



Art exhibition teams

The team of four librarians at the National Gallery of Australia who comprise the reference team have over seven decades of experience between them in supporting the research needs of the NGA curators. This in-depth knowledge of the collection and expertise in meeting the research needs of gallery staff has resulted in librarians being assigned to exhibition teams.

At the NGA each major exhibition has an exhibition team to coordinate all facets of the undertaking, from when the show is just a gleam in the curator's eye right up until opening night. Major exhibitions can be a huge financial undertaking and commercial risk – the cost of importing major artworks, such as those in the recent Masterpieces from Paris exhibition, is astronomical, with the break-even point dependent upon large scale visitation and successful merchandising of the exhibition catalogue and other products. Director Rod Radford, when speaking to the Sydney Morning Herald on 2 April 2010, said that the NGA had to break its previous attendance record of 240 000 visitors just to break even (a record happily smashed with over 476 000 people seeing the show). It makes sense therefore not to overlook any aspect in the planning process of these extravaganzas, which is why for many years now, each major exhibition has an exhibition

liaison librarian assigned to the show.

The exhibition liaison librarian is involved with the show at the very earliest stages, several years ahead, working with the curator to ensure that all possible research resources that might be required are identified and obtained as soon as possible. The library's resources are consulted heavily, especially when the curator is scoping the show and identifying works of art to borrow.

Writing and editing the catalogue can result in hundreds of reference queries, and when a publication deadline is looming, the whole reference team can be pressed into service to work on the manuscript, checking quotations, footnotes, and anything else that is required.

The Research Library provides information not just for the curatorial team, but works with all areas providing information for press releases and educational materials as well as research materials for Gallery guides. The information we provide can be vital. Sometimes exhibition timelines can be too short for comfort as can happen when the Gallery is approached to take an exhibition that is too good to miss. The timetable can leave us scrambling, there can be question marks over which paintings might be included, and yet there will be enormous pressure to include these images in sponsorship proposals, pre-publicity, and, of course, designing the exhibition merchandise. One major show nearly a decade ago had the library staff frantically checking the key images to see which way round they were (you don't want to produce a thousand posters with the image inverted). Do you trust the eight major monographs of the artist by respected authors where the subject faces the left, or the owning museum's website where the subject faces right? It was the same exhibition where an overseas museum provided a transparency of one of the paintings at the last minute (despite the many polite requests of the NGA registrars). It was the exhibition librarian who spotted the fatal mistake: "That can't be the painting that's coming – it's labelled *Christ on the Mount of Olives* but He has a crown of thorns on His head", which resulted in frantic queries back to the museum as to what painting it was they were about to pack into the shipping crate.

One of the most interesting aspects of the work is attending the exhibition team meetings, and hearing reports from every area of the Gallery as to the progress on the show. And of course the closer it gets to opening night, the more the excitement builds. Working on an exhibition is a lot like working on a theatrical production, with all the buzz associated with it.

So fancy a job as an exhibition librarian? Well you will need first rate research and reference skills, a great eye for detail, a good general knowledge of art, but most importantly you need to know a good hit man – as none of us plan on giving up our jobs anytime soon!

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Web 2.0 cloud rains innovation

HLA/HCN Health Informatics Innovation Award Winner Announced

The ALIA Health Libraries Australia group, in partnership with the Health Communication Network (HCN), offers an annual award, the HLA/HCN Health Informatics Innovation Award. The award, launched in 2009, aims to encourage Australian health librarians to showcase innovative projects which use health informatics or web technologies to support best practice in the health information field.

In 2010, there were a number of very high quality applications for the award, illustrating the breadth of innovation across Australian health libraries. The winner of the 2010 HLA/HCN Health Informatics Innovation Award is Terry Harrison, Clinical Librarian, Health Sciences Library, Royal Melbourne Hospital, for his innovative project establishing the (virtual) Centre for Evidence Based Practice Australasia (CEBPA). The CEBPA is an evolving web 2.0 'cloud' built using open-source Joomla and Moodle platforms. The site has been active for just over six months and has almost 400 registered users. Registration with the site is free (<http://cebpa.info>), and once registered and logged in, it is possible to explore the impressive range of resources available. These include a warehouse for evidence summaries; Clinical ANZwers, a tool to convert evidence summaries into clinical questions and answers; and a dedicated search engine, Evidence Australasia.

Terry will be presented with a certificate and \$2500 towards continuing professional development at the Health stream of the ALIA Access conference in Brisbane in September.

The Award committee thanks all the applicants and their seconders for supporting the award, and encourages health librarians undertaking innovative projects to considering entering in 2011.

The ALIA HLA committee is most appreciative of HCN's ongoing sponsorship of the Award and extends thanks to Allison Hart, HCN's General Manager – Knowledge Solutions, for her support.

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