

VCE Studio Arts: Art Industry Contexts

ACCA Gallery Model

Key knowledge: *The methods and intentions of public art galleries and museums, commercial and private galleries, university art galleries, artist run spaces, alternative art spaces, outdoor spaces and online galleries in exhibiting artworks*

- ACCA's gallery model is a *Kunsthalle* (German word meaning 'Art hall'). A large empty space for showing contemporary art. Key **characteristics** of a Kunsthalle are that they focus on **commissioning** new art; are **non-collecting** institutions; everything is **temporary**.
- ACCA has a stated mission to bring the best Australian and international contemporary art to audiences. ACCA privileges **accessibility** for everyone, and this is why ACCA exhibitions are **always free**.
- ACCA is a **public contemporary art organisation**. This is different to a state, artist-run or commercial gallery.
- ACCA focuses exclusively on **contemporary art**. The way that ACCA defines contemporary art is as **art by living artists** – in any media, using techniques and exploring any concepts.
- ACCA's building is purpose-built. It was designed for art exhibitions and contains one large and three smaller galleries. Spaces are often reconfigured for exhibitions.
- ACCA's building was designed by Wood Marsh Architects and built in 2002. They wanted to produce a "sculpture in which to show art" – so that the appearance of ACCA would indicate its purpose.
- ACCA has **four exhibition seasons each year**: Influential Australian Artist Series; International Artist Series; New Curatorial Positions; Big Picture Focus (broader societal ideas). Each season is accompanied by **Public and Education Programs**.
- ACCA is classified as a **medium-sized arts organisation**.
- ACCA competes with other organisations for funding – the government provides (40%) in grants (Australia Council, Creative Victoria). The other 60% comes from venue hire, philanthropic donations, sponsorship in-kind (E.g. Dulux donates paint to ACCA), and the ACCA bookshop and coffee cart incomes.
- ACCA has a **small core staff** comprising: Artistic Director & CEO; Executive Director; Curators; Curatorial Manager; Exhibitions Manager; Education Manager; Educators; Public Programs Curator; Finance Manager; Administration and Operations Coordinator; Visitor Services and Events Manager; Development Managers; Marketing and Partnerships Manager; Publicist; Designer; 10x Gallery Attendants; 30+ Volunteers.
- For **installation** and de-installation of exhibition a core team of five specialists. Each has different skills: Building, Electrical, Audio-Visual, Fine Art Handling.

ACCA Gallery Characteristics

Key knowledge: *The characteristics of different types of gallery spaces visited in the current year of study*

- One of ACCA's key priorities is to **commission** new artworks from artists.
- The **commissioning process** involves an artist being invited to create new work for an exhibition.

- A curator is usually someone who is responsible for a collection in a museum, gallery or institution. The role of a curator is quite different at ACCA as often the artworks are new commissions by living artists.
- An ACCA curator will know the kind of art and artist makes and the kinds of ideas that they are interested in. If the curator sees an opportunity for a new artwork that aligns with that artist's practice, they can then invite the artist to create new work.
- Commissioning involves discussions about **practicalities**: how long the artist has to make the artwork how much money is in the budget, and the idea for the exhibition.
- ACCA's Exhibition Program is determined by the Artistic Director and curators. ACCA does not accept exhibition proposals from artists and practitioners.
- The role of a contemporary curator is as **facilitator** and **mediator** – working directly with artists to help realise artwork to be the link between the artist and the ACCA, and also to mediate the relationship between the artwork and the public (by helping to communicate ideas in artworks to the public – in writing, interviews or public talks).

Conservation

- **Light**: strong light or exposure over a long period can break down materials used in artworks. ACCA's galleries don't receive any daylight (no windows or doors that open to the outside).
- **Temperature and Humidity**: ACCA doesn't have humidifying or dehumidifying system, ACCA has a climate control system (air conditioning) to regulate temperature. Temperature can change if doors are left open or lots of people are in the galleries.
- There is a space between the exterior steel walls of ACCA and the interior walls of the galleries. This space helps to regulate the internal gallery temperature by acting as an insulator.
- ACCA's **gallery attendants** protect the artworks while at ACCA.

Exhibition Case Study: On Vulnerability and Doubt

Key knowledge: *The curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks in current exhibitions*

- The exhibition is titled *On Vulnerability and Doubt* is a group exhibition of artworks by seven Australian and international artists. The exhibition has been **curated by Max Delany**, ACCA's Artistic Director.
- *On Vulnerability and Doubt* was developed over twelve months.
- The exhibition consists of both **new commissions** and **pre-existing artworks** that have been borrowed from artists, private collectors, and commercial galleries.
- The curator and curatorial manager worked to secure loans of pre-existing artworks from private collectors and commercial galleries. ACCA's Exhibition Manager oversaw the loan procurement process and worked to ensure that the borrowed artworks would arrive at the gallery to be conditioned reported ahead of the installation period.
- Charle Sofo's artworks in the exhibition are almost **all new commissions**. Max Delany has been following Sofo's work for a long time and thought his art would fit well within the theme of the exhibition.
- Sofo was funded by ACCA to create new artworks and at the end of the exhibition he maintains ownership of those artworks – to sell or re-exhibit in another gallery.

Artwork/Artist Case Study: Andrea Büttner *Beggars* 2016

Curatorial Intentions

- *On Vulnerability and Doubt* is a **thematic** exhibition. This means that the curator has assembled works with the **curatorial intention** that it reflects two themes, in this case **vulnerability** and **doubt**.
- The subjects of Andrea Büttner's prints, beggars, are symbolic of vulnerability and so directly address the curatorial theme.
- Delany has said he **intends** the exhibition to be considered "*a critique of spectacle, inflation, overblown and hyper-capitalised practices and objects*".
- Delany's choice of Andrea Büttner's *Beggar* series addresses his intention because they are simply executed using woodcut on paper – relatively **accessible and inexpensive media** and techniques – achieving Delany's intended critique of "*overblown and hyper-capitalised practices and objects*".
- Because the prints are unframed, they are **vulnerable** as artworks – unprotected from accidental or deliberate damage. In this way the installation techniques used reflect a key theme of the exhibition, corresponding with **curatorial intentions**.
- Delany has chosen to exhibit artworks which are of small scale relative to the ACCA's main large gallery space. This means that Büttner's artworks appear dwarfed by the gallery itself. In this way, they are **metaphorically vulnerable** as small, insignificant things within the massive gallery space.
- The presentation of relatively small, intimate artworks instead of large spectacular works in the large gallery addresses Delany's stated intention to create a "*critique of spectacle*".
- Andrea Büttner has said she thinks of her beggar prints as reflecting the vulnerability artists feel presenting their work and asking for praise or money in return. This addresses another Delany's **curatorial intentions** – to explore "*the complex feelings that artists confront when they put themselves and their artwork on display*".

Artistic Intentions

- Andrea Büttner has said that her **artistic intention** is to investigate the subject of beggars and poverty as it has been depicted throughout art history, usually in large oil paintings in ornate gold frames.
- Büttner's **artistic intention** is that the media she uses reflects the conceptual content of the artworks. To do this she uses plain, cheap plywood as printing blocks (a 'poor' material). This echoes the poverty of her subjects – beggars.
- Büttner uses a deliberately unfussy, rough technique to challenge the idea of artists needing to have technical mastery. This is because only the wealthy had access to academies to become master artists in the past. Büttner's rough technique reflects her **artistic intention** to critique mastery, and the money needed to attain, by demonstrating it is not necessary in order to create art.
- Büttner insists that her prints are exhibited **unframed** – so that they do not repeat the grandiosity of the historical examples such as expensive gold-gilt frames. This reflects her **artistic intention** that the presentation of her artwork reflect their subject. If the prints were in expensive frames, they would metaphorically contradict that intention.
- Because they are unframed because it is Büttner's intention that they are **vulnerable** as artworks – unprotected from damage - and so reflect the status of their subjects, beggars, as **vulnerable** members of society.

Conservation Methods

Key knowledge: *The methods used by and considerations of artists and curators working in galleries in conservation of artworks, including lighting, temperature, storage, transportation and presentation of specific artworks in current exhibitions*

- Andrea Büttner's *Beggar* prints are unframed and so very vulnerable to accidental touch. This has been managed using a variety of conservation methods.
- The prints were shipped from London in a specially constructed crate which kept them flat, and they were layered with tissue paper in between to ensure colour did not rub off from one onto another.
- During the installation of the exhibition the installation team wore latex gloves when handling the prints. This **conservation method** reduced the risk of fingerprints or smudges damaging the artwork.
- Two installers lifted the prints to hang on the wall, so as to **avoid bending and damaging** the prints.
- When aligning the prints on the gallery wall a laser level was used. This allows a line to be projected directly onto the prints without the need for any physical contact and so reduce the risk that a physical level might scratch, mark or otherwise damage the paper surface.
- A **specialist paper conservator** was contracted to affix special adhesive tabs to the back of the prints where the pins pierce the paper. The tabs add strength to those points to prevent the prints from tearing on the pins under their own weight.
- These tabs were specified to be acid-free, meaning that they won't turn the paper of the prints yellow over time.
- The tabs use removable adhesive which will not leave any trace on the artworks.
- ACCA's **Gallery Attendants** protect these prints the gallery. They are there to watch visitors to ensure they don't get too close. This is a conservation technique to prevent damage from visitors touching and marking the surface of the unframed artworks.

Artwork storage

- This series of prints was shipped from overseas in a specially constructed wooden crate. This kept the prints dry, flat and shielded from impact.
- The special crate doubles as storage. When these prints are taken down at the end of the exhibition they will go straight back into that same crate.
- When the prints are stored, they will have layers of tissue paper in between which will stop colour from accidentally rubbing from one image onto another.
- Special **desiccant sachets** containing a material called silicon dioxide will be placed inside with case with the artworks. A **desiccant** is a hygroscopic substance that induces or sustains a state of dryness (desiccation) in its vicinity. Commonly encountered pre-packaged **desiccants** are solids that absorb water. Real life example: you might have seen sachets like these in the box with a pair of new shoes.

Marketing and Promotion

Key knowledge: *The processes associated with the production, presentation, conservation and promotion of specific artworks in current exhibitions. The curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks in current exhibitions.*

- The **'hero image'** for the exhibition was chosen two months before the exhibition opened. It is important as audiences first impression of the exhibition. It is used for print advertisements in Art Guide, Art Almanac and TimeOut.
- An installation view of a solo exhibition by Andrea Büttner from 2016 at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles was selected as the 'hero image' for the exhibition. It was chosen because the variety artworks that appear in this image makes for a thought provoking and eye-catching image and reflect the artists contribution to *On Vulnerability and Doubt*.
- Before an exhibition opens ACCA also **promotes** through radio on 3RRR 102.7FM advertisements, artist and curator interviews on radio, and social media.
- Once the exhibition has opened we promote through **social media** (Instagram – acca_melbourne) and our public programs (acca.melbourne/programs). Social media advertising is cheap in contrast to print, which is costly.
- Because **Instagram** is highly visual it is very well suited to promoting ACCA exhibitions, which contain mostly visual artworks.
- A program of **public talks and events** have been scheduled throughout the exhibition season. These are intended to open-up ideas within the exhibition to a broad audience by connecting viewers directly to artists, curators and writers.
- **Publication:** The catalogue for this exhibition was produced in advance of the opening. This means that it is available as soon as the exhibition opens and so sells more copies.
- The image used for the catalogue cover is also used for the ACCA signage at the entrance to the gallery. It acts like a flag, indicating both ACCA and the type of art inside.
- Comprehensive **documentation** of the exhibition is available on ACCA's website.

Additional Information

- General **Art Industry Contexts Education Kit** available online [here](#).
- For more about ACCA and other gallery models see our **What is ACCA? Education Kit** online [here](#).

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