



Canberra Museum and Gallery

EXHIBITION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The exhibition program of Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) is dynamic, changing and wide-ranging. CMAG's exhibitions are a means of exploring and communicating the Canberra region's rich and diverse visual arts, social history, and sense of place and identity. Exhibitions will inform, challenge, inspire, entertain and stimulate curiosity. CMAG's exhibition program will engage the community of the Canberra region, as well as contributing to the ACT's cultural tourism strategy.

Exhibitions go beyond walls and display cases and will be supported and enhanced by a range of activities.

Exhibitions also go beyond the building and CMAG's outreach program will be part of the exhibition program.

2. CMAG'S FOCUS

The proposal for CMAG emanated from a community need for a uniquely local cultural facility, which provides opportunities for self-definition and expression. CMAG combines visual arts and social history activities in the one facility. It focuses on Canberra as a community rather than on Canberra as the national capital (a role that is well served by the national cultural institutions).

CMAG's focus is therefore as follows :

- the articulation of the historical, social, artistic and environmental identity of the Canberra region;
- the exploration of the relationships between the visual arts and social history of the Canberra region;
- the encouragement and support of a proactive, innovative and imaginative approach to programs and activities;
- the encouragement of a diversity of views and interpretations; and
- a commitment to sharing CMAG's skill base : empowering through training and involvement.

3. EXHIBITION CONTENT

Through its exhibition program, CMAG will explore the visual arts and social history of the community of the Canberra region, and will pose a range of questions to visitors that will open up issues of place, belonging and community.

In other words, CMAG will be an interrogative space that will not seek to provide definitive answers. Through exhibitions that investigate visual arts and social history in a range of cultural materials, together and/or separately, CMAG will articulate the historical, social, artistic and environmental identity of the Canberra region.

CMAG is therefore a venue for exhibitions that:

- open up the many stories of the community of the Canberra region;
- explore, celebrate and foster tolerance and understanding of the Canberra region's cultural diversity, including the unique role of the Indigenous communities of the region;
- present the full breadth of arts activity;
- investigate issues of cultural, social and environmental concern or interest to the community of the Canberra region; and
- showcase regional excellence in contemporary art practice.

The exhibition program may include exhibitions that are not specific to Canberra and the region but which address the Canberra community's needs or interests.

4. LONG-TERM EXHIBITION OBJECTIVES

Over time, the program of exhibitions curated and presented at CMAG will seek to explore the following.

Visual arts exhibitions will seek to explore:

1. the work of senior artists living in, or having had a close connection to, the Canberra region;
2. each major visual art form e.g. painting; ceramics; prints; drawings; glass; digital media; and
3. the visual arts practice of important groups and sectors within the community of the Canberra region.

Social history exhibitions will seek to explore (subject to the availability of suitable objects and materials to tell the various stories/explore the various issues) :

4. major periods, and events of major significance, in the history of the Canberra region;
5. the stories of individuals, groups, places, sectors and institutions that have played an important role in the history of the Canberra region; and
6. major social, cultural and environmental issues of relevance to the community and the history of the Canberra region.

In addition to the above objectives for CMAG's exhibition programming, exhibitions presented in CMAG's **Open Collection Gallery** will provide opportunities to showcase the collections of individuals and groups within the community of the Canberra region. These exhibitions will invite visitors to reflect on the nature of collecting: what we collect, and why.

Apart from separate visual arts and social history exhibitions, the **integrated nature** (museum/gallery) of CMAG will be reflected, in an ongoing sense, in its permanent collection exhibition and, from time to time, in temporary exhibitions that allow a more focused exploration of both aspects of CMAG's function within the same exhibition. Such exhibitions will provide an opportunity to explore the interrelationship between visual arts practice and its historical and social context.

5. SUPPORTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

CMAG is committed to providing a range of experiences and programs designed to enhance and support its exhibition program. Further details are set out in CMAG's **Education Policy**.

6. PARTNERSHIPS, AUDIENCES AND ACCESS

CMAG recognises and values the expertise that exists within the community and provides opportunities for community participation on a number of levels;

for example:

- individuals and groups within the community may share their valuable resources with CMAG staff in the development of CMAG-initiated exhibitions;
- CMAG will work in partnership with individuals, artists, community organisations or groups in the development and mounting of programs; and
- CMAG will, where appropriate, foster links and enter into joint initiatives with local, national and interstate organisations.

CMAG serves a range of audiences and acknowledges the need for exhibitions to provide information on many levels. This will, where possible, be addressed in the design and presentation of exhibitions.

Whilst CMAG is committed to a dynamic and changing program, the duration of exhibitions can significantly affect accessibility. CMAG will ensure that the majority of exhibitions are open to the public for a period appropriate to their theme, content and to the overall requirements of the exhibition program.

7. INTERPRETATION

CMAG will present authoritative interpretations of the social and artistic history of the Canberra region. CMAG also acknowledges that all interpretation is subjective and will acknowledge the involvement of individuals and staff members in the preparation and development of all exhibitions.

CMAG exhibitions will be accessible and will respond to the personal stories and multiple voices that constitute our society, and in particular those of the community of the Canberra region.

8. TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

In view of CMAG's focus on the visual arts and social history of the Canberra region, most of its exhibitions will be developed in-house. CMAG may also, however, be a venue for travelling exhibitions which address :

- issues of concern or interest to the community of the Canberra region; and
- the broader history of visual arts in Australia and of other countries, where appropriate (for example, where a sister city relationship exists with Canberra).

CMAG may tour exhibitions which have been developed in-house, to venues within Canberra and beyond.

9. THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AN EXHIBITION

CMAG places no restrictions on individuals or groups who wish to propose an exhibition for possible inclusion in its ongoing exhibition program.

Proposals will be assessed by CMAG's professional staff and must address CMAG's focus and long-term objectives as set out in this document.

10. BEST PRACTICE

The principle of best practice applies to all aspects of CMAG's planning, programs and management, as articulated in documents published by Museums Australia.

CMAG will ensure best practice applies to:

- the display of all objects and works, including those on loan from other institutions, community groups and individuals in conditions appropriate to established conservation, security and physical and environmental requirements;
- the accurate, scholarly and critical nature of research undertaken by CMAG staff;
- the integrity, intent and ownership of community-based research;
- ensuring exhibitions developed in collaboration or partnership are of benefit to all participants;
- its dealings with artists (or their representatives) ensuring respect and sensitivity for moral rights issues and industry codes of practice; and
- designs that realise the potential of an exhibition's aims and objectives and ensure accessibility, flexibility and relevance.