

# THE ABBOTSFORD CONVENT ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE MISSION

## *In-Habit.*

The Abbotsford Convent mission aspires to provide an international arena for arts explorations and cultural exchange investigations on a heritage site in a city characterized by its multi culturalism.

Programs within the artistic research and cultural exchange model for the Convent will be piloted over the next 3 years.

In 2009/10 Artistic Director Jude Anderson will oversee the co ordination, research, development and funding of the Abbotsford Convent's artistic research and cultural exchange mission in collaboration with the Convent's management and administration team and Martin Mulligan - the deputy director of the Globalism Institute (a scientific research institute for the evaluation and analysis of cultural models at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology).

Research, consultation and modelling for the artistic mission actively began in September 2007 with funding support from State and local government arts and cultural bodies provided in 2008. Government funding has been successfully secured to continue the research, development and prototyping of the program in 2009/10 and to make recommendations further to this.

The Abbotsford Convent's contemporary artistic mission and residency project will be founded upon two artistic research principles:

- **exploration of site/place/space and**
- **investigation of cultural exchange**

Each site/place/space research project will be an applied laboratory where, alongside art form development, experiences in cultural reciprocity will be initiated, tested and evaluated. These laboratories will encourage dialogue and exchange of differing techniques and approaches to:

- mutual investigations,
- arts research and making,
- interdisciplinary and collaborative practice,
- the creation of cultural networks, pathways and long term associations,

whilst concurrently recognising the richness and singularity of individual cultures.

The daily process of arts and cultural exchange learning through doing and evaluating will drive the renewal of the Abbotsford Convent's programs that promote and support artists and researchers.

In depth consultation with internationally experienced cultural exchange program managers and contemporary art form artists indicates that the complexity of the Convent's many historical layers and the cultural breadth offered by the community in which it is located should inform residency projects. The research programs envisaged will in turn deepen and broaden international investigations into multi art form and hybrid expressions of "site/place/space", whilst concurrently exploring mechanisms for dynamic cultural exchange.

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Currently Jude Anderson and the Abbotsford Convent are developing two resident artist programs that will shape investigations and inform the arts and cultural research mission over the next 3 years. The first program will be tested in 2009/10 and is located on site:

- ***I to You*** - A Master Artist Exchange

A "in - residence" program where Master Artists develop research projects on site/place/space and cultural exchange.

**Each Master Artist is selected through an open expression of interest process conducted internationally and based upon the Master Artists' practice history, intercultural competencies, and proposed project.**

The Master Artist in turn builds a research team consisting of national and international artist/researchers and determines the criteria for the selection of the associated practitioners who'll work on the project and alongside or with each other over a specified period.

When, where, and how the results of each Master Artist Exchange are showcased will depend upon the research proposition, art forms, and artists brought together through each Master Artist research project.

A public outcome for each Master Artist project is expected.

In 2009 Jude Anderson will pilot this program with 17 artists.

- ***Criss Cross*** - Emerging artist and art forms exchange:

**A residency program for young artists and emerging art forms that brings artists practising across art forms together to research and invent responses to "site/place/space."**

Linked to this program are a number of satellite research and production sites based in regional Victoria including Castlemaine in Central Victoria, Mildura in Northern Victoria, and Nowa Nowa in East Gippsland.

At each of these centres an arts and cultural exchange "relay" of locally practising artists and arts workers provides a "meshing community" that will welcome and assist with physical and social resources. Artists are expected to conduct their research with and within their chosen location and to publicly present their findings.

Artists are selected following an open national and international call for expressions of Interest. This program will be piloted through Punctum Inc.'s "SeedPod" sponsorship program and live arts incubator over the next 2 years.

Further to this we will conduct forums and build platforms (both on site and electronically) that encourage and further dialogue, debate and discussion on site responsive art and cultural exchange.

- ***How long and who***

Through research and consultation we have determined that residencies anywhere between 2 weeks and one year need to be made available.

Given the breadth of artistic and research practices we are inviting and our emphasis on meaningful cultural exchange, we want to ensure that residencies are as responsive as possible to the singular needs of each artist/researcher's project.

Programs will emphasize artists across all stages of their careers and development, manifest the spectrum of approaches to site, interdisciplinary practice, and contemporary ideas, and reflect the cultural diversity of people in Australia.

Artists participating in the programs will represent all art forms including hybrid art forms, new media, and emerging art forms in a well developed art making practice.

We consider that all participants in the program are involved in a high level of arts investigation and research.

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