

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Anonymous**

**Submitted:** As an artist

## **A Place for Every Story**

In my experience as a Professional Artist I find the public art arena is heavily tilted toward academic endeavour at the cost of the creative. In short, this is where writing about visual art for a submission or exhibition, outweighs the value of the actual image. Vincent Van Gogh or Jackson Pollack never had to rely on a written explanation for *Starry Night* or *Blue Poles*. Visual Art in Australia is overwhelmed by the need for a narrative about the art, leaving the visual artist spending more time on justifying their artworks than on creating them. Great art should give the viewer the opportunity to a part of the work to form their own interpretation and be moved by communicated emotion, not present them with a perceived explanation. A strong image does not need a story as such, but should inspire stories in others.

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

Australian society has always had a strong cultural identity mainly based around its love of sport, while the arts have perennially taken a second seat, often labelled as elitist. I believe as a nation we haven't found our adult artistic identity. This hasn't been help by over a decade of neglect by Federal Governments. Besides the wonderful work of our First Nation artists, I believe that we as a country are still searching for an artistic identity. It needs to be nurtured to mature and find its place in the world.

I also believe we should to more inclusive and less judgemental and that each artist should feel comfortable in their own skin, not judged but celebrated, allowing them to perform their artistic endeavours with the support of government.

## **Reaching the Audience**

At present there seems to be two tiers of government funded art institution. The first tier serves the community though teaching and hobby style arts and crafts. These community and outreach art practices are extremely important not only to develop a community that appreciates artistic endeavour but also as a service to improve community mental wellbeing and individual self-worth.

The second is used to showcase Professional Artists and Companies and where the pursuit of art can make a more well rounded and inclusive society. I support both these tiers of funding and I understand that the institutions in these two tiers need a selection progress, but at present for Professional Artists to obtain funding in Australia the process is heavily reliant on time consuming red tape and a bureaucratic selection framework that favours the written over the visual. The result is often the promotion of mediocre artwork with lofty explanations. Leaving gallery or event patrons feeling confused and confirming their bias that the visual arts are elitist. As such visual arts funding in Australia seems to swing between the highbrow and a populist form of community art. Since most visual artists exist in the ground between these two types of art that receive the majority of funding in Australia, there seems to be a problem finding a happy medium. I would suggest more scholarships or stipends be made available to Visual Artists in Australia, to support their daily art practice.