



Launch of “The Art of the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law” catalogue
Level 3
Wednesday 16 October 2013, 3pm/3.30pm

**The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice**

Professor McMeniman, President McMurdo, your Honours, ladies and gentlemen,

I at once commend Griffith University and the Editor Jay Younger, and all who have contributed to the production of this excellent publication.

The booklet contains both excellent photographs of the works, in their final forms and during their creation and installation; and excellent commentary on their significance, as works of art, and also their relevance to those who enter this courthouse. The commentaries are, in my respectful view, perceptive and helpful.

This was as we all know a relatively expensive building construction. That cost was in turn augmented by a large financial commitment to the public art.

I suppose significant art by nature sparks controversy. We do not see here the mellifluous tones of the Impressionists. While we hope that the work of the courts proceeds with, if I may put it this way, mundane predictability, there is no harm – indeed some potential benefit, in the public art’s provoking a deal of debate – and it has certainly done that.

I regard it as “public art” in that it is publicly accessible art – in a courthouse whose doors are open to all, although unfortunately not all civil claimants could afford to litigate here. But we do our best to address that.

The art is significant art in its capacity to inspire interest, and I should say, calm. One hesitates to characterize art as a mere diversion, but the art can operate importantly, I



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believe, in actually diverting attention here from matters which could otherwise arouse strong emotions. That is I consider an important role of the art for both court visitors and users.

But the art obviously has a broader significance, in inspiring our citizenry, both as interesting and compelling art, and in reminding our fellow Queenslanders and Australians of the significance of what is accomplished in the building.

I hope the interest in Kusama's "Eyes" will arouse curiosity to the point where the persons actually entering the building then look at Gemma Smith's ceiling and the Gabori "wash" – well, a rather advanced and evocative "wash". And in examining these pieces of art, the viewers will look with some interest, presumably, at the facilities they complement.

Gauging the reaction to date as best I can, I venture to say that there is generally wide interest in the "Eyes", whereas opinion on the Banco Court work is deeply divided. The State crest above that work, by the way, was installed at my insistence – in case you think its placement a little unusually out of the way.

I think people are generally interested in the foyer ceiling work, although we endure a regular enquiry – "Is it finished?" I can say that views would have been much more polarized had the work first mooted for that space been established.

Shamelessly plugging a modest production from my Associate and me, there is also a tiny booklet available from the Supreme Court Library, at just \$5 a copy, about the artwork of the Supreme Court more broadly, including the various paintings and sculptures located throughout the courthouse, a booklet produced without the financial backing of a university – not for a moment to suggest the work we celebrate today is in any way over the top! The smaller work contains quite a bit of material on Griffith, so I will provide a copy to Professor McMeniman.



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I believe these two works complement each other very well and, taken together, offer an insightful and comprehensive understanding of this rich cultural legacy. The quality of Jay's publication is appropriate to the public art, and I hope the publication will be distributed widely.

I congratulate those responsible for this most worthwhile catalogue style publication. I am so pleased that the establishment of such important public art is now supported by the existence of this excellent booklet.