

#2-30 JULY 2022  
THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL GALLERY  
YOUTH COUNCIL ZINE

# HEAR US NOW

The graphic features a large, bold, black sans-serif font spelling out 'HEAR US NOW' across the top and bottom. The word 'US' is positioned in the middle right. A large, orange speech bubble with a black and white checkerboard pattern is positioned on the left, pointing towards the word 'US'. Three orange curved lines, resembling sound waves, emanate from the right side of the speech bubble, curving around the word 'US'.

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**Welcome to edition two!**

**A big hello again from the youth council crew at the National Gallery. It's so nice to see you again. (You look great, have you had a haircut?) We are still buzzing from all the love at our Art IRL event in April. Thank you to everyone who came along for the evening, either in-person or online, to soak up some arty goodness at the National Gallery. We have some interesting insights to share at the back of this issue about what you'd like to see next and the big topics you're thinking about when it comes to the art world.**

**In this issue of Hear Us Now, Lara, Isla, Odette and Annabel are bringing you on a journey through the Gallery and beyond. Step into the world of Stefan Giammarco, the Gallery's Visitor Experience Manager, and learn about the relocation of The Aboriginal Memorial into the heart of the Gallery. Hear about amazing projects happening in other parts of the country with Isla as she shares her insights into the Australian Ceramic Triennale 2022 in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Finally, Odette takes a look at some big questions facing gallery art collections, and Annabel shares the results from our Issue One survey.**

**Happy reading!**

**Lara, Isla, Odette and Annabel**



Young people at the ArtIRL event in April 2022.





Young people at the ArtIRL event in April 2022.

# UNEXPECTED INTERVIEW

## VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MANAGER



Visitor Experience and Membership Manager, Stefan Giammarco.

**Stefan Giammarco began work at the National Gallery in 2021. Each time you visit or engage with the Gallery, Stefan has been working behind the scenes to make your visit as seamless, enjoyable and safe as it can be. We recently interviewed Stefan to find out more about his role and his pathway to the National Gallery.**

**YOUTH COUNCIL: Describe your role at the Gallery – what does a Visitor Experience and Membership Manager do?**

STEFAN GIAMMARCO: My role is to ensure that all the visitors that come into the National Gallery on any day of the week have the best experience possible. In terms of direct operational terms, I oversee the visitor experience team which includes ticketing, the Art Store, main entry invigilation, gallery spaces, and the membership team which looks after all our members, members events and Members Lounge. Then, at a more strategic level, I work with the Heads of Departments from other areas of the Gallery to make sure that what we're doing as a whole is for the benefit of our visitors.

**What was the career path that took you to becoming a Visitor Experience and Membership Manager?**

I was at university studying design and photography and growing up I always wanted to be a photographer, preferably in the

fashion photography space. While I was at uni, I got a job selling tickets at the aquarium in Sydney casually, and I enjoyed doing it, so I did it for the three years that I was at uni. In my final year at uni I was made a full time supervisor at Madame Tussauds, which was opening in Sydney at the time, so I was a part of the opening team for that. I had a really amazing boss there who gave me a lot of time and attention and really got me involved in the tourism attractions space. I really fell in love with tourist attractions, so at the end of uni I decided I wanted to stay in that space. I kept working there and was working for a company called Merlin Entertainments, and I worked for them for seven years (including in other cities in England), and then I moved to the British Museum in London and spent about a year and a half there which was absolutely incredible. I found myself here at the start of April last year and the timing was right. The Gallery needed the visitor experience manager and so I started on a 6-month contract.

**What's your favourite part about your work, and what do you find challenging?**

The thing that's kept me in these roles and in this industry has been working with people – that's what I love doing – and people being both visitors that come through as well as the team that we work with. I love people development and there's a great opportunity in the visitor experience area for people that typically join these institutions as a part time job while at uni. A few people end up falling in love with it as I did, and just finding pathways to move through.

I think it's probably fair to say that in the public sector there's more procedures to go through, which isn't necessarily wrong – they exists for a reason – but it definitely makes various tasks and activities more time consuming than what it would be in the private space. Given that most of my career's been in the private space, I'm used to working a little bit faster. But those processes do exist

for a reason, so I do appreciate that as well – it's just the personal challenge of being used to a different tempo.

**In the space of the National Gallery itself, you'd be engaging with a lot of art. Is there a particular artwork that stands out to you or an exhibition that you've particularly connected to?**

Since I've started the National Gallery, I've found that all employees tell you what exhibition was on when they joined, and that's almost like an opening ice breaker for the Gallery. For me, I joined during the *Botticelli to Van Gogh* exhibition. It was a massive exhibition and there were lots of challenges that went with that exhibition, and so I think that's probably the one that stands out to me most – it's still etched in my memory! But I also love a lot of the artists that were in that exhibition, particularly as you moved through into the impressionists – that's the art that I really typically love.

**'I would encourage everyone to come into the Gallery with an open mind'**

**What would your advice be to someone who's entering the National Gallery for the first time?**

I think for visitors coming into the gallery, especially visitors coming in for the first time, a lot of the time (with an art gallery especially) people feel that there's this need to have a level of knowledge or experience with art, which I think is a shame because it really encourages art to not be accessible to everyone. There's a challenge there, and there's a challenge around what people perceive to be art, but I would encourage everyone to come into the Gallery with an open mind and look at everything that we have to offer. You may not like everything that you come across in the Gallery, and there are works in the gallery that I'm not a big fan of, but I think everyone can come into the Gallery and find something that they'd like if they're willing to be open minded.

**I imagine that in your role, listening and understanding the needs of visitors is vital. Do you or your team have the opportunity to engage with visitors a lot?**

Across the Gallery, we have lots of different engagement points with our visitors. There's the most obvious one which is face-to-face engagement that happens down on the floor. Our frontline team are the eyes, the ears and the face of the Gallery. They're there to interact with our visitors, but they're also there to learn what we're doing right and what we could be improving on, and to pass that feedback on. We get staff feedback through that channel, but then we also have different feedback channels. Visitors can and do submit feedback via written forms, email to our feedback inbox, email to the executive inbox, an online feedback form, memberships, and social media, so there are lots of different channels that we have to collect and collate visitor feedback. Then, one of my team's roles is to collate all of that and report on it, and look for any trends.

**The Aboriginal Memorial has just been relocated – how do you think this move is going to reshape the experience of visitors to the gallery?**

I'm really pleased to see that it's moved, and I think it will be a much better experience for our visitors. I can completely understand why the decision was made back in 2010 to move the Aboriginal Memorial to the new location. The Memorial used to be at the entry to the gallery, but it wasn't getting anywhere near the attention and recognition that it really is owed. Being in its new space, it really will be in the heart of the Gallery. Where the memorial was isn't planned to be an art space in future, so the memorial will still be the first artwork when you come in.

**What do you see as the place of art galleries in contemporary Australia? Have you seen that role change at all?**

I think galleries, like all cultural institutions, play a really important educational role for their visitors – whether that's somebody who has studied and been through galleries their entire life, or whether that someone who's new to the gallery space and someone who's learning about art for the very first time. I think they are also a really important collection tool for documenting what the society sees as important at that point in time. We have seen changes time and time again to what society values, and we can see with what's been going on in the past number of years that there's been increased focus (rightly so) on female artists and Indigenous artists, and in 50 years it can be documented and looked back on.

**HEAR US IN  
CANBERRA**

**BY LARA  
WHITE**

# THE HEART OF THE GALLERY: RELOCATING THE ABORIGINAL MEMORIAL

It's a classic Canberra morning on 1 June. The bright sun is peeking through the clouds as we fight the crisp air outside, surrounded by the towering Eucalyptus trees of Ngambri and Ngunnawali country. We stand at the entrance to the Gallery as the words of local Ngambri and Ngunnawali custodian Paul Girrawah House echo around us in a Welcome to Country Smoking Ceremony. Speaking in both English and in Language, Mr House welcomes us to the unceded land on which the Gallery stands, referencing the theme of this week's National Reconciliation Week: Be Brave. Make Change. In the smoke, we are cleansed and freed of evil spirits, which in turn are released back into the land.

In a fitting event, the *Aboriginal Memorial* artwork is being re-opened this morning after being relocated from the front entrance of the Gallery to the middle of Level 1: directly in the heart of the building and just meters away from the *4th National Indigenous Art Triennial: Ceremony* and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander galleries. 'Respect

shapes us and lifts up the people', says Mr House in his Welcome to Country, and I would argue that respect is at the core of this relocation. In returning this artwork to where it was originally opened in 1988 in its intended rectangle shape, we see a step in recognition, reconciliation, and respect.

As Barbara Jean Humphries Assistant Director, First Nations Engagement, Bruce Johnson-McLean outlines in his message at the artwork reopening, this decision aims to 'encourage visitors to see the work from a First Nations point-of-view' so that 'everything you [see] after this work [is] grounded by your experience of this work'. The words of founding National Gallery Director James Mollison at the artwork's opening in 1988, echoed again this morning, still resonate deeply: that 'this is perhaps the most important work of art to ever have been made in this country'.









To celebrate the reopening, a collective of Ramingining artists, consisting of three generations, move through the work with song and dance, as we hear the sounds of the didgeridoo reverberate through the space. Tyson Frigo, Wiradjuri and Yuin Peoples, participant in the 2022 National Gallery Indigenous Arts Leadership Program, supported by Wesfarmers Arts, was invited to dance with these performers. Following this event, I was fortunate to hear his thoughts on the significance of the artwork and its relocation. I begin by asking him what it means to him to have this artwork relocated and to be reopening it to the public:

‘The underpin of how I operate in terms of my culture is something that was taught to me by my Master Uncle Max, from the South Coast, and he always told us ‘Give it away to keep it’. And what that means is so often we think of things as two separate worlds: the cultural world and these institutions – but that way of thinking creates a divide and that’s not what our people and our culture is about. It’s always about bringing it in and kind of circling up and becoming one. And so, in this instance, for this situation of bringing that dance and that ceremony and, for them, that powerful artwork, that was reaffirming that notion and that core underpinning of our culture as Indigenous First Nations people of Australia.

‘Essentially, it’s about sharing. At the end of the dance, a lot of people came up to me and the other dancers and they were very grateful for witnessing what we created today in that space. And that’s really what we do in full, is to share and bring people into our space. There’s enough division in the world already – we need to start gearing towards opening up these institutions that are built on unsovereign land and bringing in blackfellas to be able to share their experiences, their culture, and their ceremony, especially when it is in regards to these cultural artifacts or these artworks.’

I then asked Frigo what he saw the role of this artwork within the National Gallery.

‘I see the role of that artwork as a reminder and I guess you could say even a gateway in a sense into our law, into our culture, the law of the land, the country as well. So often blackfellas feel as though we’re not quite welcome, or that there isn’t space for us within these institutions, but to be able to be brought in, to be able to create this amazing kind of community act where people are able to feel included and witness that regardless of colour.

‘We always bring people in, no matter what. We are a multicultural people. We may all fall under one flag, we may all come from this one island, but in of itself we are many diverse peoples. The artwork is kind of this major affirmation of the fact that those ancestors and those spirits that are within those poles, within that artwork, but also within the trees and the Country that is situated here – that’s also being sung up, and in a way, kind of put to the forefront. And that’s what we need to kind of sit with, is we need to look back in order to know where we’re going to go forward. And so, the artwork kind of works as that gateway towards that thinking.’

**‘Give it away  
to keep it’**









# ART AND IDEAS BY ODETTE MILLER

# EVENING THE SCORE: GENDER PARITY IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY COLLECTION

When you think of the term ‘art collection’ what comes to mind? Maybe you picture a grand gallery laden with paintings, or perhaps a quiet stock room brimming with carefully wrapped masterpieces.

Museums and galleries around the world, including the National Gallery, act as the custodians for significant works of art. They are responsible for preserving pieces that may be hundreds of years old and decide how to best display them for audiences to enjoy.

Though, there’s a lot to say about the types of artworks that are allowed to be acquired by a gallery – otherwise known as their collection strategy. Which artworks should be prioritised for acquisitions, and by which artists? Who gets to decide which artworks are more culturally important than others? These are questions that have been asked for decades, and for good reason.

It comes as no surprise that art collecting in the Western world has historically

favoured white cis-gendered men. Men have conventionally held the capital (and influence) to purchase art and male artists have been heralded as the connoisseurs of high culture. This status quo has become so enmeshed in the purchasing and displaying of art that many institutions have become blind to this reality. The issue with it, of course, is that a vast selection of non-white-cis-male artists are unlikely to have their work recognised. This issue, plus a plethora of other outcomes that contribute to the subordination of female identifying and minority artists. Revisit the infamous Guerrilla Girls Talk Back campaign of the 1980s if you need a refresher.

It’s hopeful to learn the National Gallery has decided to carve their own path when it comes to art collecting – one that aspires to lead to a brighter, more gender-equal future.

On International Women's Day 2022 The Gallery's Director Nick Mitzevich shared that the Gallery will implement an inaugural Gender Equity Action Plan. It's a long, aesthetically formatted PDF that outlines some ambitious plans for the next five years while pitching some long-term aspirations in the process.

Within the plan's five 'impact areas' (corporate lingo for goals) is the aim to consistently present a gender-equitable artistic program. For the gallery, this looks like a 40:40:20 ratio of male, female, and gender-diverse artists represented in exhibitions, touring shows, publishing, collection displays and floor space. The final 20% can be made up of people of any gender, including those who may not wish to identify.

In a media release, Assistant Director of Artistic Programs Natasha Bullock says the Gallery recognises the necessity for change after a 2018 study conducted by the gallery found that only 28% of works acquired between 2014 – 2018 were from women artists. To view the Gender Equity Action Plan, click [here](#).

'Ensuring that all people regardless of gender, have the opportunity to reach their full potential is central to the National Gallery's vision.'

'We are now addressing the significant imbalances that exist. We advocate for change and engage with our staff, community, and partners about gender equity issues. We recognise that to effect societal change, we need to ensure our own workplace culture, policy and artistic programs demonstrate gender equity, inclusivity and respect,' Natasha said.

Have a read of the Gender Equity Action Plan [here](#) and reflect on some of the ways you consume or collect art in your life. Do you think the National Gallery is doing enough or is there room to go further? Are there parts of the plan that you'd recommend to your school, social group, or family? We'd love to hear your opinion!

Throw us an email at [young.people@nga.gov.au](mailto:young.people@nga.gov.au).



**‘It’s hopeful to learn the National Gallery has decided to carve their own path when it comes to art collecting – one that aspires to lead to a brighter, more gender-equal future.’**

# LOCAL SPOTLIGHT:

**ALICE SPRINGS  
AUSTRALIAN CERAMICS  
TRIENNALE 2022,  
AMPERE MPARNTWE  
KIDS WORKSHOPS  
BY ISLA HOOPER**



Yipirinya Primary School visits Central Craft. Photographed by Lucy Smith

**The Australian Ceramics Triennale is Australia’s landmark national ceramics conference, bringing artists, educators, theorists and collectors from around the country together to interrogate the field of contemporary ceramic practice.**

**The 16th Australian Ceramics Triennale, Ampere Mparntwe – running from 19 to 23 July – for the very first time, will be held in the Northern Territory on Arrernte Country. Organised around the themes of Archetype, Alchemy and Anarchy, this highly anticipated event will celebrate and interrogate the field of contemporary ceramics practice in all its diversity. The program has something for everyone and includes markets, opening ceremony, daily lunch events, exhibitions, open days, discussions, demonstrations, workshops and of course a closing celebration.**

**As a part of this year's conference satellite events, Central Craft will be holding a collection of Come and Try Ceramics holiday programs for young people. These workshops will be presented in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere and participants will feel a sense of achievement as they create stunning works of art.**

**The staff at Central Craft have recently been working with the local Yipirinya Primary School, facilitating workshops related to the conference holiday programs. Yipirinya School is one of the few genuinely Independent Aboriginal Schools in Australia, both founded and managed by Indigenous Elders. It takes its name from the caterpillar dreamtime of the Arrernte people of Central Australia and was established as a two-way school, bi-lingual and bi-cultural, to teach the Northern Territory curriculum and to keep Indigenous language and culture alive. It teaches four Indigenous languages and may be the only school in Australia to do so.**

**Students participating in these initial workshops have produced exciting artworks that will be showcased during Apmere Mparntwe. Additionally, the senior girls class from Yipirinya Primary School attended skill-building workshops, handling raw materials and operating the wheels. They were complete naturals!**

**Central Craft's Come and Try Ceramics holiday programs will be following some of the same steps as the Yipirinya School sessions. Attendees will be taught by a highly qualified tutor about the fundamentals of working with clay and glazes and will hopefully go home with a piece or two by the end of the program. The workshops will be running from one and a half to two hours a day with four sessions in the studio in the weeks leading up to the Ceramics Triennale, Ampere Mparntwe.**

**The team at Central Craft are looking forward to collaborating with the community in a wonderful celebration of contemporary art in the centre of Australia. If you are interested in participating in Apmere Mparntwe or its satellite events such as these workshops, make sure you check out the Australian Ceramics Triennale website or follow on Instagram and Facebook to learn more.**

 [\*\*@australianceramicstriennale\*\*](https://www.instagram.com/australianceramicstriennale)

 [\*\*@australianceramicstriennale\*\*](https://www.facebook.com/australianceramicstriennale)





Yipirinya Primary School student with pottery wheel at a skill-building workshop.





Yipirinya Primary School student with pottery wheel at a skill-building workshop.

# **WE HEAR YOU!** **YOUTH COUNCIL** **SURVEY RESULTS** **BY ANNABEL HAIZER**

**In the first edition of Hear Us Now, the Youth Council invited people aged 13 to 25 across the country to participate in a survey. We learnt what our peers are thinking in reference to art, galleries, and how we may be affected by the world we live in.**



**THE BIGGEST CONCERN IS CLIMATE  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**

**82%**

**BELIEVE THAT ART HAS THE  
POWER TO SHAPE THE VALUES  
AND IDEAS OF OUR WORLD**

**100%**

**CONSIDER THEMSELVES AN  
ARTIST OR CREATIVE**

**63%**

**WORK WITH DRAWING AND  
DIGITAL MEDIUMS**

**54%**

**BELIEVE ARTWORK DOES NOT NEED  
TO HAVE A SOCIAL, POLITICAL, OR  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTARY TO BE  
CONSIDERED VALUABLE OR IMPORTANT**

**FINDINGS FROM SURVEY**

**36%**

**BELIEVE INSTITUTIONS ARE BECOMING  
MORE PROGRESSIVE BUT BELIEVE  
THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT**

**82%**

**SAID THAT THEIR ARTISTIC  
PRACTICE IS INFLUENCED BY THESE  
ISSUES AT LEAST BY A LITTLE BIT**

**36%**

**BELIEVE GALLERIES ARE INTERESTING  
AND VALUABLE TO SOCIETY**

**Our results show that an interesting story, a meaningful message, and creative use of materials can make an artwork compelling to a young person but it can also be something that ‘looks cool’ too.**

**‘the climate crisis  
is the most time-  
sensitive issue out of  
the options. It directly  
affects everyone  
indiscriminately, and  
our collective futures  
are directly impacted  
by our current  
actions.’**



**So, what do young people want to see more of? Diversity, community engagement, and experimentation. Here is what some participants had to say:**

**‘Voices from all walks of life, and hearing stories from cultures which aren’t the dominant.’**

**‘An effort to involve audiences and show them that they can be an active part of art institutions.’**

**‘Community and encouragement. I feel that a lot of young artists would benefit greatly from encouragement and collaboration in a positive environment.’**

**‘I would like to see more local artists such as small businesses or agricultural art being placed in the art gallery for people to come and look at the display and show their name out.’**

**‘I really would love to see more surreal and/or experimental art.’**

**This survey has demonstrated that young people are actively engaging with social issues and art, as well as responding to these issues through their artistic practice to communicate their own concerns. We want more discussions about the climate crisis, mental health, and human rights, as well as some action. These results show that young people are not alone in feeling anxious for the future. Young people feel that art can be a powerful tool for change but it is also enough for art to be something that is fun to create, a method for self-expression, or exist for aesthetic appreciation. Our results have also shown us that there are some valuable and interesting discussions we could have about the role of the community and the accessibility of art institutions in young people's engagement with art.**

**We would like to say thank you to those who participated in our survey. Do you have an interesting insight about young people and art? Is there more we should investigate about art and the climate crisis? What work of art do you love just because it looks cool? Write to us at [young.people@nga.gov.au](mailto:young.people@nga.gov.au) at or DM us on Instagram @nationalgallery.youth**

**#ArtIRL**  
**@nationalgallery.youth**

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