

SEPTEMBER 2010 SEMINAR SUMMARY

GREENING THE ARTS PART 2 Creating Sustainable Spaces and Communities

6.00-8.00pm, Monday 27 September 2010
Surry Hills Library, 405 Crown Street, Surry Hills

Chair

Gillian Clyde joined Screenrights in March 2003 as its Corporate Counsel. Prior to joining Screenrights Gillian was the former Head of Legal for the UK Film Council (London) where she also acted as Head of Business Affairs. During this time she managed the lawyers, assisting in the management and operation of the Film Council's investments in development and production through its Development Fund, New Cinema Fund and its Premiere Fund. Prior to this, she was the Manager, Business and Legal Affairs, Buena Vista Productions Limited (Disney) London where she was responsible for all contracting, business and legal advice from development through to production financing and distribution of BVP's Original Production Development projects, including the first Australian co-production. She was also responsible for multi-territory program acquisitions and assisted in the start-ups of Disney's European TV Channels in Italy, Spain and Germany.

Speakers

Samantha Graham is a consultant with Stormlight Consulting (a partnership with her husband John Talbott) and has been designing and facilitating sustainability and cultural transformation workshops for 15 years, both in Australia and Scotland for not-for-profits, corporate and government clients. Her current interest is in the power of bringing diverse groups together to enable uncommon dialogues that lead to new, unanticipated ways of doing things ("whole systems" change). Sam has a Masters degree in Human Ecology and a PhD in Sustainability from a UK Management School, focusing on Transformative Learning Experiences and was a key speaker at SAMAG's first Greening the Arts seminar in April 2009.

Ilana Kaplin is the Acting Cultural Development Manager, City of Sydney. Ilana is passionate about arts and culture and has worked at a number of film festivals, community and arts organisations. She is currently at the City of Sydney managing Cultural Development, which includes cultural projects, collaborations, partnerships and the grants and sponsorship programs.

Anna Davis is a Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. She is Co-Curator of the MCA's current, environmentally themed exhibition *In the Balance: Art for a Changing World*, in which she worked with local and international artists on a range of gallery-based and off-site projects. Anna is also an artist and holds a PhD in Fine Arts. Her solo and collaborative work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently in *Vocal Thoughts* at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA) and *Face to Face: Portraiture in Digital Age*, which is currently on tour throughout Asia.

SEPTEMBER 2010 SEMINAR SUMMARY

Lucas Ihlein is a Sydney based artist who often works collaboratively with groups such as Big Fag Press, SquatSpace, Teaching and Learning Cinema and NUCA. In recent years Lucas has been working on a series of "blogging as art" projects. The use of blogging as a method of artmaking enables Lucas to follow a process closely annotating experiences as they unfold; discovering learning as it happens. Lucas is currently conducting an environmental audit for the MCA's current exhibition, *In the Balance- Art for a Changing World* (July - November 2010).

In 2009, SAMAG held its first *Greening the Arts* seminar, a dynamic event that put the energy saving spotlight on arts organisations working to reduce their carbon emissions and impact on the environment generally. It was intended to be a unique event, but SAMAG soon realised just how engaged the arts sector is with environmental concerns, and that need a sequel was needed. Where *Part 1* focussed on the changes arts organisations could make to green their workplaces, the sequel looked outward, at sustainable projects from the City of Sydney and how environmental issues are being answered by artists and communities in creative ways.

Ilana Kaplin, the Acting Cultural Development Manager for the City of Sydney, opened the seminar; setting the scene with an overview of what the City of Sydney is doing and ways the Council can help organisations wanting to 'go green'.

Sustainability is a big issue for the City of Sydney. Over an eighteen month period during 2007 and 2008 the City held 41 events and consultation forums, 12,000 people were directly consulted, the 2030 website received more than 15,000 website visitors and 200 comments, and more than 2,000 comments were received through the 'Future Phone' line.

Using this input, the Council developed the *Sustainable Sydney 2030* strategy. The Council's vision is to create a *Green, Global, and Connected City*. The City has applied this in its own 'backyard', with the Surry Hills Library providing a great example of a sustainable building with its green roof technology, solar panels, rain water tanks and use of sustainable materials. If you want to learn more about this 'green' building visit <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Development/CityImprovements/CompletedProjects/SurryHillsLibraryCommunityCentre.asp> or the 2030 strategy www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/2030/.

The City is 'made up' of 180,000 residents, 1 million visitors, and around 16,000 businesses and not-for-profits organisations; many of these are small arts organisations. So, its important to the City that sustainability is considered by arts organisations. The Council and other government agencies have a range of programs that can assist arts organisations 'go green'.

These are listed at the end of this summary. Ilana made the following additional comments about making buildings more sustainable:

- If you're engaging a consultant check their experience and once a he or she has finished his or her report (and before you pay them), check that detailed and useable recommendations have been provided.



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Seminars for Arts Professionals

SEPTEMBER 2010 SEMINAR SUMMARY

- A good plumber can help you to make significant changes in water use; just make sure they're well briefed. The Master Plumbers Association can help you to find a plumber (visit <http://www.masterplumbers.com.au/>)

Ilana also noted that arts organisations, through their productions, exhibitions and other activities, can play a unique role in carrying the message about sustainability.

This was well illustrated by Anna Davis talking about the Museum of Contemporary Art's environmentally themed exhibition, *In the Balance: Art for a Changing World* (http://www.mca.com.au/default.asp?page_id=10&content_id=7358).

Among the 30 artists in the show, Anna spoke first about Artist as Family's 'food forest' at St Michael's church in Surry Hills. Artist as Family has created a community garden that will be an ongoing community resource: providing a space for social interaction as well as food. As the artists describe it: the garden is a project for "social warming". The Surry Hills project has brought people from the local area together in unexpected ways; becoming a focal point for talks and other activities. To find out more visit the Artist as Family blogspot <http://theartistsfamily.blogspot.com/>.

Another example from the MCA's exhibition are two works by Amy Franceschini and Futurefarmers, *Sunshine Still* and *Sun Runner*. *Sunshine Still* is model of a traditional moonshine still, re-engineered to produce ethanol alcohol and drinkable ethyl alcohol from compost, waste or algae. The liquid produced by this still is nicknamed 'Sun Shine' because it is made with the energy of the sun. The *Sunshine Still* along with its delivery unit, the *Sun Runner* are presented inside an establishment reminiscent of a speakeasy called the *Speak Hard*. As artists, *Futurefarmers* meet at the intersection between art, design and activism. They develop prototypes and working models and create experiential events. They have also developed a series of 'community gardens', including Victory Gardens 2009+, an ongoing project developed with the City of San Francisco that supports the transition of backyard, front yard, window boxes, rooftops and unused land into food production areas. (Visit <http://www.futurefarmers.com/>).

Tessa Zettel and Karl Khoe are Sydney-based artists and co-directors of Makeshift, who work together on a wide range of projects. For *In the Balance* they built a mobile food cart with a beehive which has been open to the public a number of times during the exhibition, serving hot pikelets with honey (produced in the cart by native stingless bees). The work is called *Gwago patabágun* _ _ _ *We will eat presently* (2010).

The artists discussed by Anna are among a group of artists looking at how "art can be good for the world". These artists often work outside the gallery space, and social interaction and discussion are important elements of their art. They provide good examples of what Ilana described early in the seminar.

In an unusual move, the MCA engaged artist Lucas Ihlein to conduct an environmental audit of the exhibition itself. Asking questions such as "If the museum puts on an exhibition about the

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SEPTEMBER 2010 SEMINAR SUMMARY

environment, how much in the way of resources is consumed, how much carbon (etc) emitted in the process? In other words, was it worth it?" Lucas has taken up 'residence' in the exhibition's resource room and is mapping and blogging about the environmental impacts of *In the Balance*. In the audit Lucas has found "dilemmas everywhere" and uncovered the very high 'costs' that can be associated with operating as a traditional "perfectionist" museum. For example, Lucas estimates that the exhibition will generate 16 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions for lighting alone. He also gave a number of other examples, from controlling the temperature, building walls, and photocopying, to generating and replacing wall texts and labels. All of which presents a challenge to the MCA and other galleries and museums that set high standards for lighting and temperature controls within their institutions and when borrowing and lending work to others. Anna commented that Lucas' work has prompted a discussion within the MCA, but really it is a broader issue across the sector. In concluding his presentation Lucas asked: "How do we get a ship that is moving along to change its direction?" To read Lucas' blog visit <http://www.environmental-audit.net/>.

So what can do? As an educator and facilitator, Samantha Graham from Stormlight Consulting has worked with a range of organisations on behaviour change. Since speaking at the first *Greening the Arts* seminar, Sam has moved away from speaking about the statistics of climate change to focus on how we, as individuals and organisations, can bring about change through our own practice. She noted that we are used to thinking that someone's in charge (mum and dad, teachers, bosses, governments), but this isn't the case, no-one's going to come to our rescue. We have to start having "uncommon conversations" about the things we want to change and how we might change them.

Sam said that the key to change can be using the right mix and the right number of the key six "influencers" for change"; noting that too often only one or two are used. The six influencers are "making the desirable undesirable" (personal motivation) "surpass your limits" (personal ability/skills), "harness peer pressure" (social motivation), "find strength in numbers" (social ability/skills), "design rewards and demand accountability" (structural motivation), and "change the environment" (structural ability) (for an explanation see, for example, <http://sourcesofinsight.com/2009/06/09/influencer-the-power-to-change-anything/> . (<http://www.stormlight.com.au/>). Based on a US model, using four out of six of these "influencers" can bring about change ten times more effectively.

Sam also commented on the power of people within an organisation to change things from the ground up; noting that with some skills and motivation people can bring about big changes. Also, having the physical space and time to work together on issues can be powerful. Ilana noted that there is an informal group of 'green champions' at the Council who have made a big impact e.g. by giving out green apples when people use their recycling bins and giving chocolates to people who turn off their computer monitors.

As well as providing a number of resources, *Greening the Arts – Part 2* identified a number of inspiring art projects and a range of strategies that will help answer Lucas' question: "How do we get a ship that is moving along to change its direction?"

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SEPTEMBER 2010 SEMINAR SUMMARY

Web Links

City of Sydney

Sustainable Sydney 2030 <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/2030/>

Smart Businesses Live Green

(<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Business/AwardsPrograms/GreeningYourBusiness.asp>) is a program developed by City of Sydney, Sydney Water and the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water. It assists businesses to save on water, waste and energy costs. The program provides free water assessments and can support businesses to reduce energy and waste. The program is available to businesses using between 10 and 80kL of water per day.

Other Government Assistance

NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/>

NSW Department of Education and Training

The Green Skills Business Incentives program provides training subsidies for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to deliver green skills courses for NSW small business. Subsidies are available to businesses and Local Government wanting to train managers, supervisors and environment officers in green skills.

https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/programs_services/funded_apl/ssp/gsbi.html

Grow Me The Money guides small to medium sized businesses through the steps necessary to become more sustainable and benefit from their efforts. The program is designed for businesses that have access to their energy and water bills and have been operating for at least 12 months.

<http://www.growmethemoney.com.au/>

ResourceSmart online (Victoria)

http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_businesses/how_to_start.html

Other resources

Metro Screen

<http://www.metroscreen.org.au/GreenScreen.htm>

British Council

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa-arts-greening-the-arts.htm>

by: Sarah Evans

