

The South Australian School of Art History Project

*Report presented to the Friends of the South Australian School of Art
Annual General Meeting,
August 19 2010*

As Chair of the South Australian School of Art History Project, I am pleased to present this report to the third Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the South Australian School of Art. At the second Annual General Meeting last year, I was able to report that much hard - and often invisible work - had been done and while this work continues apace, this year sees even more visible and tangible results.

Adjunct appointments

These achievements include the conferral of Adjunct Research Fellow status on **Dr Jenny Aland PSM**, who is the chief researcher locating, gathering and organising the previously lost and scattered archives of the South Australian School of Art. This honorary position represents no simple task in terms of the tangled Human Relations thickets of University appointment processes. As well, the continuation of an Adjunct position for **Jack Cross**, legendary educator, historian and indispensable supporter of the SA History Project, is scheduled for School Board approval next week, having been fully endorsed by School Executive. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work closely with both these remarkable people.

These appointments represent important acknowledgements of service to the University and the School because, while the School fully endorses and supports this project, and the work of the Friends, this support does not currently translate in terms of funding or workload allowance. Except for some honorary payments to Dr Aland from the Friends' welcome and hard won fundraising, all work remains voluntary.

A question of value

At this point, it is important to put this into some perspective. Since Australian universities have become corporatised entities, measurable by market oriented yardsticks, art schools and their histories have, across the nation and beyond, become increasingly diminished in stature, resources and, some might argue, their influence in and upon society. Within a relentless managerialist ethos of 'moving forward', histories of institutions and communities, regardless of their pedigree and achievements, are generally regarded as redundant or even antithetical to the relentless 'drivers' of modern research priorities – even in universities. We believe, however, that history has much to teach us and that this particular School's history can enlighten us as to its present circumstances and the changing role of contemporary art in general. We see this project, therefore, as a significant opportunity to reflect upon what we are doing and why, and where we are going as a diverse and creative community.

So, in line with the '\$ & ¢' thinking of university economic rationalists, it is apt to quote some statistics - to crunch some numbers, as they say in Management Land - about this history project. I will preface these statistics by acknowledging that all voluntary workers, especially in Friends organisations, don't count the cost; we all do it for love and conviction but even Governments are now including this kind of 'social capital' as a significant part of the broader economy.

What is the worth of this invisible social capital? Firstly, any properly researched publication has an average incubation period of five years, and that applies equally to funded and unfunded projects. Then there are huge printing costs, ideally borne by a high calibre publisher. Just to give you an idea of the costs involved in the research and organisation involved prior to the writing and publication stages of this project, the following figures give a conservative estimate of work done to date on the SASAHistory Project. For **Dr Jenny Aland** this computes as around 10 hours per week over 18 months. At rates recommended by the Accredited Professional

Historians in Australia at Levels 3 & 4, the casual rate is between \$105.00 and \$173.00 per hour. Over 78 weeks at the lower figure this comes to \$81,900 or at the higher rate this would work out at \$134,940. Just for good measure, the Chair and co-researcher's hours, firstly in an administrative role involving liaison, deskwork and fundraising costed at lowest rate of \$35.00 per hour 4 hours a week over 3 years comes to \$ 21,840. Add to this higher level research, co-ordination grant writing, etc. over 78 weeks at 3 hours per week at \$105 per hour; this totals \$24,570. With administration this adds up to \$46,410 (or \$65,052 at the higher research rate of \$173.00 per hour). All this labour alone can be estimated at \$128,310 (or \$199,992 at the higher rate of pay/hour); a mere trifle in comparison to corporate managerial salaries! These figures don't include all the thousands of hours expended by Friends in raising money for this project and for the School. And we're not there yet!

'Outcomes'

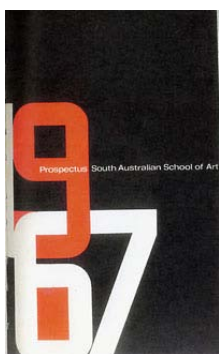
The question inevitably rises in an 'outcome driven' environment: what do we have to show for all this? The task of any research is invariably slow but is made slower by complex University processes, procedures – and politics. Anyone who works in a large corporation will be familiar with this fact. It bears mention that an earlier funded major national project on art school histories across Australia had to be suspended because of lack of information/archives, especially in South Australia. We have been able to surmount this hurdle and will, of course, share our information should that national project resume.

Recovery

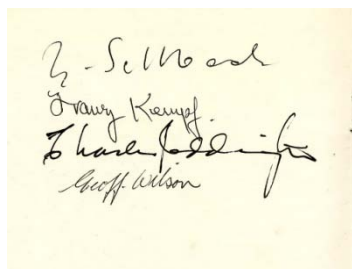
So, our intensive contact and meetings has been an exciting time of discovery, allowing **Dr Jenny Aland's** considerable research expertise to use blocks of concentrated time; this has made the *invisible* mostly *visible*. The first of our initial two aims of the SASA History Project ((as stated on the website below) is now well on track, although this will remain open to new information through an ongoing repository:

- **'Project 1:** *the development of an ongoing bibliography of material relating to the School. This information would assist in the development of a longer term initiative, a general history of the South Australian School of Art'.*

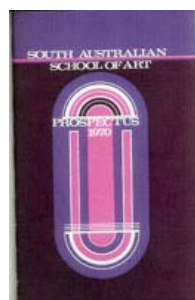
When we initiated this project, we knew it would be a long haul enterprise but we were not aware that a vast number of documents, images and artworks had been lost or dispersed during the School's move from Underdale and through numerous other amalgamations and re-locations. With the help of **Ann Mather**, retired UniSA Arts Librarian and History Project committee member and from the wonderful community of Friends who have donated material **Dr Jenny Aland** has been able to painstakingly recover a vast treasure trove of archives relating to the school, some of which you see here tonight.



SASA Prospectus cover, 1967



SASA staff signatures from exhibition catalogue, 1964



SASA Prospectus cover, 1970



Staff assessing first-year student work. SASA Prospectus, 1973. Do you recognise them all?

Research Results to date (August 2010)

There is still much in the way of archival material missing but we now have a substantial body of documents that have been meticulously organised into:

- Initial 'snapshots' of previous student and staff reminiscences;
- A professionally organised Bibliography of archives;
- Recorded Interviews and transcriptions;
- A major archival collection of documents and images of ***The Stanley Street Years: Timeline (172 pages); Indexed collection of Research papers:***
 - journals,
 - articles,
 - speeches,
 - prospectuses,
 - newspaper clippings,
 - newsletters,
 - exhibition catalogues,
 - artist's photographs & statements,
 - principals' correspondence,
 - SASA archives
 - other ephemera,
 - websites, and,
 - recent extensive email records.
- Research material for '**a White Glove event**' which includes:
 - Artists' Biographies from a variety of sources,
 - Images,
 - Catalogues,
 - Online Catalogues,
 - Print material from the Art Gallery of South Australia,
 - Email correspondence.

Project 2

Such a rich information bank is fundamental to the next stages of research - of synthesis, analysis and writing up. This is the stage we are now at, our second stated aim (Project 2):

'a publication specifically examining a key decade in the School's history when it was located in Stanley St., North Adelaide during the 1960s and 1970s.'

Living History

With **Jack Condous'** and the Friends Committee's enthusiastic support, other SASA History Project activities have been successfully undertaken, including 'living' history: these include the acclaimed live interviews of **Geoff Wilson** by **Winnie Pelz** and **Ann Newmarch** interviewed by **Jack Cross** to large and captivated audiences.



Ann Newmarch with Jack Cross



Geoff Wilson with Winnie Pelz

Funding & sponsorship applications

In addition to these events and other numerous fundraising ventures by the Friends, have been initiatives to seek private, corporate and other forms of funding, including a joint deputation of

History Project researcher and Chair, the Friends and UniSA Marketing to solicit corporate sponsorship from Bartons Chartered Accountants and Wealth Advisors. Australia has not yet attained a philanthropic tradition and at a time of global financial crisis, we were, understandably, unsuccessful at this time.

Undeterred, we then completed an application to South Australia History Fund for \$5000. This represented five full working days to complete and the results will be announced in December. It is a very small fund and therefore very competitive. Nevertheless, this was a worthwhile activity because it allowed reflection of what had been solidly achieved, even if not yet in the form of a finished manuscript and the letters of support for the project - and for **Dr Jenny Aland** an myself as chief researchers - was extremely encouraging, even humbling. We have been made even more aware of the affection and esteem in which the school and its history is held across many sectors of the arts community.

We are continuing to seek further avenues of funding. And we still rely on the Friends' energetic fundraising through exciting events that are regularly made available to members for a ridiculously low membership fee. Below is information on our next SASA History Project fundraiser.

A White Glove Event



a White Glove event

An exclusive fundraising event made possible by the Friends of the South Australian School of Art, Inc., and the Art Gallery of South Australia.

This event offers participants a unique opportunity to view rarely seen works on paper from the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia made by artists who were staff or students at the South Australian School of Art during the first 100 years of its existence (1861 to 1961).

The White Glove event will be presented by **Maria Zagala**, Associate Curator, Prints, Drawings & Photographs at the Art Gallery of South Australia, **Dr Jenny Aland** and **Dr Pamela Zeplin** from Art, Architecture & Design at the University of South Australia. Wearing curators' 'white gloves', the three presenters will discuss original prints, drawings and watercolours by artists including **Ethel Barringer**, **Dorrit Black**, **Dora Chapman(Cant)**, **Harry Pelling Gill**, **Frederick Millward Grey**, **Barbara Hanrahan**, **Mary Packer Harris**, **Ivor Hele**, **Jacqueline Hick**, **Margaret Preston**, **George Reynolds**, **Udo Sellbach**, **Karin Schepers**, **Brian Seidel** and **Marie Tuck**.

Date: Friday 22nd October from 2pm to 4pm

Venue: Function Room 2 at the Art Gallery of SA

Acknowledgements

Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to all who have supported this project. In particular, thanks go to my close and valued colleague, **Dr Jenny Aland PSM**, Committee Members of the SASA History Project: **Jack Cross**, **Ann Mather**, **Jack Condous**, **Max Lyle**, **John Copeland**, **Geoff Wilson**, **Barrie Goddard**, **Virginia Jay**, **Alb Smith**, and **Ron Corso**. My warm appreciation extends to the Friends of SASA Committee chaired by the indomitable **Jack Condous**: **Pamela Karran**, **Bill Morrow**, **Gloria Goddard**, **Garrie Hiscoe**, **Jack Cross**, **Yvonne East**, **Ruth Flaherty**, **Lyn Robins**, **David Northcote**, **Gerry Colella** and **Brian Budgen**. For their continuing interest, support and time, my thanks go to Art, Architecture and Design Head of School, **Professor Mads Gaardboe**, Associate Head, **Dr John Barbour** and Acting Associate Head, **Andrew Hill**. **Denice Daou's** continuing loyalty and **Hazel Ryder** and **Dr Mary Knights'** support is especially valued, as is the wise counsel and moral support of **Adjunct Professor Ian North**. The contribution of **Dr Neville Weston**, **Dianne Longley** and **John Neylon** to the School's History Project also warrant special mention. Last but not least we all value highly the individual contributions of members of the Friends of South Australian

School of Art, including **Lois Turner** and **Ann Newmarch**, and all those who have supported Friends' functions throughout the year.

We have a great team and a solid foundation of quality research established; now we need serious financial support to continue this valuable research to publication stage. Please contact **Jack Condous**, President of the Friends of South Australian School of Art (FoSASA), about opportunities to be a lasting part of this project.

Website: <http://www.friendsasa.com/>

Email: friends@friendsasa.com

Postal address: *Friends of SASA, The South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, GPO Box 2471 Adelaide SA 5001*

Dr Pamela J Zeplin (with assistance from Dr Jenny Aland PSM)
Chair/Convenor, South Australian School of Art History Project Committee
19 August 2010



The History Girls!!
Dr Pamela Zeplin & Dr Jenny
Aland PSM at FoSASA AGM,
2009