

Benalla Art Gallery Committee

Agenda

Date: Tuesday 22 February 2022

Time: 6pm

Venue: Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room)
13 Mair Street, Benalla
and Zoom

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Agenda

Chair	Barbara Alexander AO	
Committee	Cr Danny Claridge	Council representative
	Cr Peter Davis	Council representative
	Tim Abdallah	General member
	Brad Hearn	Friends of Benalla Art Gallery representative
	Winsome McCaughey AO	General member
	Bess Nolan-Cook	CEO Tourism North East
	Anna Parle	General member
	Fiona Stephens	General member
	Alice Tallis	General member
In attendance	Adam Saddler	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Eric Nash	Director Benalla Art Gallery

Acknowledgement of Country

We, the Benalla Rural City Council, acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Apologies

Recommendation:

That the apology/ies be accepted and absence of leave granted.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, all Committee members must declare any conflict of interest pursuant to Sections 127 and 128 of the Act in any items on this Agenda.

Section 130 also requires that the Committee member declaring a conflict of interest must exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting of the Benalla Art Gallery Committee held on 16 November 2021 be confirmed.</p>

Business

1. Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment

SF/1742

Adam Saddler – Manager, Economic Development and Sustainability

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides an update on the redevelopment of the Benalla Art Gallery.

DISCUSSION

Off Site Storage

The Council undertook an official tender process from 5 November to 1 December 2021. Unfortunately, the process did not produce a successful tenderer as submissions did not meet the tender requirements.

The Council is currently exploring an alternative option and is hoping to be in a position to provide a confirmed timeline in the next 4-6 weeks.

Architectural Services

A public tender was opened 11 February and closes on 18 March 2022.

The following summary is from the tender portal:

“Council is seeking tenders from suitably qualified and experienced architectural providers to work with Council on the design of the Benalla Art Gallery.

Tenders should clearly demonstrate that the Principal Architect have the necessary capacity, capability, and experience in this type of Project. The Principal Architect and sub-consultants will need to have a background in but not limited to:

- *Design of large art and culture facilities,*
- *Working as the Principal Consultant,*
- *Managing a large sub-consultant team,*
- *Working in regional Victoria,*
- *Designing / Building within heritage environments,*
- *Designing / Building within sensitive areas (both culturally and environmentally),*
- *Consultation and communication with stakeholder groups, and*
- *Working within tight timelines”*

The tender specifications are accompanied by the following documents:

- Benalla Art Gallery Feasibility Study
- Consultation Report supporting Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment
- Benalla Art Gallery Brand, Marketing and Communications Strategy

The design project is expected to be completed by October/November 2022.

The Redevelopment

While this stage is reliant on the outcomes and recommendations of the Architectural Services Project, redevelopment funding has been allocated by the Victorian State Government on the basis the whole project will enhance the Benalla Gallery entry, staff and back-of-house spaces, and the existing café offering.

It is anticipated that the stage will be completed in the first quarter of 2023.

<p>Recommendation:</p>

<p>That the report be noted.</p>

2. Director's report – February 2022

SF/1742

Eric Nash – Director, Benalla Art Gallery

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides an update on the operations of the Benalla Art Gallery since the previous meeting.

DISCUSSION

Pauline Fraser Exhibition

Benalla Art Gallery's end-of-year exhibition in the Simpson Gallery proved exceedingly popular, with over 3,300 exhibition viewers attending Pauline Fraser's *Contemplating Nature* across Summer. These are impressive figures as during this time the Gallery noted an audience trepidation surrounding the emergence of Omicron and this had generally impacted visitation. The exhibition was also particularly important as it celebrated the work of an accomplished artist not only living and working within Benalla, but also creating work in direct response to our unique landscape. This served a dual purpose; helping to engender community pride, and providing visitors an authentic insight into our region.

The audience reception could also be assessed through sales, with 16 framed works from the exhibition selling, while numerous ceramic forms and small etchings were presented in a complementary Gallery Shop exhibition, *Land and Sky Collection*. Many more works were sold through this display, which has also been used to establish the glass cabinets as a space for monthly, rotational, sales-based exhibitions of works by local and regional practitioners.

The Power of Cultural Infrastructure Sector Insights

Commencing in December, Benalla Art Gallery has presented a series of talks by leaders in the cultural sector providing insight into the social, economic, and cultural achievements of their respective institutions. The series has been developed and presented with support from partners MPavilion and RACV.

At the time of writing this report, the Gallery has hosted talks by Katrina Sedgwick OAM (Director & CEO ACMI), and Nicole Durling (Director, CRAFT / former Director of Collections and Exhibitions, MONA). Subsequent talks are confirmed by Bree Pickering (Director, MAMA), and Tarragh Cunningham (Assistant Director, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art).

Attendance has been strong, while MPavilion has professionally recorded the talks, enabling those who weren't able to attend in person to view the talks via the Gallery website at a later date.

Benalla Art Gallery Profile**Media Performance**

Benalla Art Gallery was a source of consistent and positive media coverage since the most recent Benalla Art Gallery Committee meeting, with outcomes including

- Time Out Melbourne article ‘The top regional galleries to visit in Victoria’
- Social media promotion by reputable peer galleries with extensive followings
- Local and regional radio interviews including ABC Mornings and Edge FM Wangaratta
- Local and regional print press including Mansfield and Wangaratta newspapers, and the following Benalla Ensign articles:
 - Friends of Benalla Art Gallery Max Allen lunch – 17 November
 - Art on Saturdays workshops – 1 December
 - The Power of Cultural Infrastructure Talk 1 – 8 December
 - Nick Selenitsch Form and the Universe of Colour – 15 December
 - Lurg artist celebrated – 5 January
 - Gallery workshops great for kids – 12 January
 - Benalla Art Gallery Culture Talks continue this month – 19 January
 - Applications open for art gallery shop exhibitions – 26 January
 - *All about me!* opens at art gallery – 2 February
 - Magazine highlights our gallery’s class – 9 February
 - Haines requests \$37 million for Benalla in budget – 9 February

EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE

Exhibition (from 1/11/2021 to 13/2/2022)	Dates	Attendance	Days	Daily average
Re-generation: Benalla Art Gallery Collection Ledger Gallery	1 November 2021 – 13 February 2022	6768	85	80
Temporal Artefacts Simpson Gallery	1 November – 12 December 2021	1434	36	40
Showcase 2021 Bennett Gallery	1 November – 28 November 2021	2175	24	90
Nick Selenitsch: Form & The Universe of Colour Bennett Gallery	3 December 2021 – 6 February 2022	4533	52	87
Pauline Fraser: Contemplating Nature Simpson Gallery	17 December 2021 – 13 February 2022	3336	48	69
Adrienne Doig: It’s All About Me! Bennett Gallery	11 February – 13 February 2022	517	3	172

PUBLIC AND EDUCATION PROGRAM ATTENDANCE








<i>Programs and Events</i> <i>(from 1/11/2021 to 13/2/2022)</i>	<i>Age Group</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Little Artists – 3 November 2021	Children	1	20
Art on Saturdays: Janet Leith, Life Drawing – 6 November 2021	Adult	1	12
Art on Saturdays: Janet Leith, Life Drawing – 13 November 2021	Adult	1	12
Art on Saturdays: Janet Leith, Life Drawing – 20 November 2021	Adult	1	10
Art on Saturdays: Thistle and Fern , Wreath Making – 27 November 2021	Adult	1	15
Little Artists – 1 December 2021	Children	1	16
Art on Saturdays: Goose and Bug, Jewellery Making – 4 December 2021	Adult	1	6
First Mondays: Nick Selenitsch, Form & the Universe of Colour – 6 December 2021	Adult	1	25
Gallery Tour: ARTC Inland Rail Group	Adult	1	12
The Power of Cultural Infrastructure: Katrina Sedgwick OAM on 'The new ACMI' – 11 December 2021	Adult	1	40
Launch: Pauline Fraser, Contemplating Nature – 16 December 2021	Adult	1	70
School holiday workshop: Plein Air Painting – 13 January 2022	Children	1	12
School holiday workshop: Street Art – 19 January 2022	Children	1	13
School holiday workshop: NGV Kids on tour – 20 January 2022	Children	1	9
The Power of Cultural Infrastructure: Nicole Durling on 'Going outside the Gallery' – 30 January 2022	Adult	1	55
Little Artists – 2 February 2022	Children	1	8
Art on Saturdays: Mark Dober, Plein Air Painting – 5 February 2022	Adult	1	5
First Mondays: Anna White, In my	Adult	1	40









father's garden – 7 February 2022			
Launch: Adrienne Doig, It's All About Me! – 11 February 2022	Adult	1	52
Art on Saturdays: Fleur Rendell, Linocut Printing – 12 February 2022	Adult	1	12








Attachment:
Strategic Plan Progress Report















Recommendation:
That the report be noted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS FEBRUARY 2022

Goal 1. To improve, protect and conserve the Benalla Art Gallery permanent collection				
OBJECTIVE 1	Key Strategies	Actions & Achievements	Progress	Performance Indicators
Objective 1.1 To improve the Benalla Art Gallery permanent collection	Acquire, by purchase, gift and bequest, works of art of outstanding quality in line with the Benalla Art Gallery Collections and Acquisitions Policy	Limited to gifts and bequests. Two proposals brought forward to February meeting.		1.1 That the actual annual spend on conservation and repair work be no less than \$1 for every \$2000 worth of total collection value. 1.2 That all works considered to be of significance be digitised within the life of the Plan. 1.3 That all works considered to be of significance are reviewed to establish clear copyright status within the life of the Plan 1.4 That short and longer term storage solutions, with the available budget and resources, be executed. 1.5 That the industry accepted deaccession process be applied. 1.6 That the collection store have appropriate environmental controls, including temperature and humidity.
	Where possible, remove from the Gallery collection, by an appropriate de-accession process, works that do not fit within the Benalla Art Gallery Collections and Acquisitions Policy.	Development of a list of works eligible for de-accession currently on hold pending the completion of the digitisation project.		
	Encourage, facilitate and acknowledge funding, donations, gifts and bequests that enhance the Benalla Art Gallery collection.	New acquisitions to be clearly identified when first exhibited. This will be prominently achieved in 2022 through the Simpson Gallery exhibition, Michael Cook: <i>Invasion</i>		
Objective 1.2 To protect and conserve the Benalla Art Gallery permanent collection.	Provide appropriate storage, security and environmental conditions	Issues related to climate control systems and security are proactively monitored and reported for repair through Benalla Rural City Council's Facilities team. Benalla Art Gallery Director has worked to develop a Tier 3 application to the Regional Collections Access Program, due 25 February, which would encompass CCTV and HVAC renewal/replacement		
	Provide appropriate financial and other resources to adequately conserve and repair works	A comprehensive record of ideal conservation treatment for all significant artworks, and priority list and proposed timeframe with cost estimates was proposed to be developed in-line with the digitisation project. The scope of the digitisation project has not allowed for this, and work will need to be undertaken in due course. Staff continually monitor the condition of artworks being handled or on display to identify any pressing concerns, and as mentioned, a high volume of condition reports have been completed to get a more comprehensive indication of current conditions. The Community Heritage Grant received to conduct a Significance Assessment is a positive step toward accomplishing this task.		
	Document and manage the collection, including maintaining current digital records to an industry best practice standard	This project has not progressed in recent months, owing to unavailability of key staff due to serious illness. Progress remains as 797 records completed and uploaded to the cloud-based Collection Management Database, eHive. Of these, 396 records have been vetted and published.		
	Continue with securing copyright permission for individual work	Confirming copyright status and sourcing licenses remains a work in progress.		

Goal 2. Increase engagement of the community with the Gallery collection, exhibitions and programs				
OBJECTIVE 2	Key Strategies	Actions & Achievements	Progress	Performance Indicators
Objective 2.1 Display and exhibit works of art	Display art works from the permanent collection in a manner that provides opportunities for deeper engagement.	Throughout 2022, Benalla Art Gallery is displaying 250+ works from the Ledger Collection. Current outbound loans from the Collection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Janet Dawson <i>Morning Star</i> Margaret Lawrence Gallery – <i>Who’s Afraid of Aboriginal Art?</i> 25 February 2022 – 3 March 2022 Lloyd Rees <i>River at Richmond</i> Lloyd Rees <i>Derwent River No. 2</i> Lloyd Rees <i>Mountain Slopes, Tasmania</i> Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery – <i>Landscapes of Light, Lloyd Rees and Tasmania</i> 7 December 2022 – 12 May 2023 		2.1 Visitor numbers grow and visitor feedback is positive 2.2 New brand identity for the Benalla Art Gallery launched 2.3 Social media engagement grows 2.4 Engagement in public programs is meaningful 2.6 Different sections of the permanent collection are displayed
	Present a well-researched, balanced, stimulating, informative and enjoyable exhibitions program	The Benalla Art Gallery’s efforts to present this diverse exhibition program has again been positively received, though visitation has again been impacted by visitor apprehension surrounding the Omicron spike in Summer. 18,763 visitors to the three exhibition spaces recorded from beginning of November 2021 until 13 February 2022.		
Objective 2.2 Promote the Benalla Art Gallery	Develop and launch a new brand identity for the Gallery	All graphic materials have been delivered in-line with the new brand.		
	Promote highlight exhibitions, and other opportunities for engagement to increase visitation	Positive outcomes in the reporting period have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Out Melbourne article <i>‘The top regional galleries to visit in Victoria’</i> Social media promotion by reputable peer galleries with extensive followings Local and regional radio interviews including ABC Mornings and Edge FM Wangaratta Local and regional print press including Mansfield and Wangaratta newspapers, and the near-weekly Benalla Ensign articles 		
	Present the Benalla Art Gallery brand in a consistent and credible manner	As per report for ‘Develop and launch a new brand identity for the Gallery’.		
	Promote the Gallery as a regional tourism product, with a focus on partnerships and collaboration	Benalla Art Gallery continues to focus on the development of partnerships to enhance regional tourism objectives, and is advancing the plans toward an outdoor projection screen, though recurring delays in fabrication and delivery of the secure housing has delayed anticipated activation. A partnership has been secured with the University of Melbourne, which will commission 12 works for the screen, at a total commission value of \$6,000. Benalla Art Gallery has supported members of Oculi Collective in submitting RAV Quick Response Grants to enable more programming on the weekend of 13-15 May, which will be a regional focus for the statewide PHOTO Festival, and therefore driving audiences to Benalla. Benalla Art Gallery has supported Goldrush Ballooning’s loan request to the National Gallery of Australia, which if successful would see Patricia Piccinini’s <i>Skywhale</i> and <i>Skywhalepapa</i> take a late-March flight from a pre-determined winery within the region.		
Objective 2.3 Increase access to the permanent collection	Use collection displays, Gallery exhibitions, travelling exhibitions, loans, publications, programs and new technology to increase access to the permanent collection	As per reports for ‘Document and manage the collection, including maintaining current digital records to an industry best practice standard’ and ‘Display art works from the permanent collection in a manner that provides opportunities for deeper engagement.’		
	Finalise the business case and plans for the development of the Art Gallery masterplan	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment - Design Services Tender opened in February. Benalla Rural City Council is seeking tenders from suitably qualified and experienced architectural providers to work with Council on the design of the Benalla Art Gallery. The tender follows the 2019 Feasibility Study and Business Case for redevelopment of Benalla Art Gallery, and this architectural services opportunity is made possible thanks to funding from the Victorian State Government to support Regional Cultural Infrastructure. The successful tenderer will deliver two linked but distinct outcomes, being a Masterplan Design for future redevelopment of the Gallery and how this may be achieved in a staged approach, and Detailed Architectural Drawings for Stage 1 redevelopment. Stage 1 redevelopment funding has been allocated by the		

		Victorian State Government to enhance the Gallery entry, staff and back-of-house spaces, and the existing café offering.		
Objective 2.4 Provide interesting and relevant education and public programs	Present innovative, informative and engaging public programs	Benalla Art Gallery public programs increased in frequency in this reporting period. In total 20 programs were presented for 444 participants.		
	Stimulate engagement and understanding of the visual arts through events, workshops, learning opportunities and lectures	The diversity of activity was included adults and children's workshops (paid and free/drop-in), sector lectures, artist talks, launches and exhibition celebrations. Both major Bennett Gallery exhibitions in the reporting period have also incorporated an interactive component for young families.		
	Engage with the Victorian School Curriculum to ensure programs are targeted and appropriate for students and teachers	Benalla Art Gallery is in the process of re-engaging with schools in the region to plan activity for 2022, with school only having recently recommenced for the year.		
Objective 2.5 Provide high-quality services and an enjoyable, accessible environment for visitors.	Provide a level of visitor service which is welcoming, knowledgeable and consistent with a Gallery of premium standing	Development of appropriate visitor services standards which are observed by all staff and volunteers to be developed – pending. Friends of Benalla Art Gallery have conducted some peer benchmarking with the objective to responsibly activate a volunteers exhibition guide program.		
	Seek and respond to visitor feedback	Benalla Art Gallery continues to collect visitor responses and demographic insights through general reception surveying.		
	Seek to refine the Gallery Café Lease agreement	The lease and any arising issues are managed through Greg Robertson, Manager Facilities and Information Technology.		
	Continue to improve the Gallery retail space	The Gallery's retail performance was bolstered by the success of Pauline Fraser's concurrent Shop and Simpson Gallery exhibitions. The Shop has now been thematically re-stocked to complement the major exhibition <i>Adrienne Doig: It's All About Me!</i> , including greeting cards, puzzles, magnets, and one-of-a-kind miniature nesting doll sets..		

Goal 3. Maximise support for Gallery operations				
OBJECTIVE 3	Key Strategies	Actions and Achievements	Progress	KPIs
Objective 3.1 Develop and maintain strategic relationships.	Actively engage with all levels of Government	This is done as part of regular operations as appropriate.		3.1 Sound financial position and financial capacity to host large scale events 3.2 Stakeholder satisfaction with facilities and services 3.3 Establish a Foundation for the Gallery through which funds can be raised for the redevelopment of the Art Gallery 3.4 Raise funds for the redevelopment of the Art Gallery
	Work collegially as part of the visual arts sector	Benalla Art Gallery continues to engage with the sector nationally through the consideration and appropriate approval of loan requests, representation at key events and in relevant discussions, and chiefly through the peak body, Public Galleries Association of Victoria.		
	Develop and maintain productive relationships with artists, donors, sponsors, members and other key stakeholders	Further focus required, a number of planned opportunities for engagements with artists, members, etc. have been postponed or cancelled.		
	Continue to work with Tourism North East, other galleries and appropriate regional tourism operators	Benalla Art Gallery continues to do this as part of regular operations, as indicated by reported support of Goldrush Ballooning's NGA loan application. Benalla Art Gallery's current exhibition <i>Adrienne Doig: It's All About Me!</i> is a touring exhibition, the result of a relationship fostered with Bathurst Regional Art Gallery.		
Objective 3.2 Secure and manage the Gallery's financial resources	Establish a Foundation for the Gallery for the purpose of securing its long-term financial security	Being progressed through Chair, Winsome McCaughey, and appointed Trustees, Margaret Richards and Cr Peter Davis.		
	Secure funding and support for Gallery operations and programs from Government, corporate and private sources	Appropriate funding programs to be identified to support the key objectives of the gallery, such as the RCAP funding application in development.		
	Maximise return from commercial operations	Commercial lease and retail revenue are beginning to return to pre-COVID levels of return.		
	Manage financial resources effectively, aligning them with strategic and financial plans	This is done as part of regular operations; the Gallery continues to present a highly ambitious exhibition and events program within the constraints of allocated budget.		
	Develop a Philanthropic Funding Strategy	Refer progress being made through the Benalla Art Gallery Acquisition Trust.		
Objective 3.3 Manage the infrastructure of the Gallery	Maintain the Gallery building to a high standard	All regular facilities tests (airconditioning, fire systems, etc.) completed, and monitoring of performance ongoing. Identified issues with various systems communicated through Council for immediate rectification or inclusion in future budget processes. Major upgrades forecast in Council 10 year Financial Plan, Gallery applying for grant as previously mentioned to bring works forward.		
	Maintain the Gallery building so it best protects the Gallery permanent collection	As per report for 'Provide appropriate storage, security and environmental conditions'.		
	Consider environmental sustainability in the Gallery operations	Following electrical investigations, Benalla Art Gallery was able to complete a lighting upgrade in the Simpson Gallery. This space now utilizes only LED lights with Bluetooth dimming capacity, hence reducing the Gallery's power consumption.		
Objective 3.4 Renew the Gallery infrastructure	Finalise the business case and plans for the development of the Gallery masterplan, ensuring it best serves the needs of the Gallery and its audience	Final Report presented on behalf of the Committee by Winsome McCaughey to an Assembly of Benalla Rural City Council in February 2021.		
	Seek Government and non-Government support for the redevelopment project	Benalla Art Gallery, in partnership with RACV and MPavilion, has been presenting a program of four keynote style presentations by leading figures in the sector, exploring the transformational power of cultural institutions and appropriate cultural infrastructure from a number of different lenses, aligned loosely to the objectives set out in the Feasibility Study and Business Case. The talks are intended to be both educational and inspirational for general public and those who will influence the project. Dr Helen Haines MP has included a \$7m ask for the next stage of Benalla Art Gallery redevelopment in her package of budget requests for the Indi region.		

3. Exhibition schedule 2022

SF/1742

Eric Nash – Director, Benalla Art Gallery

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the 2022 exhibition schedule.

DISCUSSION

This report captures exhibitions at various stages of development and also changes made necessary due to direct and indirect impacts of sector-wide COVID-19 closures.

Attachments:

Exhibition Schedule 2022

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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Benalla Art Gallery Exhibition Schedule 2022

Location	January					February					March					April					May					June					July					August					September					October					November					December				
weeks start Mondays	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26								

EXHIBITIONS

[illegible]

RELATED EVENTS

[illegible]

School terms - Victoria
Festivals
Lakeside Farmers Market 9AM-1PM
Gardens Market 3-8PM

[illegible]

4. Acquisition Proposal – Charles Blackman

SF/1742

Eric Nash – Director, Benalla Art Gallery

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a recommendation for acquisition of artworks for the Benalla Art Gallery Collection.

DATE 22 February 2022**WORKS** Charles BLACKMAN

Alice Magic
etching
68.9 x 60.0 cm [framed]
ed. 50/90

The Chess Game
etching
60.3 x 63.6 cm [framed]
ed. 49/90

COST None. The work is being offered by the donor as a direct donation.**PROVENANCE** Work was purchased direct from an art dealer by Benalla Art Gallery volunteer, Linda Tullberg.**BIOGRAPHY** Charles BLACKMAN
Born: Sydney, New South Wales, Australia 12 Aug 1928
Died: Sydney, New South Wales, Australia 20 Aug 2018

Charles Blackman is one of the most celebrated Australian figurative artists of the 20th century. An excellent draughtsman as well as a painter, he created imagery – often in series – based on personal, literary and musical themes. He came to prominence after the Second World War as one of the so-called ‘Heide circle’ of artists and was also a founding member of The Antipodeans art movement.

Born in Sydney, Blackman grew up in Queensland before leaving school aged 13 and returning to Sydney to work as an illustrator for the Sydney Sun newspaper.

Predominantly self-taught, he attended night classes at East Sydney Technical College, now the National Art School, from 1943 to 1946.

In 1951 Blackman moved to Melbourne and became one of the group of artists, which included Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker and Joy Hester, centred at Heide, the home of art patrons John and Sunday Reed, in the city's outer suburbs.

It was during his first year in Melbourne that he discovered the bayside suburb of St Kilda, where he would travel by tram to swim, draw and visit Luna Park. The drawings, including Luna Park with Griffin light, led to a series of paintings on the same theme.

Blackman's first major series, 'Schoolgirls', created between 1952 and 1955, has long captured the public imagination. In it, he painted the schoolgirl figure, often depicted in eerily empty streetscapes, as a symbolic embodiment of urban loneliness and alienation. The painting Girl dreaming and the drawing Schoolgirls with a dog – both in the Art Gallery of NSW collection – form part of this quintessential series.

Further acclaim followed with his 'Alice' series, based on Lewis Carroll's book Alice in Wonderland, introduced to him by his then wife Barbara Blackman, who served as the model for Alice in these works. Produced from 1956 to 1957, the series includes more than 40 paintings of vivid and surreal imagination.

In 1959, Blackman was one of seven figurative artists, including Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, John Brack, Robert Dickerson, John Perceval and Clifton Pugh, who signed the 'Antipodean manifesto', drafted by Bernard Smith, which outlined their objections to abstract art, which they felt was becoming too prominent in Australia.

In 1960, Blackman received the Helena Rubenstein Travelling Scholarship and moved to London for six years, where he exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery and the Tate Gallery.

In 1970 he was awarded a Cité des Artes scholarship and spent a year in Paris, a city he found inspiring and would return to often in later years.

Blackman's work is held in all major public collections in Australia and internationally including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Tate. Blackman was appointed an Officer of the British Empire in 1977 for services to Australian art. He died in August 2018, a week after his 90th birthday.

Courtesy: www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au

WORK UNDER CONSIDERATION



Charles BLACKMAN
Alice Magic
 etching
 68.9 x 60.0 cm [framed]
 ed. 50/90



Charles BLACKMAN
The Chess Game
 etching
 60.3 x 63.6 cm [framed]
 ed. 49/90

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Charles Blackman is one of Australia's most important artists, and was renowned for his images exploring the duality of life. His *Alice* series was perhaps his most significant and enduring body of work. This series comprised 46 major paintings produced from 1956 to 1957, complemented by a suite of prints and works on paper, such as those proposed for acquisition.

Blackman heard Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in 1956. The bizarre tale, coupled with the personal impacts of his wife Barbara's failing, served as ample inspiration for this series of images, described as "challenging images that are simultaneously amusing and disquieting."

These etchings are indicative of Blackman's *Alice* series, which blended iconic motifs from Carroll's fantastic journey into the imagination with the artist's own personal life.

The works would complement a number of other works already held or approved for acquisition into the Benalla Art Gallery. As such they would find numerous possible contexts for public exhibition. These works would complement other works by Blackman's Heide circle peers; the extensive suite of works on paper by Australian artists, donated by Dr Douglas A Kagi and currently being processed through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. Most directly they bolster the Benalla Art Gallery's holdings of works by this artist, which currently includes the paintings *Landscape*, *Avonsleigh*, and *Flinders Street Station*.

Collecting will be focused according to the following broad aspirations:

- *To build on existing strengths and identify areas for collection development;*
- *To acquire iconic works of enduring significance and impact;*
- *To acquire exemplary works which demonstrate new modes of practice;
or exemplify key moments in art history;*
- *To promote opportunities for exhibition-related acquisitions and commissions*

ADDITIONAL COSTS: NIL

Recommendation:
That the offer of acquisition be accepted.

5. Acquisition Proposal – Sebastian Di Mauro

SF/1742

Eric Nash – Director, Benalla Art Gallery

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a recommendation for acquisition of artworks for the Benalla Art Gallery Collection.

DATE 22 February 2022**WORKS** Sebastian DI MAURO

Furl / Ripple Rap 2014
from *Surf 'n' Turf* series 2014
artificial grass, real grass, neoprene, aluminium
dimensions variable

COST None. The work is being offered by the donor as a direct donation.**PROVENANCE** Work is proposed for direct donation by the Artist**BIOGRAPHY** Sebastian DI MAURO
Born: Innisfail, Queensland, Australia 1955

Sebastian Di Mauro was born in Innisfail, Australia in 1955 and he currently lives and works in Wilmington, Delaware. He has a PhD from Griffith University and was an Associate Professor until he retired in 2016. At Griffith University he taught sculpture in the Fine Art Program.

Since the late 1980s he has held over 45 solo exhibitions and his work has been included in excess of 100 group exhibitions in Australia and overseas. His paintings, sculptures, artist books and installations are collected by many of Australia's key art institutions, including: the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Bendigo Art Gallery, Besen Collection, Artbank, University of Queensland Art Museum and Deakin University.

Recognised in 2004 as one of Australia's sculptors to watch in terms of investment, his work has been celebrated in two monographs, *Between Material* (1998) and *Footnotes of a Verdurous Tale* (2009). Di Mauro's work has risen to national prominence through a number of achievements namely: an Australia Council 'New Work' grant in 1999; winning the Inaugural Woollahra Sculpture Prize; inclusion in

the National Sculpture Prize and Exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia in 2001; awarded residencies with Parks Victoria,

Melbourne and later the British School, Rome in 2002; being judged a finalist in The McClelland Survey and Award in 2003; winning the Montalto Sculpture Prize (Mornington Peninsular, Victoria); selection for the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award and Exhibition in 2003, 2005 and 2008; awarded the Australia Council's Barcelona Studio in 2009; and more recently a survey exhibition of his work mounted at Queensland University of Technology Art Museum in 2009.

During the last 15 years Di Mauro has also completed a number of major public art commissions in high profile buildings including: Chat at 175 Eagle Street, Brisbane (2002); Drift for 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane during the Year of the Built Environment (2004); and Blur between for the Brisbane Magistrates Court (2004). He has collaborated with innovative architects such as Alice Hampson on several public art projects including Undulant at the Logan Community Health Centre (2005) and Greener Fields in the Gabba Members Area (Gabba Cricket Ground). In Adelaide Di Mauro completed a commission in 2006 for Taylor, Cullity and Lethlean Landscape Architects and in 2011 he installed an ephemeral public artwork for the Adelaide City Council. He has an international reputation as a public artist. In 2011 Di Mauro's Drifter was commissioned in Ningbo and Rapture for Suzhou 2013, China. He continues to develop public art projects for China and Australia.

Courtesy: www.sebastiandimauro.com

WORK UNDER CONSIDERATION

Sebastian DI MAURO
Furl / Ripple Rap 2014
from *Surf 'n' Turf* series 2014
artificial grass, real grass, neoprene, aluminium
dimensions variable

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The artist states, “My 2014 solo exhibition titled *Surf 'n' Turf* at Gold Coast City Art Gallery continued my investigation into the same cultural territory as previous artificial grass and neoprene artworks. The installation *Furl/Ripple Rap* combined artificial grass, blue neoprene, and real grass.... In the exhibition, I explored the desire for the evergreen manicured lawn, the search for arcadia and the creation of utopia—a ‘little piece of heaven on earth’. Many Australians live on or close to the coast. The exhibition *Surf 'n' Turf* investigated and critiqued the suburban dream that has been transplanted onto a plot of land on the coast—with the blue ocean breaking not far away, the evergreen lawn, and the perfect house. The artificial grass forever green wrapped over the curved form offered a kitsch substitute and humorous interpretation of the real thing.”

In the catalogue essay for the exhibition, Louise Martin-Chew stated, “As an artist, Di Mauro has often embraced the double edge of nostalgia—its joyous and, at times, excruciating elements. This work revels in the aspirations of the suburban Australian dream, the desire—particularly in immigrant populations—to recreate the green grass and garden that signifies home.”

While far from the beaches of the Gold Coast, this thematic exploration is highly relevant to Benalla, and particularly the immediate Gallery surrounds, owing to the creation of a

Botanical Garden 'utopia' in an idealised colonial style, and the creation of a man-made Lake in 1975 from the Broken River.

This work has the opportunity to be displayed internally as part of thematic exhibitions, and would stoke interesting conversation around these fabricated landscapes. It would also be a welcome addition to the Gallery's limited holdings of large-scale sculptural/installation pieces.

Following advice from the artist, the materiality would also allow for external display, should an appropriate temporary or permanent site be identified.

For external installation, the artist advises "*Furl* is connected together in components, please see below image showing the connection points. The plates that join together are bolted, likely M8 or M6 SS CSK. As far as a footing design I would think it can be bolted directly to a concrete slab or tiles etc with some form of nylon or rubber spacer to stop the material corroding. The footing design would need to be assessed according to the site. The upper components will need to be supported, again assessed according to the location. The upper components may be suitable to have cable supports."



The work would be a desirable addition to either the internal or external Collection (pending appropriate site confirmation). Storage pressures do need to be considered. While approximate installed dimensions are 380 x 300 x 500 cm, the work packs down to around 300 x 300 x 200 cm floorspace in storage. While storing in climate-controlled conditions is also desirable if the work were intended for internal display only, it is also not crucial over a short period, owing to the potential external display and hard-wearing nature of the materials. Storage of the work will not be an issue upon completion of the anticipated offsite Collection store, so this presents as a short-term issue. It is recommended the work be accepted, pending identification of an appropriate short term storage solution, or permanent outdoor installation site.

The acceptance of this work would fulfil the following criteria:

- *To acquire iconic works of enduring significance and impact;*
- *To acquire exemplary works which demonstrate new modes of practice;
or exemplify key moments in art history;*
- *To promote opportunities for exhibition-related acquisitions and commissions*

ADDITIONAL COSTS: \$1500 contribution towards artwork transportation from artist's studio in Queensland.

Footings for possible outdoor display additional.

Recommendation:

That the offer of acquisition be accepted conditional on appropriate temporary storage.

6. Discussion Paper – Benalla Art Gallery Strategic Plan Review

SF/1742

Eric Nash – Director Benalla Art Gallery

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents intended process for review of the Benalla Art Gallery Strategic Plan.

DISCUSSION

The current Benalla Art Gallery Strategic Plan is set to expire in 2023. Internal and external forces have also impacted the currency of the document:

- Impacts of COVID on resourcing landscape, audience behaviours, and sector changes
- Updated progress of major projects such as Benalla Art Gallery redevelopment and activation of the Benalla Art Gallery Foundation
- Local, State and National strategic policies have been updated:
 - Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2021-2025
 - Creative State 2025
 - Australia Council for the Arts Corporate Plan 2020-2024

To ensure the Strategic Plan best suits and guides the Benalla Art Gallery, the Director will commence a process of Strategic Plan review and revision. This is an important process to deliver a cohesive, singular guiding vision that best positions the organisation to attract external support, ensures vision alignment with Foundation activities, and consolidates existing key documents such as the *Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Feasibility Study and Business Case*, and *Benalla Art Gallery Marketing and Brand Strategy*.

This review process will encompass benchmarking against Strategic Plan structures for reputable peer cultural institutions; seeking advice through the Melbourne Business School's 'For Purpose Executive Leadership Course', and seeking and utilising the expertise of members of the Benalla Art Gallery Committee.

This process is in line with the Terms of Reference for the Benalla Art Gallery Community Asset Committee:

3. Strategic Plan

3.1. *In conjunction with the relevant Council Officers, develop and monitor a Strategic Plan for the Gallery.*

Following the Director's review and revision, a new draft Strategic Plan will be brought forward to the Benalla Art Gallery's 23 August 2022 meeting for comment.

The adoption of the Benalla Art Gallery strategic Plan will then be subject to Benalla Rural City Council processes, which may involve community consultation.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

7. Benalla Art Gallery Acquisition Trust Fund

SF/1742

Winsome McCaughey – Chair, Benalla Art Gallery Acquisition Trust Fund

To be presented at the meeting.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Art Gallery Committee is scheduled for **6pm on Tuesday 24 May 2022.**

AGENDA ITEM 7

REPORT FROM THE BENALLA ART GALLERY (ACQUISITION) TRUST TO THE BENALLA ART GALLERY COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE: FEB, 2022

1. REPORT ONE: THE TRUST ROUNDTABLE HELD 4 FEB 2022

Purpose of the Roundtable

The Trust hosted a Roundtable on 4 Feb 2022 in the Studio below BAG with the following purpose: *'To consider and advise the Trust on ways the Trustees can work collaboratively with other entities directly associated with BAG, including with the Friends of Benalla Art Gallery (FBAG); the Gallery Director; the Benalla Rural City Council and Council's Community Asset Committee (BAG CAC) to:*

- *Build relationships with existing and new supporters and encourage contributions to BAG*
- *Raise funds for the BAG Redevelopment Project (including building, programs and operations)*
- *Raise funds for BAG programs current that are in urgent need of support.'*

Trust Strategic Advisory Team

The Trust is fortunate to have the assistance of three distinguished, professionals with high-level skills, expertise and experience in fields directly related to the Trust's purpose. They are:

- Ms Lin Bender AM, consultant in strategic planning, executive and change management; former CEO, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. *(Providing pro-bono Strategic Advice to the Trust)*
- Associate Professor, Jody Evans, Melbourne Business School (former Board Member of the Shepparton Art Museum Foundation and the Public Galleries Association Vic)
- Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Kerrie Bridson from Deakin University

Roundtable Participants and Presentations

All Trustees participated in the Roundtable and were joined by others from entities directly associated with BAG, including senior representatives from: the Council, the Gallery Director and the BAG Community Advisory Committee of Council, the Friends of BAG and a wider community leader. Assoc/Prof Evans facilitated the Roundtable.

The Trust Chair acknowledged the Roundtable was just one step in an ongoing process and builds on decades of community efforts that have driven consultations, studies, reports and concept plans.

Excellent presentations were made by:

- Prof Jody Evans on 'Mapping the Economic & Social Impact of Regional Art Museums'. Prof Evans also said MBS was offering other initiatives of value, including an opportunity for BAG to participate in a long term research study on impact of galleries on community quality of life.
- Eric Nash on 'Opportunities for the Benalla Art Gallery'

Discussion focussed on:

- What could be the impact of a Redeveloped BAG for Benalla and what could be its powerful, stand-out, succinct Narrative or Value Proposition that will engage BAG supporters?
- How can the Trust work collaboratively with FBAG and others directly involved with BAG to engage supporters and raise funds for BAG?

Concepts Proposed in Roundtable Discussions for BAG Value Proposition Statement (Narrative)

(Similar concepts have been expressed /can be found in the excellent Consultation & Branding Report by 3Deep (2019) and also in the Feasibility, Business Case and Concept Plan by Urban Enterprises (2020)

1. BAG should be /become:

- *'The People's Gallery'* because 'Art is a Universal Language that belongs to everyone.' (This term was also coined by participants in the 2019 3DEEP Consultations)
- Contemporary. Bold. Courageous. Innovative. Relevant. Honest. Inclusive.
- An Economic driver/ a catalyst that helps unlock the quality opportunities that Benalla City and community have the potential for; that and stimulates positive, quality growth

- A truly regional gallery: engaging diverse art forms in 'telling' stories that honours, owns and considers honestly the past (good and bad), critiques the present, embraces the future and reflects on what it is to be Australian – as per values embodied in the Weary Dunlop sculpture
 - A multi-discipline platform for Arts and Cultural diversity that engages regional art workers
 - A hub/ meeting place/point of connectivity for locals and beyond - and for all society elements
2. BAG should play key roles in:
- Cultural enrichment and innovation for the region and beyond
 - Educational opportunities locally; especially building skills/confidence of students and of youth who are experiencing disadvantages
 - Health and Wellbeing, especially of children and people who are unemployed or isolated
 - Indigenous reconciliation; fostering understanding of our past and of future opportunities.
3. The BAG Redevelopment of the Building should be:
- Iconic architecture, yet respect the existing building and beautiful historic landscape
 - Sufficient number/ size of spaces to enable and support extensive range of Redevelopment Programs as identified in 1 and 2 above and in previous studies ('form follows function')
 - A source of great civic pride, a booster of civic confidence and of enterprise activity

Roundtable Advice to the Trust

1. Analyze Trust funds to determine if sufficient monies can be released to contract a part-time position to build strategic relationships and raise funds for at least 12 months
2. Assist with development of a powerful, stand-out BAG Narrative / Value Proposition
3. Collaborate with FBAG and other BAG-support bodies in fostering engagement in and funding for BAG **(a)** the optimal Redevelopment of BAG; **(b)** Current BAG programs.

Outcomes of the Roundtable

1. The Trust has identified \$38,000 of 'untied funds' and agreed to allocate this towards contracting a person to work part-time in assisting with BAG Engagement and Fund-raising.
2. The Trust will engage with and encourage FBAG, Council and other BAG-related bodies to:
 - contribute to the Engagement & Fund-raising position (so as to extend position duration)
 - seek support for the BAG Director's top funding priorities for current BAG programs.
3. The Trust has a *Strategic Advisory Team*: Ms Lin Bender AM, Assoc Prof Jody Evans and Assoc Prof Kerrie Bridson have offered to help the Trust and associated BAG bodies achieve BAG Engagement and Fundraising objectives. The Trust thanks the Team sincerely for giving their time and expertise pro bono to the Trust and the Benalla community.

2. REPORT TWO: AMENDING THE TRUST STRUCTURE – AND THE BAG FOUNDATION

The Trust Chair, with input from BRC Council CEO is working with senior Counsel from Maddocks to:

- bring the 1986 Trust Deed of the Benalla Art Gallery Acquisition Trust into compliance with modern ancillary fund requirements
- expand the purposes of the BAG Trust and
- rename the BAG Trust to the Benalla Art Gallery Foundation.

This has been a lengthy process as the ATO determined that the current Trust had to be updated and made compliant, prior to the new Foundation being formed. The following steps still remain:

- Execute Deed of Variation No. 3
- Incorporate Benalla Art Gallery Foundation Limited
- Execute Deed of Appointment
- Execute Deed of Variation No 4

Approval from the ATO of all documents is required for these steps to be finalized. This is pending. Council also needs to approve execution of documents to appoint Benalla Art Gallery Foundation Limited as trustee of the BAG Trust. Approval for this is also currently pending.

(Prepared for Feb 2022 BAG CAC meeting by Trust Chair, Winsome McCaughey, on behalf of fellow Trustees.)

FRIENDS of Benalla Art Gallery Inc. Report to Benalla Art Gallery Asset Committee

Another exciting year ahead for the Friends!

Although this is the first meeting of the BAG, the Friends have held a number of meetings of the Friends which have been highly productive and effective. We have over 50 members in the incorporation!! The Friends of the Benalla Art Gallery have commenced their strategic planning for the years ahead and are looking to align their strategy alongside the Gallery and the Trust to best work together as a collective group of committed community members working in the best interests of the community asset.

Our Framework Arms for operation are:

- Increased Community Voice
- Increased Engagement in the Gallery
- Increased Advocacy of the Gallery
- Supporting the Gallery
- Fundraising
- Membership

These six areas lay the foundation of our organisation and support us to continue the great work that we do in raising funds and needed support for the Gallery.

Currently we are looking for interested members to gain their RSA qualification. An EOI has gone out to all members. The RSA training has been supported by the BRCC, in which we thank them for the contribution to our organisation and to the Gallery as a whole. Although a number of smaller events have been postponed due to unforeseen complications with the pandemic we are excited about the year ahead.

We are completing our sales of the Friends 2022 BAG Calendar which appears to be going positively and we are looking to the future with upcoming events and activities for your participation.

The Friends have been supportive in a number of Gallery events and presentations this year already, which had kept the calendar full for members of both the Gallery and of the Friends. We know that Friends events are a calendar highlight to many members and makes membership to the Friends a worthy organisation to be a part of including preferential ticketing and first in booking opportunities along with occasional discounts on sales on both events and on fundraising items. Hearing first hand from all aspects of Gallery operations and strategy and being a part of a fundraising body is another core function and we want to thank the director and the BAG for supporting the Friends to remain informed about all aspects of the Gallery. The Friends are a group of keen supporters that want to continue the great work the reduces burden on the rate payer and promotes a more inclusive and accessible community asset. The Friends remain committed to ensuring that the Gallery provides the meeting place for all residents to feel connection and build a sense of belonging. Mental ill health has ravaged Victoria over the past two years and it is through the work of the Gallery the we can ensure those that are a part of Benalla LGA and those that visit can benefit from the health benefits provided by the Benalla Gallery.

As this fantastic year progresses we look forward to continuing the advocacy of the Gallery through both a Federal and State elections, alongside being active contributors to the work of the BAG and the Trust in achieving their strategic objectives. As plans for the year unfold from our neighbouring bodies we can better align the efforts of the Friends with the tangible results of all three entities. For the first time in the history of our organisations the open dialogue and commitment of these three organisations have been optimistic to say the least. The three chairs (Barbara, Winsome and Myself) and the director are establishing communalised strategic objectives and working collectively together which is a first since the establishment of the Gallery. We look forward to what we can achieve in the year ahead and continuing this team spirit.