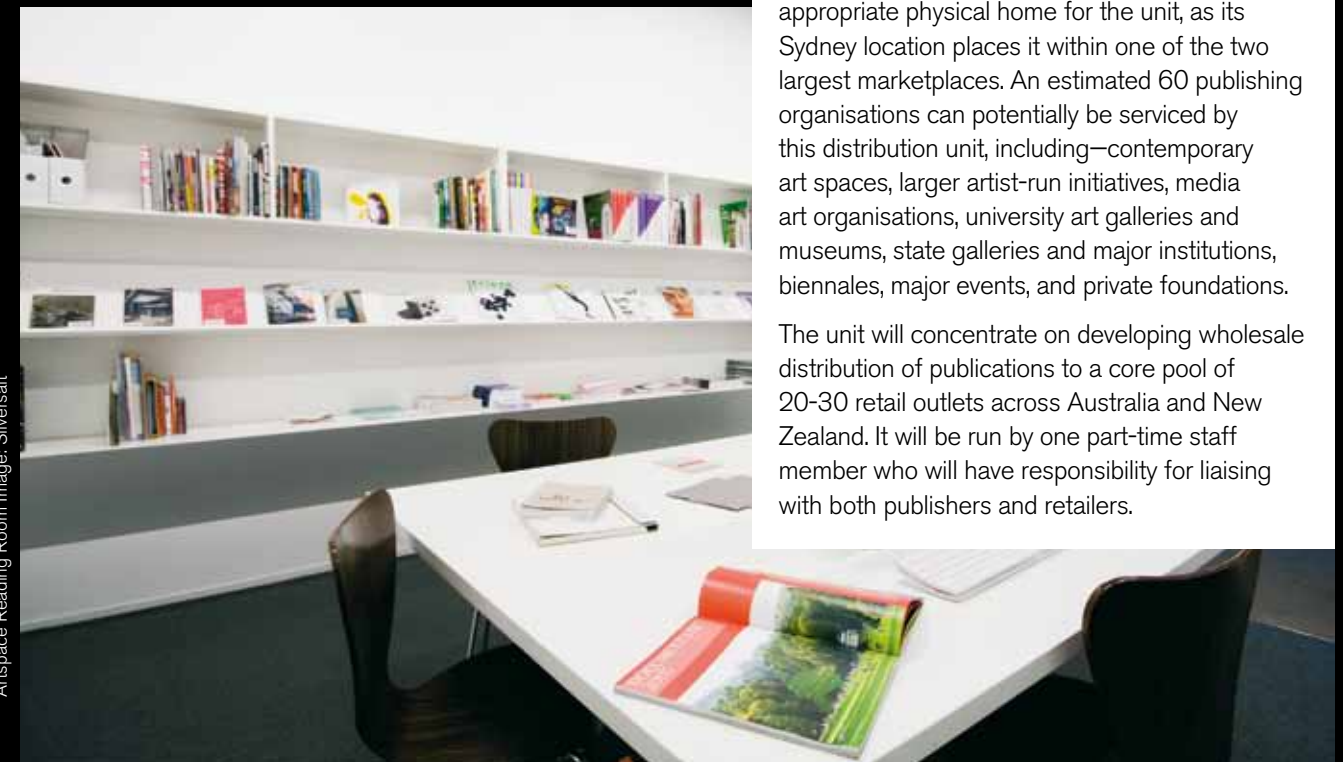
Comprehensive national distribution of Australian contemporary art publications is crucial in order to maximise the educational, promotional and development potential of this publishing resource.

Wider circulation is the key to meeting and developing an interested readership. Increased visibility of stock in retail outlets nationwide will both enhance the profile of Australian contemporary art and artists and assist in developing greater understanding of and engagement in contemporary arts.

CAOs prioritises establishing a PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTION UNIT within a dedicated contemporary art organisation. Established and overseen by IMA and Artspace, with their extensive publishing experience, the unit will ensure publications are appropriately presented to retail outlets; that feedback regarding key interest areas as well as individual publications both finds its way back to publishers and is incorporated within forward publishing and distribution plans; and that retailers have the ease of dealing with one distributor providing access to a wide range of stock.

CAOs envisages Artspace as the most appropriate physical home for the unit, as its Sydney location places it within one of the two largest marketplaces. An estimated 60 publishing organisations can potentially be serviced by this distribution unit, including—contemporary art spaces, larger artist-run initiatives, media art organisations, university art galleries and museums, state galleries and major institutions, biennales, major events, and private foundations.

The unit will concentrate on developing wholesale distribution of publications to a core pool of 20-30 retail outlets across Australia and New Zealand. It will be run by one part-time staff member who will have responsibility for liaising with both publishers and retailers.



A case study Growing Future Innovators

Allowing young people and their teachers to cultivate the values and culture of innovation and develop the innovation skills of creativity, self-efficacy, energy, risk-propensity and leadership.

Since late 2008 PICA has collaborated with Edith Cowan University's Faculty of Education and Arts, with support from the Fogarty Foundation, on *Growing Future Innovators*, a project that examines how contemporary arts organisations can deliver 'next practice' schools education programs that encourage and promote innovation across all disciplines.

The *Growing Future Innovators Scoping Study*, to be launched at PICA in August 2010, includes a detailed review of local, national and international policy relating to arts, education and innovation and case studies of innovative and best practice schools education programs delivered by eighteen contemporary arts organisations in Australia and the UK. It also contains a set of recommendations for how contemporary arts organisations can work with schools to educate for innovation.

Together with extensive education sector consultation it has been informing the development of a three-year pilot program to be delivered by PICA from 2011–2013 in partnership with a number of metropolitan and regional primary and secondary schools in WA.

With delivery costs funded primarily by the private sector, this pilot program will facilitate primary and secondary school students' direct engagement with professional artists and the latest in contemporary arts practices. Its design, impact and effectiveness will be evaluated over a number of years by Edith Cowan University and researchers from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation.



Engaging Audiences

New positions

In the research paper *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts*, visual arts and crafts "showed the highest level of creative participation of any artform, with more than one in five (22%) of the sample creating visual arts or crafts over the last twelve months. Over one-third of Australians had receptively participated..."¹⁸

The report says that "personal relevance of the arts is enhanced when people creatively participate."¹⁹ This is borne out by other research and our own anecdotal feedback from audiences.

Research undertaken by Art Galleries and Museums NSW, further confirms that public programs are an effective way of encouraging repeat visits, greater advocacy and have potential to generate other business opportunities. "...those who had visited the gallery more recently, were also more likely to have attended a workshop, talk or group activity."²⁰

CAOs organisations see public programs as being critical to the success of exhibitions and to the broader development of contemporary arts and cultural literacy. Initiating more regular and sophisticated public programs has engaged audiences in conversation around contemporary art and ideas. These range from informal artists' talks where audiences engage directly with the artist about how and why they made a work, to participatory workshops and events engaging audiences with each other as much as with professional artists, to more formal Symposia bringing together artists, academics and critics to explore contemporary ideas in the broader culture.

While CAOs audiences are eclectic, ranging from 'Bedroom DJ's' who actively take part in creative activities to 'Mature Explorers' whose arts engagement is driven by curiosity and spontaneity—more than half might be described as 'Early Adopters'—engaged, informed and enthusiastic about contemporary arts and able to communicate their experiences to their peers and friends. This offers CAOs a great opportunity to further cultivate audiences of the future.

A snapshot of CAOs audiences²¹

- More GENDER NEUTRAL than general arts audiences with men almost as regularly represented as women (45% men & 55% women)
- UNDER 35 IN THE MAJORITY (57% with 27% aged 15–24 & 30% aged 25–34)
- HIGHLY EDUCATED (72% tertiary educated, 31% of whom are post graduates)
- A healthy mix of LOYAL REGULARS AND FIRST TIME VISITORS (41% have visited more than 5 times and 30% are first timers)
- POSITIVE OR VERY POSITIVE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF visiting the gallery (95%)

All CAOs organisations encourage audiences to actively participate—as peers, stakeholders, critics and cultural producers. Since 2004, they have invested increased resources to engage more with general audiences, specific networks and communities including: young people, students, local residents, Indigenous and Pacific Islander communities, recently arrived migrants and gay, lesbian and transgender groups. This has resulted in dramatic growth of audiences—114% increase between 2004 and 2008.

However, most CAOs organisations have done this without dedicated staffing of Public Programs and/or Audience Development positions. Whilst good results have been achieved, current marketing and programming staff are working at capacity diminishing potential for further growth. A more sustained and specialized approach will attract more diverse audiences and deepen their engagement encouraging repeat visits.

Developing strategies and programs for new and diverse audiences requires additional resources and staff. CAOs therefore prioritises the establishment of AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT POSITIONS in each organisation around the country with a budget that will facilitate payment of artists, writers and educators to generate relevant innovative programs.

CAOs members are well positioned to undertake development and implementation of a range of bespoke approaches to audience engagement and public programs. And as a network, CAOs provides an excellent peer forum for sharing the research, identifying best practice and adapting programs across state and territory borders.

¹⁸ *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts*, Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney, 2010, p. 22

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 27

²⁰ *Guess Who's Going to the Gallery? A Strategic Audience Evaluation and Development Study for Galleries in NSW*, Art Galleries & Museums NSW, Sydney, 2006, p.69

²¹ Aggregate from sample data of 4 CAOs organisations (ACP, Artspace, PICA & CCAS) across 3 cities (Sydney, Canberra & Perth)

CAOs across the country

24HR Art (NT) promotes and develops contemporary visual arts in the Northern Territory, by facilitating opportunities for people to engage with current contemporary art practices. Producing a diverse program of exhibitions, performances, education programs and artistic projects, 24HR Art provides opportunities for artists in the NT to exhibit their work in a national and international context. Reflecting its unique geographic location in Australia, 24HR Art maintains a strong engagement with the many artistic communities of the NT and surrounding regions, including remote Indigenous and South East Asian arts communities. 24hrart.org.au

Artspace Visual Arts Centre (NSW) is an international residency-based contemporary art centre, committed to the development of new ideas and practices in contemporary art and culture. Artspace hosts around 50 artists-in-residence a year and works closely with artists to foster the development of challenging new installation-based work. Through extensive public program and education activities Artspace explores critical contexts for contemporary art and encourages examination of the diverse social, political and visual processes that shape Australian culture within both regional and global frameworks. In addition to producing 15 gallery projects a year, often in partnership with peer organisations nationally and internationally, Artspace publishes *Column*, a regular Artspace periodical along with cultural theory books and artist monographs. artspace.org.au

The Australian Centre for Photography (NSW) is a national centre for the presentation, dissemination and creative learning of photo-based practice. Established in 1973, it has played an important role in identifying and promoting the major artists of Australian photography as well as supporting new and emerging photo-media practitioners. Operating locally, nationally and internationally ACP has a strong emphasis on the active engagement of audiences with contemporary photo-media practice spanning traditional photography to digital media. Its activities include an extensive exhibition program, national and international touring, and publishing. ACP's educational programs range from life-long learning to professional development and master classes by national and international experts, while the Social Inclusion program uses photography to help socially disengaged young people develop life skills. acp.org.au

IMAGES
Gabriel Maralngurra explains 'Yingana' mythology to Tadasu Takamine, *Rapt*, 2006 Photo: 24HR Art
Installation view *Artspace 24/25*, 2008 Photo: Silversalt
ACP Gallery 1 Photo: Emmanuel Giraud/ACP



Australian Experimental Art Foundation (SA) was established in 1974 by a small group of Adelaide artists and theorists in order to both encourage new approaches to the visual arts and to promote the idea of art as 'radical and only incidentally aesthetic'. The AEAFF incorporates a gallery space, bookshop and artists studios. The AEAFF curates its exhibition program to represent new work that expands current debates and ideas in contemporary art and culture. The contemporary visual arts sector that the Foundation supports, promotes, and seeks to stimulate includes practices that are inter-disciplinary and research-driven and have various gallery, project and urban outcomes. aeaff.org.au

Canberra Contemporary Art Space (ACT) encourages artists to explore new ideas and media that stimulate, challenge and entertain audiences. Presenting a broad program of exhibitions, CCAS provides practical opportunities for artists, performers, writers and curators to develop careers in the arts. CCAS shows the work of local, national and international artists. Support for emerging artists includes provision of studio space, professional support and exhibition opportunities. Established artists are offered opportunities to experiment and advance their practice to facilitate their ongoing contribution to Australian visual cultures. CCAS audiences experience innovations in contemporary art before it's collected and exhibited by the larger art museums. ccas.com.au

Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (SA) promotes new and innovative art practice that critically engages contemporary ideas and diverse areas of knowledge, creating contextual relevance by placing key interstate, local and international artists together according to conceptual and/or material links, with an emphasis on bilateral partnerships between domestic and ASEAN cultural sectors. Established as the Contemporary Art Society in 1942, CACSA exhibits the work of young and emerging artists and commissions mid-career and established artists' projects. CACSA publishes the internationally distinguished quarterly *CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART+CULTURE BROADSHEET* magazine, exhibition catalogues, anthologies and artists' monographs, and routinely hosts public artist talks, symposiums, associated activities. cacsa.org.au

IMAGES
Pip & Pop, Installation view *'I love it that you love what I love' duetto*, AEAFF, 2010 Photo: Teri Hoskin
Cristy Gilbert & Anna Simic, *Spread*, CCAS, 2007 Photo: David Broker
George Popperwell, Installation view *Exit Music*, CACSA, 2008 Photo: Alan Cruickshank

CAOs across the country

Centre for Contemporary Photography (Vic) engages audiences in contemporary photography, providing an accessible environment that promotes appreciation and understanding of contemporary photo-based arts. Established in 1986, CCP supports artists and enables audiences to explore photography via exhibitions, lectures, workshops, publications and public debate. Working from a tradition of photography CCP explores the various dimensions of the photographic and the post-photographic through exhibition and allied activities. CCP offers a space where emerging photo-based artists can gain a formative experience in the development and staging of exhibitions; where practicing photographers can find new audiences; and established artists can experiment with new directions. ccp.org.au

Contemporary Art Services Tasmania (Tas) is an active participant in the Tasmanian creative community, offering opportunities for artists, arts professionals and audiences through an annual program of exhibitions, off-site projects, artist forums, professional development initiatives, publications and the provision of artist's studios. CAST provides a platform for Tasmanian artists to develop and test new works and ideas in a context of national practice, as well as to connect artists with new audiences, public galleries, collecting institutions and the art market. CAST occupies a lead role in the contemporary culture of Tasmania and is respected for its experience and professionalism in the contemporary visual arts sector where it maintains regular engagement with public galleries, artist run initiatives, festivals and the education sector. castgallery.org

Gertrude Contemporary (Vic) was established in 1985 and is Melbourne's leading contemporary arts centre focused on the development and presentation of new art practices. Fostering a culture of experimentation, risk, and critical dialogue, Gertrude Contemporary's exhibition program includes new commissions from early-career and established Australian and International artists, while the studio program provides space for sixteen Australian artists for two-year tenures. International activities include annual reciprocal collaborations with colleague organisations in Asia, and international partnerships involving exhibitions, exchange-residencies and publications. Gertrude Contemporary manages an Emerging Writers Mentorship, a Visiting International Curators & Artists Residency, an active publishing program, and an education program that enables audiences to interact with artists in a studio setting. gertrude.org.au

IMAGES
CCP Rotary Youth Art Program, CCP, 2009 Photo: Unknown
Cath Robinson, *Thought noise / wave form prelude*, 2009, Mixed media, Dimensions variable Photo: Jan Dallas
Studio Artists Exhibition, Gertrude Contemporary, 2008 Photo: Andrew Curtis



Institute of Modern Art (Qld) opened in 1975, making it one of Australia's first contemporary art spaces and Queensland's first 'gallery of modern art'. It is the hub of contemporary-art life in the state. Its program includes exhibitions and events by emerging and established, local, national, and international artists. The IMA operates in an expanded field of contemporary art, taking in aspects of cinema and new music. The IMA is distinguished by aggressive publishing and exhibition touring. In addition to producing exhibition catalogues, it publishes stand-alone books, including key scholarly works. It co-publishes the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, Australasia's principal peer-reviewed art-history journal. The IMA also runs residencies to support its exhibition and publishing program, including a writers residency (a joint project with Eycline magazine). ima.org.au

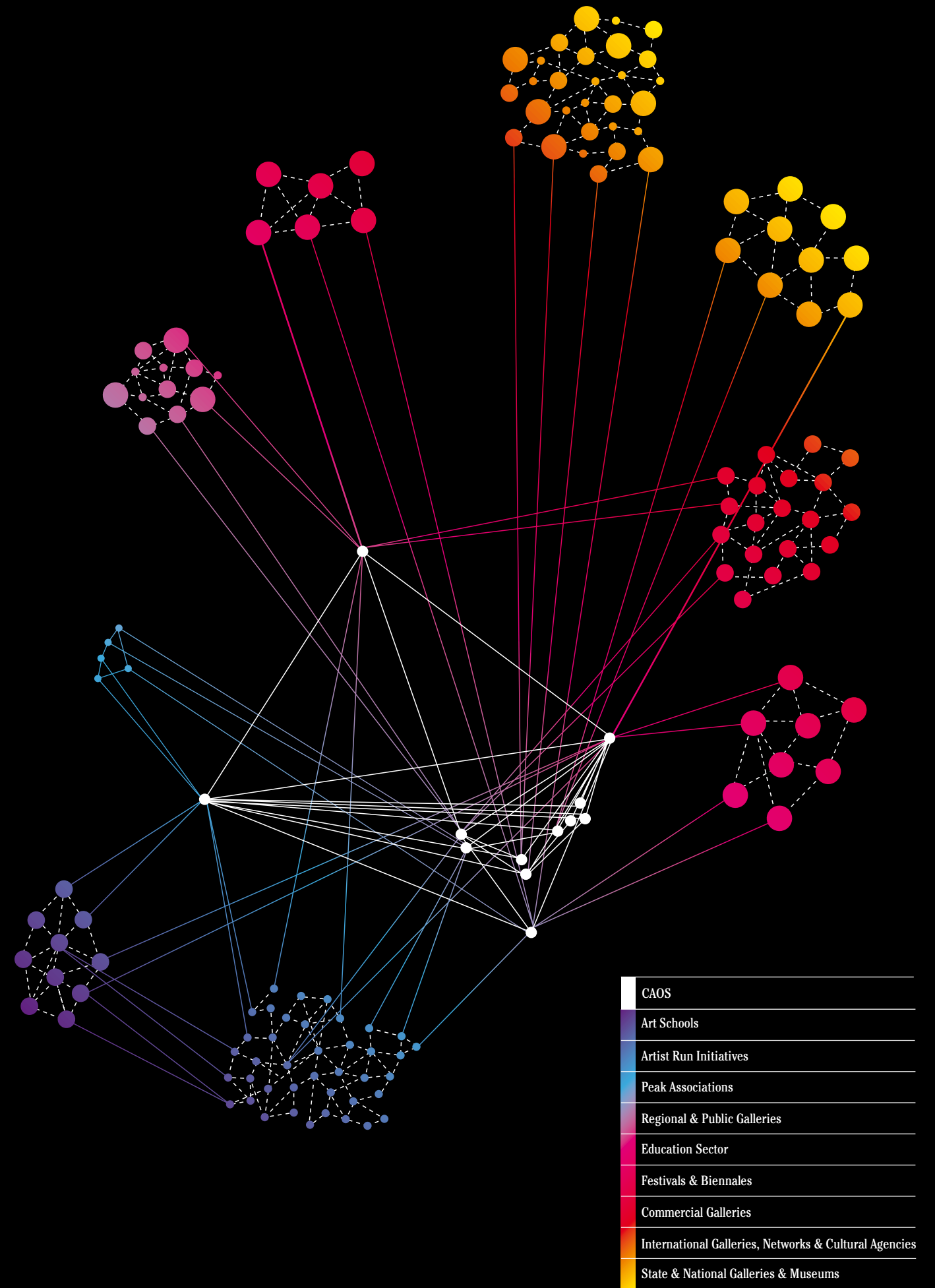
Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (WA) is a catalyst for innovative and ground-breaking art and culture, giving artists and audiences a glimpse of what is possible. Both a producing and presenting institution, PICA runs a program of exhibitions, contemporary dance, theatre, performance and interdisciplinary projects. PICA promotes, supports and presents contemporary arts and stimulates critical discussion around the arts and broader cultural issues. In many aspects of its operations, PICA might be understood as an incubator: providing resources, mentoring and support for both emerging and mature artists whilst promoting new and emerging ideas, forms and practices to the broader community. pica.org.au

Performance Space (NSW) is a creative space for artists and audiences to explore and experience new forms, new ideas, and new contexts of interdisciplinary arts. Performance Space specializes in art that explores the intersections between artforms, questions assumptions about the relationships between artist and audience, and engages with the concerns of the ever-evolving society in which we live. Development and Presentation Programs include performances and installations, residencies enabling artists to creatively develop their practice, and contextualizing initiatives including discussions and publications. Established in 1983, Performance Space works with local, regional, national and international artists. performancespace.com.au

IMAGES
DJ, Annual Members Cocktail Party, IMA, 2008
Jeppe Hein, Installation view *Appearing Rooms* at PICA 2010
Photo: Tony Nathan
Wade Marynowsky, *The Hosts: A Masquerade of Improvising Automaton*s, Performance Space, 2009 Photo: Garth Knight

I can't imagine an art world in Australia without CAOs. Early on in my career, several CAOs spaces provided me with a platform to create new bodies of work that in retrospect have turned out to be important stages in the development of my practice. Protein Lattice, Your Time Starts Now, and Swell (at AEAF, CACSA, IMA and Artspace) were technical and conceptual leaps for me, and were a result of wanting to push my practice as far as I could because I knew that they would be seen by a critical audience. To this day, I take these spaces as seriously as I did when I first left art school. I continue to see work that inspires me.

Patricia Piccinini, Artist



21st Century CAOs: A Forward Plan for Contemporary Art
is produced by Contemporary Art Organisations Australia

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CAOs

— noun

1. Critical
2. Collegiate
3. Efficient & flexible
4. Early adopters

— Acronym: Contemporary
Art Organisations
Australia

— Origin: 1985

— Synonyms: Connectors,
Generators, Strategists