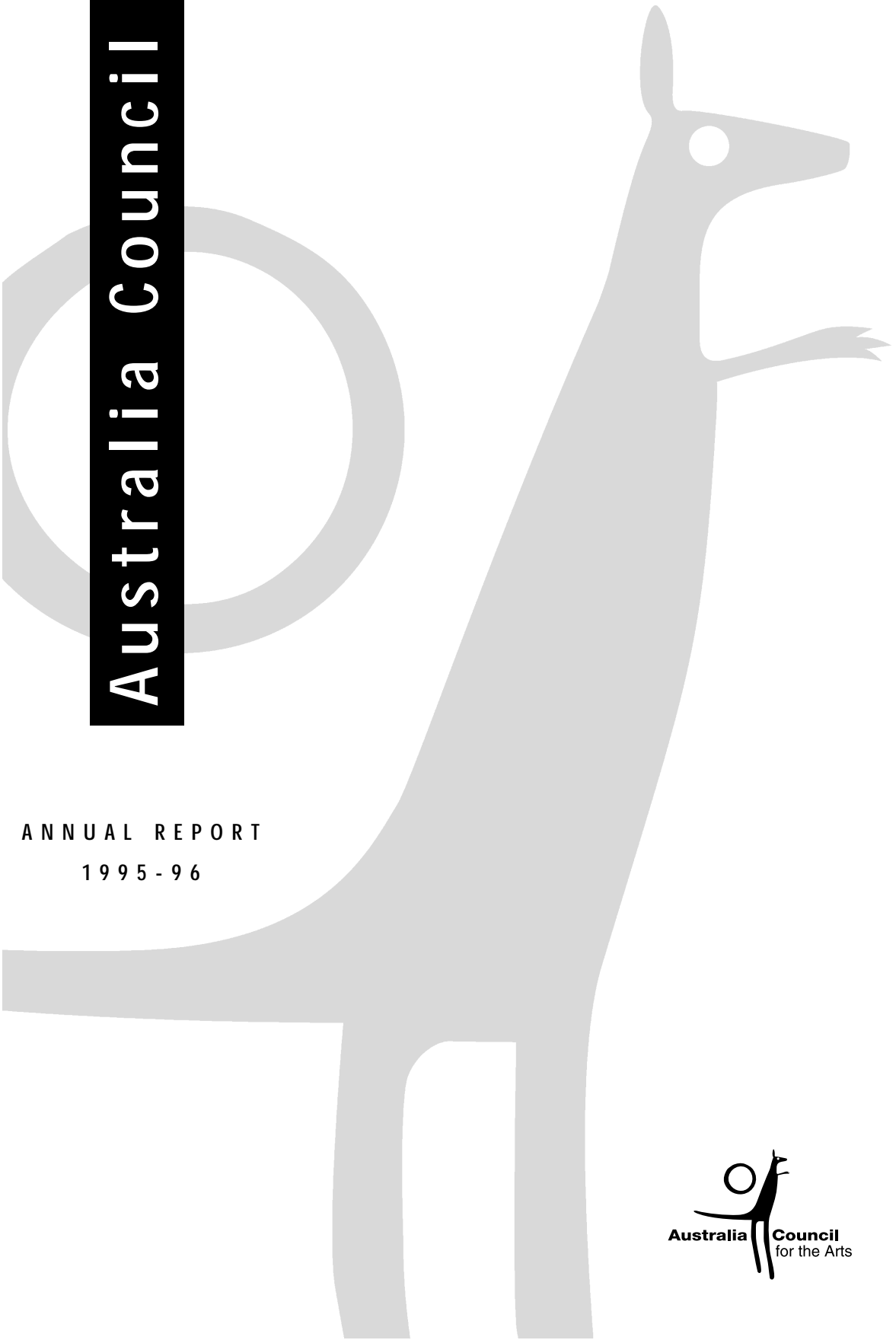


# Australia Council

ANNUAL REPORT  
1995 - 96





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*Through its Arts Funding Division, the Australia Council fosters excellence and diversity in the arts by providing support to allow artists, arts organisations and communities to develop their artistic potential, and by making the arts accessible to all Australians.*

The Arts Funding Division was established on 8 April 1996 as part of the restructure of the Australia Council. It drew into one Division the five administrative units responsible for managing the policy development and grant applications procedures for the five Boards and sixteen Committees which formerly determined the allocation of their respective arts funding budgets. All the grants offered in 1995-96 were decided prior to the new system coming into effect, so in this section of the Annual Report, funding decisions for 1995-96 are reported as decisions of the Board or Committee, as appropriate; and ongoing activities and policy are reported as those of the Funds which, apart from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, have now taken over from the Boards and Committees.

Support for artform development and general arts activities remains central to all the Australia Council's grants programs. Australian literature, performing arts, visual arts and craft, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, and community cultural development are supported, affirmed and encouraged by the programs offered.

#### **Objectives**

- ▶ To support artists, projects and organisations of excellence;
- ▶ To promote artists, art works, projects and organisations of excellence in Australia and abroad;
- ▶ To enrich the quality of life throughout the community;
- ▶ To reflect cultural diversity through the arts;
- ▶ To ensure the continuing integrity of arts funding at arms length from government.

#### **Outcomes**

Examples of outcomes for each artform area are provided in the following sections. Grants lists and financial summaries are at the back of this report.

Through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, the Australia Council assists Indigenous Australians to claim, control and enhance their cultural inheritance.

The Board and its Artform Committees (Performing Arts, Literature and Visual Arts and Craft) see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as living forces, each with its own dynamics and momentum, not simply remnants of the past. They aim to make these cultures a living part of the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and a source of pride for all Australians. As such, the Board's decisions and initiatives are guided by the view that Indigenous arts are important to the principles and practice of self-determination and reconciliation. The rising interest and popularity of all forms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic expression is evident in the response to artists such as Christine Anu, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Judy Watson, Ginger Riley, Maningrida Clever Kids and many others.



Monique Marsh

Australia Council General Manager Michael Lynch and Chair Hilary McPhee with singer and dancer Christine Anu on the occasion of Christine's presentation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of a specially mounted display of her Gold CD *Stylin' Up*.

During 1996, the Board has been developing a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy which will be presented to the Council for consideration at the end of 1996.

As well as advising the Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts issues and administering grant programs for Indigenous artists and organisations, the Board undertakes a number of its own initiatives in the stimulation and development of Indigenous arts.

Among these was the financial support and organisation of a national Indigenous writers and playwrights conference and workshop. *Mogwi Jdan: Stories of the Land* was held in Brisbane from 29 April to 3 May 1996. The event attracted more than 120 participants and national media attention.

The encouragement of artists in prisons is a Board policy, and is in keeping with recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. During 1995-96, the Board initiated a national pilot project involving artists working with inmates to develop their skills in cultural expression. *Inside Art/Out* is a partnership between the Australia Council and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

The Board also organised meetings of Indigenous community arts officers from across Australia. Some of these positions are funded by the Board as part of its initiative for cultural development for Indigenous communities, particularly in remote and isolated areas. The meetings, lasting two to three days, provide opportunities for networking and ideas exchange, and a forum for dialogue with the Australia Council. The first meeting was held in Sydney in November 1995 and the second in Melbourne in June 1996.

*Arts Yarn-Up* on radio, based on the Board's successful newsletter, is another initiative developed during 1995-96. A half-hour 26-part series on Indigenous arts will be broadcast directly into Indigenous communities across Australia. After a national tender process, the project was awarded to Gadigal Information Services. The first transmission is scheduled for 9 July 1996.

Recognising the economic benefits for Indigenous people in their own arts industry, the Board took part in the National Indigenous Business and Economic Conference, held in Brisbane in September 1995 with the theme, *Indigenous Arts Means Business*. The same theme was used to promote the Board at the *Survival '96* concert held at La Perouse in January. The Board also supports Survival through its funding of the organiser, the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association (NIAAA). The Board established NIAAA to respond to issues of intellectual property, copyright and moral rights.

The Festival of Pacific Arts is held every four years as a celebration of Indigenous cultures of the Pacific regions. The next festival will be held in Western Samoa in September 1996. The Board takes responsibility for the Australian delegation and preparations have been made during 1995-96, with artists from performing arts, visual arts, craft and literature selected from the large number of expressions of interest received.

The Board is represented on national bodies including the Visual Arts Export Group; the ATSIC Cultural Industry Advisory Committee; the ATSIC Intellectual Property Reference Group; and the Standing Group of Commonwealth Representatives: Implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The Board's Director, Lydia Miller, is a member of the Sydney Olympic Games Cultural Committee.

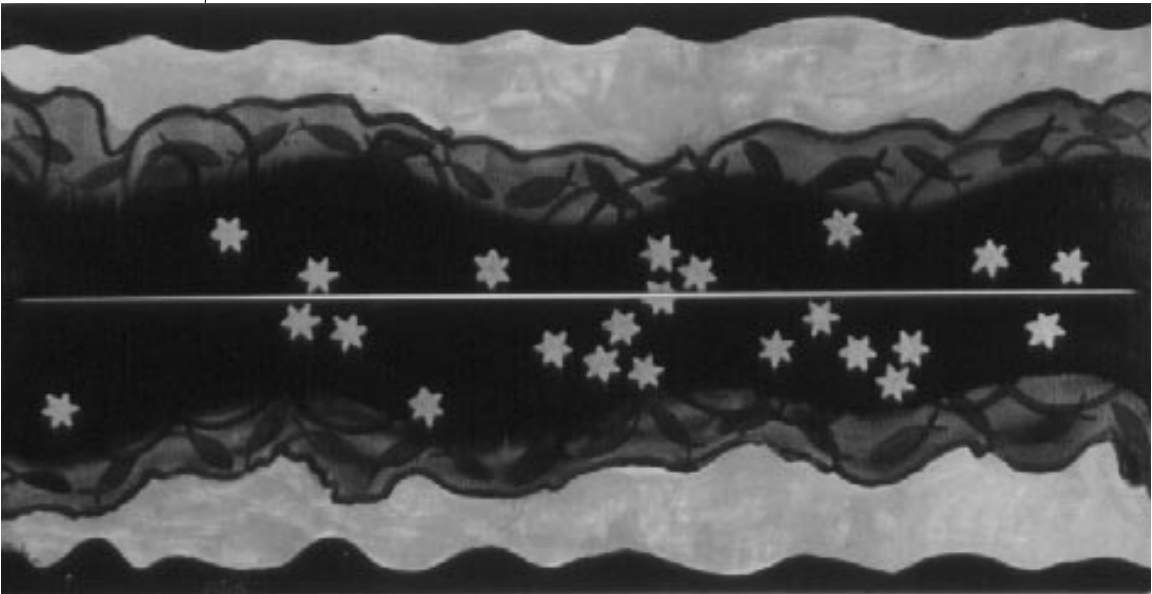
Indigenous organisations which received substantial support from the Board during 1995-96 include triennially funded organisations NIAAA, Magabala Books, Woomera Aboriginal Corporation and the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre; and theatre companies

Kooemba Jdarra and Yirra Yaakin. Yirra Yaakin, based in Perth, specialises in Indigenous youth theatre. It has been funded for its first fully professional production to be staged in the latter part of 1996. Kooemba Jdarra's funding includes an extensive touring program, particularly for its successful self-devised production *The Seven Stages of Grieving*.

The Board's most important award for individual artists or performance groups is the Red Ochre, awarded annually in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the development of Indigenous culture. The Mills Sisters, three musical grandmothers from the Torres Strait who have charmed audiences all over the world, were the 1995 recipients.

The Board also supports excellence by awarding Fellowships, each of \$35,000, to artists across all artforms to allow them to work for a full year on developing their professional careers. Ten fellowships were awarded in 1995-96, to: performer Vic Simms; writers Alf Taylor and Philip McLaren; fashion designer Ron Gidgup; and artists Ellen Jose, Stephen Kawurkku, Leah King-Smith, Lynda Syddick Napaltjarri, Arthur Pambegan and Gloria Tamerre Petyarre.

A work by Torres Strait Island artist Ellen Jose, one of ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders awarded a Fellowship in 1995-96.



Many of the projects supported by the Board include workshops and skills development components as part of a touring or festival program. For instance, it funded the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association to perform and conduct workshops of its Torres Strait Island inspired dance piece, *Drums of Mer*, to the 1996 Torres Strait Cultural Festival; Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter to perform and conduct workshops in the remote communities of Cape York and the Northern Territory; and the Munupi Arts and Craft Association, producers of the world renowned Tiwi pottery, to exhibit and attend workshops in Canberra.

One of the Board's specific goals is to assist, through the arts, in the research, recovery and restoration of disrupted, stolen or repressed cultural practices. Among the projects with this objective was a grant to the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Sydney for a repatriation project of ceremonial trees from around Australia back to the Moree region. The Board also supported projects involving the teaching and passing on of traditional language, dance and music skills to the young.

The Board's other goals support the expression of Indigenous artistic and cultural diversity and

Young members of traditional dance group Barambah Bwan-gul who performed at the Barambah Beltout in the South Burnett region of Queensland.



the encouragement and promotion of artists and products of excellence. This robust diversity is reflected in the range of projects supported across Australia, from jazz singer Marlene Cummins to comic book writer and artist Gerald Scifo; from multimedia artists Rea and Brook Andrew to the fine arts of the Hermannsburg Potters; from the contemporary music of Christine Anu and David Page to the country and western sound of Walter Parkes (1995 Tamworth Country Music Festival Talent Quest winner).

Major national touring exhibitions have included *Native Titled Now* and *Made With Meaning: Crafts of Aboriginal Far North Queensland*. Festivals are also important opportunities for Indigenous expressions and the Board has supported components of such festivals as Nambundah (NSW); the Barambah Beltout (Queensland); the Torres Strait Cultural Festival; the Come Out Festival and Narna Tarkendi Indigenous Arts Festival (SA).



*Story Eggs* by Thancoupie, from the touring exhibition *Made with Meaning: Crafts of Aboriginal Far North Queensland*.

Internationally, the Board is advocating the recognition of Australia's unique cultures. Among the projects supported have been a tour of *The Aboriginal Protestors* to Germany; a Koori-Celtic exchange to England and Ireland for Victorian-based musician David Arden; the attendance of Queensland writer Herb Wharton at the World Folkloriada in the Netherlands; and a tour by artist Jimmy Pike from the Northern Territory to China.

The unprecedented interest within Australia and around the world in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures has highlighted the need for protection of artists' rights and the recognition of cultural protocols. The Board has been a long-time advocate of these needs and as well as addressing them in its policy, continues to support organisations such as NIAAA to work on artists' behalf and to educate the wider public. The Board has also funded conferences on issues such as copyright and cultural maintenance and continues to explore all avenues for the recognition of the cultural authority of Australia's Indigenous people.

Through its Community Cultural Development Fund, the Australia Council assists communities to investigate and express their culture.

The Community Cultural Development Fund (CCDF) encourages artists and communities to work together through locally determined, community-based arts activities. The Fund supports work across all artforms and in new technologies. Community cultural development enables communities to advance their artistic, social, and economic aspirations and provides opportunities for artists to expand their arts practice through innovative collaborations with community groups.

Through its programs the Fund aims to:

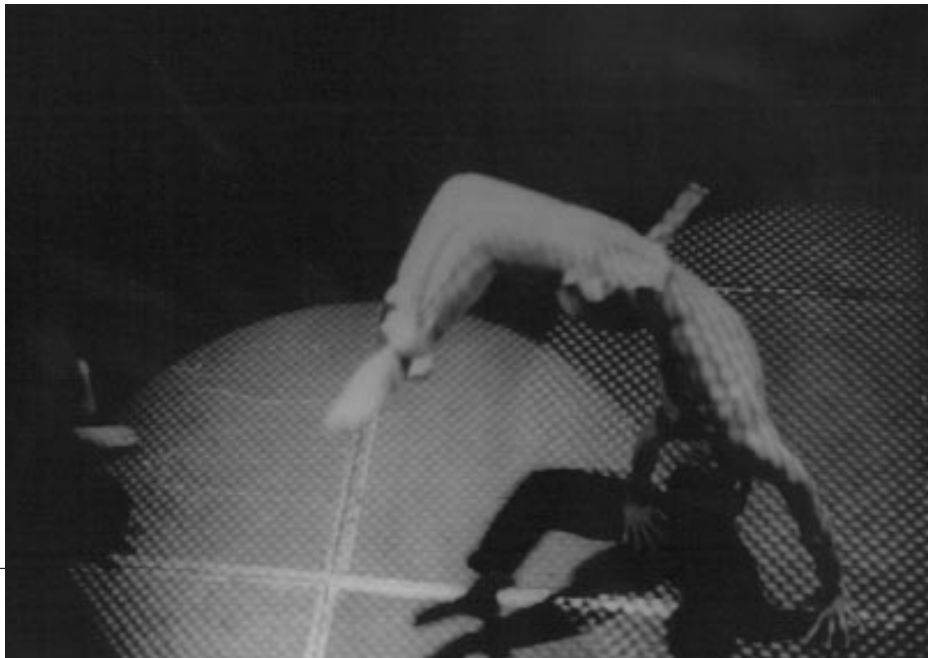
- ▶ achieve an increase in locally determined arts and cultural development;
- ▶ encourage outstanding achievement in arts and cultural activity within the community context;
- ▶ encourage cultural expressions of diversity in the context of current debates on the future of the nation; and
- ▶ ensure that the value of community cultural development is widely accepted.

In 1995-96 the Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) undertook a number of special initiatives supporting artists, projects and organisations of excellence.

The International Year of Tolerance Fellowships particularly targeted artists proposing to work in regional and remote areas on issues relating to cultural diversity. Six artists were funded, in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Far North Queensland, to each undertake a 12 month program. Activities range from overseas visits by Indigenous visual artist Michelle Broun, to Indigenous designer Leigh Harris's publication work with the Cape York Health Council. Mixed media artist Irene Powell is working with non-English speaking background communities in Geraldton on a series of place-making installations, and theatre director Ruby Red is undertaking a series of residencies with women's information and community agencies in Cape York and on the Atherton Tablelands.

Two new organisations were supported through multiyear funding agreements. The Multicultural Arts Officer position at the Multicultural Arts

Death Defying Theatre's *Hip Hopera* used hip hop music and language with multimedia in workshops and performances involving young people from Western Sydney.



lasso Tarabouisi



Melanie Gray

Inspired by the life of Frida Kahlo, *Alive Still Life*, a community theatre production by Access Arts, Queensland, included people with disabilities in all stages of the script writing, design and performance.

Centre of WA and Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Youth Theatre Company negotiated performance agreements for their planned three year program. Yirra Yaakin's activities for 1996 include a community outreach program in urban Perth and a program of residencies in Geraldton and Bunbury. The CCDF now funds 28 diverse community cultural development organisations and organisers on multiyear performance agreements. The agreements have been negotiated with the involvement of State funding authorities, successfully clarifying the expectations of all parties. The first fully tripartite multiyear funding agreement was signed in October 1995 between the Australia Council, Arts Tasmania and the Tasmanian Arts Council.

The Board also supported a range of innovative one-off projects. Examples are:

- D Digitarts, based at *Grunt*, Brisbane's new youth centre, launched a World Wide Web site on the Internet in June this year. A virtual space was created by young women from a variety of cultural backgrounds and non-metropolitan areas, who use information technology to create and distribute artworks relevant to their community.
- D Arts Christmas Island, where the population of 2,400 includes Chinese, Malay and

Caucasian with small groups of Indians and Eurasians, recently commenced a non-language-based project which will bring master trainer Lu Guang Rong to the Island for a three month residency. The project, which builds on earlier work by the Ran Dan Club, will extend the community's skills and develop their Lion Dance repertoire, with the possibility of establishing a community-based performance group.

In order to promote artists, artworks and projects of excellence and to ensure the value of community cultural development is widely accepted, the CCDF supported a number of research and promotional projects, including:

- D *Creating Social Capital, A study of the long-term benefits from community-based arts funding*, by Deidre Williams, published by the Community Arts Network of SA. This report analyses the social, educational, artistic and economic benefits of community cultural development practice, with close consideration of nine diverse case studies.
- D A how-to manual of community music programs, being published by the Music Council of Australia. Based on a model for a community music program developed in the Dandenong Ranges, this project seeks to stimulate community music programs on a national level.

The Board also undertook a National Model Projects initiative, working with eleven diverse community-based organisations across the country to develop and promote their work and to assist them build on and broaden their own exemplary practice. These agencies will gain long term skills to pass on to the wider field.

This year's recipient of the prestigious Ros Bower Memorial Award was Marla Guppy, who has worked for more than a decade in community arts and community cultural development. As a cultural planner, she has worked closely with communities and city councils throughout Australia. She has also

worked as an artist-in-residence for Garage Graphix in western Sydney, and has been chair of the NSW Community Arts Association.

The CCDB actively pursued a number of special initiatives to support artists and communities in rural and remote Australia. These included:

- D a partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy to encourage regional development agencies to recognise the arts as a tool to address the complex economic, environmental and social issues which are a characteristic of regions undergoing major change;
- D a partnership with the North West Queensland Region of Councils and the State Library of Queensland to develop a computer-based bulletin board and database facility which will be accessible through public libraries in remote communities.

During 1995-96, the Local Government Cultural Development Strategy supported major advocacy projects through Local Government Associations in Queensland, New South Wales



Monique March

and Victoria. Council's involvement in the partnership is now the responsibility of the Audience Development and Advocacy Division.

The CCDB's vigorous and strategic pursuit of its objectives throughout the year has ensured its wide-reaching success in achieving significant community cultural development outcomes and in assisting individuals and organisations in many parts of Australia to contribute to the cultural life of their communities.

Top right:  
*Untitled*, by Maree Azzopardi and participants at a mixed media workshop hosted by Sydney PRIDE Community Centre.

Right:  
Jindii and Jupun Aboriginal Corporation, based in Kempsey, undertook the development and production of a major outdoor arts event, *Living the Dreaming*, involving more than 350 local students, which celebrated the work of the late Robert Campbell Jr, an Aboriginal artist whose most famous works depict the life of his people in Kempsey during the 1950s and '60s.



Ann Algar

### Community, Environment, Art and Design (CEAD)

Through its CEAD program, the Australia Council encourages artists, designers and communities to work together developing links between the cultural life of communities and the quality of their physical environment. CEAD is jointly administered by the Community Cultural Development Fund and the Visual Arts/Craft Fund.

A comprehensive evaluation of outcomes from the CEAD program was undertaken early in 1996, taking into account over 350 projects which have been funded since the program's inception in 1989. Key findings from the evaluation included:



South Melbourne Tram Depot employees and Melbourne's tram users made artworks about their lives, the tramways and the streets of Melbourne during this CEAD project. Image from *Tracking Vehicle*, video loop developed by Michael Douglas and Lawrence Wallen.

- ▶ that there has been exponential employment growth for artists working in collaborative design and public art;
- ▶ that CEAD grants have been an effective catalyst for significant cofunding from other sources, particularly local government and the private sector;
- ▶ that the program has provided an effective national model for government support of collaborative and creative approaches to urban design, and that nearly all state governments have established related funding programs;
- ▶ that the program has supported a significant amount of regional arts activity, including a number of projects involving Aboriginal communities.

This year's CEAD Award winner, Swallowcliffe Schools in North Adelaide, pioneered the involvement of artists and community members in the design of artworks to be integrated into the building fabric of State schools. The project has been overwhelmingly successful in developing a sense of community pride and ownership in the school and incidents of vandalism have dramatically reduced.

Thirty-eight innovative and diverse projects were funded throughout the year including:

- ▶ The Warringah Shire Council's coastal walkway project, which brought together local government, community members and artists Gordon Hookey, James Kutasi, Richard Stutchbury and Jenny Toynbee Wilson to create concepts for integrated artworks along an 8 km stretch of the Bicentennial Coastal Walkway on Sydney's northern beaches. The Warringah Shire Council now has an extensive reference list of possible artworks for future integration on the site. Of these, twelve include specific employment of artists and eight include community collaboration.
- ▶ The production of *The Blue Devil Waltz*, a documentary video on the history of the *Land Discovery Trail* project which was created on site at the Living Museum of the West in Melbourne's outer suburbs. *The Land Discovery Trail*, funded at all stages by the CEAD program, crosses the boundaries of Aboriginal, industrial, multicultural and environmental history in a public area which had been derelict for many years. The documentary is due for release later in 1996.

The success of the CEAD program demonstrates its capacity to increase opportunities for artists and designers to practise their art and to improve their incomes from their arts practice.

Through its Literature Fund, the Australia Council encourages the creation, publication, critical appraisal and promotion of high quality contemporary Australian literature in Australia and overseas.

The effectiveness of direct grants to individual writers was demonstrated by an evaluation of these grants over the years 1990 to 1993 inclusive. The evaluation revealed that 48% of works written with Literature Board assistance during the years surveyed had been published or performed, a further 17% had received part-publication or staged readings, and 26% of projects were under contract: a total of 91% overall. As well, around 60 Board-assisted writers had subsequently won literary prizes or had their works included on award short lists.

The 1996 Miles Franklin Literary Award was an outstanding example of assisted writers attaining recognition for their work. All seven writers included on the short list (Carmel Bird, Beverley Farmer, Judith Fox, Paul Horsfall, Christopher J Koch, Amanda Lohrey and Alex Miller) had their novels supported by the Literature Board, either through writing or publishing grants. The winner, Christopher J Koch, wrote his prize-winning novel *Highways to a War* on a two-year Category A Fellowship.



Adelaide Festival Writers' Week, March 1996: a panel discussion about beginning a writing career. From left: Liam Davison (chair), Ben Winch, Matt Rubinstein, Fontini Epanomitis, Sue Errington and (at the microphone) Cath Kenneally.

Similarly, several Board-assisted writers – poets Philip Hodgins, John Kinsella and Dorothy Porter, and novelists David Brooks, Garry Disher, David Foster, Rod Jones and Sue Woolfe – were either commended or included on genre short lists for the 1996 National Book Council 'Banjo' Awards. The winners, announced at the 1996 Australian Publishers Association Book Fair, included Rod Jones, who won the fiction prize for *Billy Sunday*, and Philip Hodgins, who was posthumously awarded the Turnbull Fox Phillips Poetry Prize for *Things Happen*.

In view of the excellent outcomes of direct grants to writers, approximately half of the 1995-96 Literature funds were devoted to Fellowships and Writers' Project Grant programs. Seven four-year Senior Fellowships at \$20,000 per annum were awarded to writers with substantial publication achievements; 20 one-year Category A Fellowships to writers who had a minimum of three major works published or performed; 28 one-year Category B Fellowships to writers with one or two works published or performed; and 38 Writers' Project Grants to emerging writers.

Emeritus Awards were granted to two eminent writers: poet Bruce Beaver, whose work has influenced the development of many other Australian poets and who has achieved critical recognition, both within Australia and overseas; and Michael Cannon, who has written important social and historical works documenting many aspects of Australian life.

Following the introduction in 1995 of a comprehensive Translations Program aimed at contributing to the diversity of Australian writing and to excellence in literary translation in Australia, the Literature Fund reached agreement with the German government in June 1996 to institute a new award, the Australia Germany Award for Literary Translation. The award, which will be formally ratified later in 1996, is intended to increase intellectual and literary exchange between Australia and Germany and is similar to the already-established France Australia Award for Literary Translation.

In keeping with its intentions of promoting Australian writing in the international market, the Literature Board awarded grants to publishers in several countries to assist with the publication of foreign-language editions of Australian literary works. Notable among these were the translation and publication in Chinese by the Rye Field Publishing Company (Taiwan) of the 1994 Miles Franklin Literary Award winner, *The Ancestor Game* by Alex Miller; *The Seal Woman* by Beverley Farmer published by Klim (Denmark); and *The Rose Crossing* by Nicholas Jose published by Berlin GmBh (Germany).



In association with the Australia-Korea Foundation, the Literature Board organised a very successful book exhibition, *Read Australia*, to coincide with an Austrade promotion taking place in Korea in October 1995. Three hundred literary and visual arts titles were exhibited at the National Library, Seoul and in Changwon. Korean-Australian writer Don'o Kim and children's book illustrator Ann James accompanied the exhibition and took part in workshops and other events. At the conclusion of the exhibition, the titles were donated to Korean libraries.

Other international grants assisted Australian writers to travel to various countries, some to take up residencies at the Council's international studios in Paris and Rome and others to participate in literary events and conferences. A grant given to writer Sue Woolfe to attend the International Writing Program, University of Iowa, in 1994 has borne rich fruit. Her play, adapted by her from her novel *Leaning Towards Infinity* (written with the support of a writers' grant), was workshopped at the Iowa Playwrights' Workshop. A representative of a New York performance company, Women's Projects and Productions, saw the workshop and selected the play for an intensive pre-production workshop in New York in March 1996, with a full production planned for 1996-97. Sue Woolfe received travel assistance from the Literature Board to enable her to be present at the New York workshop. Another outcome of the original grant is that Rollins College (Florida) is co-funding, with the Literature Fund, a nine-week writer-in-residency for Sue Woolfe: it is likely, therefore, that she will be in the USA for the production of her play.

Major writers' festivals supported throughout Australia continued to attract large crowds: the Adelaide Writers' Week held in March 1996

Above:  
The Literature Board's stand at the 1995 Australian Publishers Association Book Fair at Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Right:  
The Literature Board held its last meeting in Adelaide in March 1996 to coincide with the Adelaide Writers' Week.  
From left:  
Drusilla Modjeska, Kevin Hart, Joan London, Louis Nowra, Gillian Rubinstein, Ed Campion (Chair) and John Collins.



had over 40,000 people attending the many sessions which featured both Australian and overseas writers. New regional festivals, the 1996 Mildura Arts Festival in Victoria and Down South Writers' Festival in Busselton, WA, had lively and entertaining programs which pleased audiences, as did the Somerset Celebration of Literature in Queensland.



Queensland writer  
Herb Wharton.

Rosie Doctm

The Youth Literature Program, auspiced by St Martins Youth Arts Centre in Victoria, continued to expand, with writers for young people from all over Australia brought to St Martins to discuss and read from their books to young audiences. Another very successful project has been the Australian National Playwrights' Centre's Young Playwrights' Weekends, held in capital cities around Australia: at these weekends, young playwrights workshop their scripts with local professional directors, dramaturgs and actors with whom they develop an ongoing mentor relationship.

Placing experienced writers with community groups in unusual contexts has been a feature of the Board's residency program in 1995-96, ranging from residencies in Migrant Resource Centres in Queensland and Tasmania to the Southern Areas Woman and Child Centre in South Australia. Two major residencies were undertaken by Queensland writer Herb Wharton: one organised by the Next Wave Festival at the Healesville Animal Sanctuary (Vic) where Mr Wharton worked with members of the local Indigenous community; and the second in conjunction with the Northern Territory Community Writing Program where he conducted workshops in schools and communities, recording traditional stories and collecting oral histories with a strong Indigenous and multicultural focus.

Through the Major Organisations Fund, the Australia Council promotes the effective delivery of artistic excellence by Australian arts organisations of national standing.

Organisations are selected for inclusion in the Fund on the basis of their significant cultural role, their size, the scope of their programs and their financial viability. They are expected to have demonstrated a high profile nationally or internationally and must show a commitment to developing the professional skills of Australian artists.

The companies supported by the Major Organisations Board since its inception in April 1995 are the Australian Ballet, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Black Swan Theatre

Company, Circus Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre, Musica Viva, Playbox Theatre Centre, Queensland Ballet, Queensland Theatre Company, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Sydney Dance Company, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Theatre Company and the West Australian Ballet Company.

A further two companies, Bangarra Dance Theatre and Bell Shakespeare Company, were accepted into the Board in December 1995, bringing the total number of companies to



Dein Perry's *Tap Dogs* was a hit for the Sydney Theatre Company.

seventeen. Bangarra Dance Theatre was a particularly significant addition, as the first Indigenous company to be included as a major organisation.

These companies face complex business and planning needs, particularly given the changing and fragile environment in which they operate, the high-risk nature of their operations and their limited asset base. In its first year of operation, the Major Organisations Board supported initiatives to develop best practice models of governance for the companies. A meeting with company board chairs in December 1995 was valuable in opening dialogue between the Major Organisations Board and the company boards. Areas of difficulty and success factors in governance of the companies were identified and shared, providing a basis for companies to improve their own governance practices.

The Board also worked with the companies to improve financial management practices, emphasising realistic budgeting, tight cost controls, and the necessity to build reserves. After several difficult years financially, results for 1995 show the majority of companies have been successful in strengthening their financial positions.

A central element in facilitating improvement of planning processes and financial management is stability of funding. In October 1995, the Major Organisations Board agreed to provide three-year base-grant funding for its companies, covering 1996 to 1998, and determined the funding level for each company. Ninety-five percent of the Board's budget is expended through these grants. The Board also encouraged and assisted the companies to develop transparent business plans including benchmarks, forward targets and key performance indicators, together with appropriate systems for measuring achievements against these indicators and targets. The plans focus on strategies to sustain artistic quality, develop audiences, improve access and strengthen Australian content, as well as addressing the management objectives described above.

They provide the basis for detailed performance agreements negotiated with the companies towards the achievement of mutually agreed artistic and operational objectives.

In addition to providing multiyear base-grant funding, the Major Organisations Board also determined to provide incentive support to encourage risk-taking in artistic programs and collaborative ventures, engagement with technology, and to address training needs. Examples of projects supported in pursuit of these aims include a circus skills training program involving two international specialist aerialists, Deb Pope and Rodrigo Matheus (Circus Oz), the production of a video of *Tap Dogs* (Sydney Theatre Company), and the commissioning of a new dance work by James Taylor for outdoor performance and regional touring (WA Ballet). All of these projects fulfil the Board's broader aim of maximising the value of its investment in these companies by increasing access to their facilities and product.

The performing arts Funds are dedicated to developing and implementing policies and programs which help professional performing artists and arts organisations in their work and which contribute to an invigorating, innovative and accessible national culture.

The restructure of the Australia Council was a major focus for the Performing Arts Board (PAB) last year, with several meetings held to discuss the division of the Board into separate artform Funds. These were established in April 1996, replacing the Board and its Dance, Theatre and Music Committees. The Hybrid Arts Committee was subsumed at the same time by a new Fund, New Media Arts (see page 41). As the Board and Committees operated for most of the year under review, their work is reported here under the rubric of Performing Arts.

The inaugural Performing Arts Awards for outstanding contributions to the performing arts in Australia were presented in October 1995. Jill Smith, General Manager of Melbourne's Playbox Theatre for 16 years, won the individual award. The Performance Space in Sydney received the organisation award.



Batacuda, from Victoria, a band of anarchic percussionists who create foot-tapping, hip-swivelling rhythms with dejambi, snare, bass, talking drum and bells, performed at the Singapore Festival of the Arts in May 1996.

The Don Banks Music Fellowship went to Richard Mills of Queensland. The Fellowship will enable Dr Mills to compose a number of works including the *Frescoes from Millingimbi*, an orchestral work based on his *Earth Poem Sky Poem*, for Aboriginal singers and the Darwin Symphony Orchestra.

The Performing Arts Board's international policy, established in 1989, includes an international advocacy program, touring assistance to Australian companies, and targets international

markets and festivals for promotion. Since the restructure of the Australia Council, the arts export component of these activities is being managed by the Audience Development and Advocacy Division.

Significant activities during the year included:

- ▶ planning for the second Australian Performing Arts Market, to be held in Canberra in October 1996;
- ▶ implementation by the Council, the Board and Asialink, in association with Arts Victoria and the Myer Foundation, of short-term residency opportunities for performing artists in Asia;
- ▶ support for the regional conference of the Federation for Asian Cultural Promotion, the peak organisation for major performing arts presenters and producers in this part of the world, held in Melbourne on 5-7 January 1996;
- ▶ development by the International Theatre Institute, with the support of the Performing Arts Board, of Artslink, a computerised information service incorporating specialist information for arts producers and presenters across the performing arts.

The Board was one of the few non-Japanese bodies invited to participate in the inaugural Tokyo Performing Arts Market in September 1995, where over 500 Japanese producers and presenters took part. The PAB's booth incorporated computerised, video and print resources, and a portable touch-screen interactive display showing the wealth and diversity of Australian dance, theatre and music.

Two Australian companies with funding from the PAB performed in Tokyo to critical acclaim. Bangarra Dance Theatre gave three performances of *Ochres* specially for arts market delegates, and Playbox Theatre Company's production of *The Head of Mary* was performed in repertoire with a Japanese production of John Romeril's *The Floating World* in the Tokyo International Festival, held concurrently with the arts market.



Above: Carouselle Theatre Company was one of only seventeen puppetry groups invited to UNIMA 96 in Budapest, the world's most prestigious puppetry festival, where they presented *Waiting for... Beckett*, which explores the visual and poetic possibilities of Samuel Beckett's later works through puppetry, music and drama.

Right: Gideon Obarzanek, who is directing his new company, Chunky Move, in a program of several innovative dance and dance-theatre works.

Wojciech Piarok

The Board gave 32 grants totalling \$757,000 for international touring. In many cases this allowed companies their first opportunity to take work to a new venue overseas. Highlights include:

- ▶ South Australia's Magpie Theatre received funding to tour *Verona*, a spectacular retelling of the Romeo and Juliet story in silent-movie style which was a hit at the National Festival of Australian Theatre, to North America.
- ▶ West Australian Deckchair Theatre's production of *Ningali* and the Sydney Theatre Company's *What is the Matter with Mary Jane?* were acclaimed at the 1995 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.
- ▶ Venerable Anglo-Celtic-based folk-rock group the Bushwackers undertook a three-week tour of Canada and the USA in May, including performances at Canada's premier Music West event in Vancouver.
- ▶ Performing Lines, one of Australia's major touring agencies, coordinated a program of performances for It's Queer Up North, held in Manchester, UK, in April and May 1996. The program included William Yang's *Sadness*; aerial theatre group Club Swing from Victoria; and artists from The Performance Space's outrageous cabaret, Club Bent.

## Dance

The Dance Fund fosters the development of Australian dance and movement arts through supporting companies, ensembles, freelance artists and independent initiatives. It encourages artists to create and present the highest quality work that contributes to the diversity and originality of Australia's performing arts.

The first stage of Microdance, the dance-on-screen initiative of the Australia Council, the Australian Film Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, was completed this year. It comprised a national program of forums, workshops, screenings and lectures designed to stimulate creative partnerships between the dance and film communities.



Derek Biermann

Stage two is the developmental phase where creative teams are established and proposals submitted. These were recently assessed, with thirteen proposals shortlisted from a field of sixty-one. Each shortlisted team was granted \$2,500 to further develop or workshop their proposal. Of these, four successful teams will be selected for full production later in 1996 and then broadcast on ABC television.

Other projects supported by the Dance Committee this year include:

- ▶ Chunky Move, a new dance company directed by Gideon Obarzanek, for a two-year program of innovative dance

and dance-theatre works. The company's first works premiered at the 1995 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts.

- ▮ Choreographer's fees for Stompin' Youth Dance Co from Launceston for the company's latest outdoor site-specific production to be staged in Hollybank Forest in Lilydale Valley.
- ▮ Outlet Dance, a professional dance company for young people, for its 1996 program, including a collaborative festival performance by the Out-rageous youth dance company,

comprising 16 members aged 14-20, and *In Control* a dance-multimedia-interactive-technology piece. Restless Dance Company, a group combining young dancers with and without a disability, will share resources with Outlet Dance in 1996.

- ▮ Paige Gordon & Performance Group, formed by 27-year-old independent dancer and choreographer Paige Gordon, for infrastructure support. Since its formation in 1993, the company has produced innovative accessible dance theatre focussing on uniquely Australian themes.



Rehearsal shot of Dance North's *Seanchai*, by choreographer Wendy Wallace.  
Dancers:  
Martine Redman,  
Leanne Ringelstein,  
Rachel Jenson and  
Karina Smith.

Donna Larcom

**Music**

The Music Fund fosters the highest quality work by encouraging artistic innovation in composition, performance, recording, broadcast, touring, promotion, electronic distribution and publication of music, music theatre and sound art. It also supports the development of professional artists, the professional coordination of music activities and the dissemination of critical debate on contemporary issues in Australian music.

A seminar on the librettist-composer working relationship was held in March as part of the 1996 Adelaide Festival: *words & music*, convened by Keith Gallasch, was a joint initiative of the Performing Arts and Literature Boards. Participants included established artists, composers, librettists, performers, conductors, critics, and artistic directors working in opera/music theatre in Australia today.

In response to increasing demand for opera music-theatre productions, and a growth in contemporary activity by independent artists, ensembles and opera companies seeking to establish a more theatrical context for their work, proposals worth a total of \$535,000 were supported. These included:



- ▶ the West Australian Pocket Opera's performances in the Old Fremantle Prison of *The Growing Castle*, a two-act contemporary chamber opera by Australian composer Malcolm Williamson;
- ▶ Chamber Made Opera's 1996 program of contemporary Australian opera music-theatre, including a co-commission with the Opera Factory, Zurich, of Brian Howard's *The Wide Sargasso Sea*, and a new opera work by Julian Yu and Glenn Perry;
- ▶ *Get Frocked*, a mixed-media cabaret project by a group of dynamic multi-skilled women artists from the Northern Territory.

Top right:  
Music-theatre project  
*Get Frocked* challenges  
gender stereotyping with  
glam gowns, alter egos  
and satire.

Right:  
Canberra-based youth  
music-theatre group  
Gaudeamus' production  
of *Dante's Inferno*.



George Brzostowsky

The Victoria State Opera received a grant for a workshop of a new Australian opera, *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. The work was composed by Richard Mills with libretto by Peter Goldsworthy, and was commissioned with funds from the Australia Council.

Composer Andrew Ford has been commissioned to compose a new work for Graham Pushee and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. This will be a contemporary statement on 18th-century instruments for counter tenor, obligato flute and baroque strings. A dual text will investigate the invasion-colonisation of the Australian continent and will contrast an Aboriginal view with the first impressions of white settlers.

A diverse range of projects in the youth area were assisted, including jazz, rock, choral, percussion workshops, composer and conductor training programs and youth orchestras. Multiyear funding was offered to fifteen organisations.



Deborah Mailman in the Kooemba Jdarra Indigenous Performing Arts production of *The Seven Stages of Grieving*

Canberra-based youth music-theatre group Gaudeamus (Music for Everyone) received support for the artistic coordinator of its 1996 program, including a street music-theatre work (sponsored by the NRMA Road Safety Trust) aimed at 12-16 year olds as pedestrians and future motorists. It will include road sounds treated electronically and percussion from used car parts.

## Theatre

The Theatre Fund fosters a wide range of approaches to the creation of theatre including text-based theatre, devised work, contemporary performance, puppetry, visual theatre, youth theatre, circus and physical theatre.

Approximately 95 per cent of productions funded directly or indirectly by the Theatre Committee in 1995 were created in their entirety by Australian artists. Of these, 75 per cent were productions of plays. The other 25 per cent were physical theatre, contemporary performance, visual theatre, etc.

Three companies received program funding for the first time this year:

- ▶ the Hildegard Company from Melbourne, whose vocal and choreographic style is rooted in folkloric tradition;
- ▶ Kooemba Jdarra Indigenous Performing Arts in Brisbane; and
- ▶ Geelong-based Back to Back Theatre, which employs performers with disabilities, often in collaborations with other companies such as Handspan Theatre, Melbourne Workers Theatre and La Mama.

The Flying Fruit Fly Circus received funding for its program of new work, interstate touring and a national training project. Tours of *Totally Wicked* and *Chance It* to regional areas of Australia, international exchanges and a rural workshop program to remote schools are part of the forthcoming plans of the company.

Through the Experimetro program, Brisbane's Metro Arts provides valuable space for innovative and interdisciplinary activities in film, video, sound and audio art. The 1996 Experimetro program, funded by the PAB, includes new composers, dance-movement-physical theatre, script development and poetry readings, and independent film and video making.

City Moon's production of a new play, *Conversation with Charlie*, a dialogue between a young Vietnamese-Australian artist and Charlie Chaplin, an artist who has mythical status in Vietnam, was funded in 1995-96. The play will be part of the Sydney Asian Theatre Festival at Belvoir Street Theatre.

A contribution was made towards the production of *Wake Baby* for Brisbane's Out of the Box Festival. *Wake Baby* is a new physical and visual theatre piece specifically for a target audience of 3-8 year olds. It is a collaboration between Company Skylark and several independent artists, including Gillian Rubinstein, Nigel Jamieson and Peter Wilson.

A creative development grant was given to the Just Us Theatre Ensemble for *Black, White and Shades of Brown*. This Cairns-based company is involving Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists in a project on the theme of the lost generation of Aboriginal children removed from their families for domestic service in white Australian homes.

Carole Skinner as Miss Quodling and Gillian Jones as Miriam Sword in the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney, production of Patrick White's *Night on Bald Mountain*.



The establishment of the New Media Arts Fund in April 1996 followed from the success of the Hybrid Arts strategy of the Performing Arts Board. Artists whose practice is not based in any one discipline, or artists who are working collaboratively across artforms, not just in the performing arts, will be able to apply to the New Media Arts Fund; the other Australia Council Funds will continue to support digital arts projects within single artform areas.



Mutley Media's *Booth*, a nationally touring coin-operated exhibition venue comprising a custom built black and white photobooth offering the usual photos and a short multimedia performance, and two-way access to a corresponding boothsite on the Internet.

Projects funded by the Hybrid Arts Committee in 1995-96 include:

- D** *Light*, which combined visual arts, sound, dance and light to create a day-time soundscape and a night-time performance on the banks of the River Torrens during the 1996 Adelaide Festival. A collaboration between writer, historian and sound artist Paul Carter, dancer and choreographer Chandrabhanu, and artist Hossein Valamanesh, the work explored what is known, unknown and projected about William Light.

- D** The Warlpiri Water Dreaming Path, a 2000 km Aboriginal dreaming track expedition from Alice Springs to Darwin, the subject of a grant to Timothy Newth. The project, involving both Warlpiri and white artists, explores the relationships between the worlds of Aboriginal land owners and contemporary white Australians.
- D** Queensland artist Keith Armstrong created a performance using the virtual and interactive system Mandala to allow performers to move within large video projections on the floor of an empty swimming pool, Spring Hill Baths in Brisbane. It combines graphical animation and interactive body silhouettes.
- D** Victoria's Company in Space devised a performance project that links the major cities of Australia via an interactive computer video medium carried over a teleconferencing system. Performers may control and change their sequence of video, light, sound, image, text and action of both their performance site and that of the remote performer.
- D** skadada – performer Jon Burtt, visual artist Katie Lavers and sound artist John Patterson – received development funding for an artist residency at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts which enabled them to experiment with innovative approaches to installing and staging new material.

Two art and technology residencies established in 1995 with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) were awarded again in 1996. The RMIT residency was awarded to film maker Antonia Bruns from Melbourne. She is developing an installation representing three imaginary artists' studios. The installation is set in the future where artists are using emerging materials and technology.

The ABC Residency was awarded to Ion Pearce, Sydney-based composer and sound artist. His work involves the design and construction of original instruments or sound machines, often using recycled materials.

Two new residencies, with the CSIRO Division of Information Technology and with Firmware, one of Australia's leading digital media groups, have been negotiated this year and will be awarded for the first time in 1997.

Performer Jon Burtt, visual artist Katie Lavers and sound artist John Patterson work as skadada. This is an still from their *QT Movie*.



Through its Visual Arts/Craft Fund, the Australia Council supports the creation, presentation and interpretation of contemporary Australian visual art and craft both nationally and internationally.

The redevelopment of a national touring network, intensive consultation with the crafts community, and major grants towards new technology initiatives, along with increased funding support for individuals, are just some of the year's achievements.

The Visual Arts/Craft Board (VACB) offered grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$35,000 to over one hundred individual artists in 1995. Fellowships, which enable artists to devote their time entirely to their work for twelve months, were awarded to Margaret Ainscow, Eugenie Keefer Bell, Marion Borgelt, Tim Burns, Carolyn Delzoppo, Gerhard Emmerichs, Hendrik Forster, Linda Jackson, Derek Kreckler, Kay Lawrence, Lindy Lee, Susan Norrie, Debra Phillips and Julie Rrap. The overseas studio Fellowship, at the Institute of Contemporary Art in New York, was awarded to Queensland artist Luke Roberts.

Right:  
Pippin Drysdale's  
*Treescape*  
(Breakaway series),  
1994, porcelain with  
white tin glaze under  
fritted colour and  
lustres, from the  
*Delinquent Angel*  
exhibition.



Far right:  
Stephen Bowers'  
*Teacaddy*, 1994,  
white earthenware  
clay marbled with  
underglaze detail  
painting and onglaze  
lustre, from the  
*Delinquent Angel*  
exhibition.

Two further Fellowships were awarded to the writers and curators Helen Grace and Kevin Murray, and writer-in-residence grants were made to Craft Victoria for Naomi Cass and to the Jam Factory for Linda Marie Walker. Other artist-in-residence grants were given to the Queensland Potters Association for Bruce Anderson, to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, for Jan Irvine, to the NSW Institute of Forensic Medicine for Richard Stanford, to the Jam Factory for Robert Foster, and to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in collaboration with the Crafts Council of the NT for Catherine Truman.

Senior artists honoured with Emeritus Awards in 1995 were painter Eric Smith and glass engraver Anne Dybka. Emeritus Medals for significant service to the visual arts and crafts were given to Marj Richey and to John Perceval. The medals were designed and made specifically for the recipients by 1994 Fellowship recipient, Rowena Gough.

One of the successful applicants in the Craft Curators Program grant round was the Museum of Victoria which has begun to acquire and document work by Victorian art/craft workers from non-English speaking backgrounds. The documentation of the contemporary craft collection to date includes taped interviews with the artists on their work, photos of the work and a file on each artist.

The VACB assisted major visual art and craft organisations to provide communication links between their services and artists in all parts of Australia and internationally. The Australian Association of Contemporary Arts Organisations (AACOA) was granted \$286,222 towards equipment purchases for electronic communication and exhibition facilities centred on new screen-based technologies, with particular reference to potential World Wide Web networks.



Right:  
Interior of the  
Visual Arts/Craft Board's  
Greene Street,  
New York, studio  
which celebrates  
its twentieth anniversary  
in 1996.



Craft Australia received \$40,000 as seed funding for a National Visual Resource Network. These examples illustrate significant planning by the VACB towards best use of new technologies and information services.

1995 saw the development of a new touring network through the eight organisations which make up the National Exhibitions Touring Service (NETS). The VACB also supported Craft Australia to work in collaboration with the NETS agencies and with Museums Australia to carry out research on craft exhibitions.

Right:  
Textile by  
Judith Ann Hooworth,  
a project grant  
recipient for 1995.  
Detail of *Still Life with  
Poppies*, 1994.



A number of significant exhibitions at the Adelaide Festival in March 1996 were funded by the VACB. These were *Native Titled Now*, curated by Doreen Mellor for Tandanya; *Compost*, curated by David O'Halloran and John Barbour, which presented the work of sixteen Australian artists in private homes in Norwood, Adelaide; and *Art Across Oceans – Containers 96*, curated by David O'Halloran.

Among other major exhibitions funded in 1995-96 were *Austral/Asia*, managed by the Institute of Modern Art and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art; the *12th Tamworth Fibre Biennale*, at the Tamworth City Gallery; and *Points of Diversity*, an exhibition of contemporary Australian furniture design, curated by Stuart Thorn for the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Major touring exhibitions were *Delinquent Angel*, the survey of historical, Aboriginal, and contemporary ceramics curated by Joe Pascoe, which was the focus exhibition at the International Ceramics Concorso in Faenza, Italy, and then toured to Singapore and Japan before beginning its current Australian tour; the continued tour through venues in the USA of the textiles exhibition *Crossing Borders*, curated by Sue Rowley; the showing in Germany of the exhibition of Australian glass art *Ausglass to Ebeltoft*, following its very successful showing at the Ebeltoft Museum in Denmark; and the touring to Germany and the USA of the retrospective exhibition of the work of Klaus Moje. The Venice Biennale exhibition of the work of Bill Henson began its Australian tour in February at the Lawrence Wilson Gallery in Perth.

The Visual Arts Export Strategy provides significant assistance towards the export of Australian art and craft by selected commercial galleries and agencies. Managed in the Visual Arts/Craft Unit until the restructure of Council, it is now a function of the Audience Development and Advocacy Division.

Arrangements for additional overseas studio residencies were concluded in 1995, adding Manila and Milan to the Board's long-established residencies program. The Greene Street studio in New York has its twentieth anniversary in 1996. In that time over eighty artists have benefited substantially from its existence, the most recent being David Jensz, Donald Fortescue and Daniel Mafe.