

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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LAUNCESTON ART CO-OPERATIVE COLLECTION

Artists, Launceston
Art Galleries, Launceston

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The Launceston Art Co-operative was formed on 21 October 1992 by nine artists to provide an artist-run exhibition space for practising artists and craftspeople who lived in the Launceston area. It was to be self-funded, without government grants or sponsorship, thus giving members freedom in presenting their art. The Co-operative was the brainchild of artist Bea Maddock and ceramicist Robert Ikin.

A small two storey brick building, formerly a dilapidated warehouse at the rear of 144 Charles Street, in Bender's Lane, with its entrance off the York Street car park, was rented. It was decided to adopt the name 'Snakepit' as it was rumoured that a snake trainer had once leased the building. The Co-operative held monthly meetings, and management was maintained by a system of rotating monthly managers.

Three tiers of membership were established. Full membership was limited to 26 members, allowing each member to hold an exhibition for a fortnight each year, with the member having curatorial and administrative responsibility for all aspects of the exhibition. Reserve members, limited to 25 in any one year, automatically became full members the following year. Associate membership was available to interested people who wanted to be included on the mailing list. Patron membership was introduced in 1995. Patrons made a financial contribution towards the running of the gallery, and in return, as part of their membership, were presented with an original, limited edition print, produced by a member of the Co-operative.

Hiss Review and the Snakepit Calendar were distributed every three months to all members, with copies available for sale.

The first exhibition was held in January 1993. The gallery hosted over 100 fortnightly shows to the end of 1996, involving 111 artists, as well as six Snakepit Group Shows. The list of all exhibitors is included in 6/11, folder (2).

At the end of 1995 it was becoming harder to find bookings for shows, and in October 1996 a decision was made to dissolve the Co-operative. However a new group was formed: the gallery's name changed to the Snakepit Art Space, exhibition terms were made more flexible, involvement with students and the community was to be expanded and membership extended outside the Launceston area. The quarterly publication was renamed *Snakebite*.

When the building was to be sold in 1998, the committee, already concerned with the low level of participation in gallery activities, decided to close the gallery. The last exhibition was held in April 1998.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in July 1998. Additional items were added in 2008.

1.Minutes of Meetings

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 1/1 | Minutes of meetings, 21/10/1992-1/12/1993 | 1992-1993 |
| 1/2 | Minutes of meetings, 4/1/1994-6/12/1995 | 1994-1995 |
| 1/3 | Minutes of meetings, 3/1/1996-4/12/1996 | 1996 |
| 1/4 | Minutes of meetings, 5/1/1997- 4/3/1998 | 1997-1998 |

2.User's Agreements

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| 2/1 | The Snakepit User's Agreements, 25/2/1993-11/12/1996 | 1993-1996 |
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3.Correspondence

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| 3/1 | Miscellaneous correspondence | 1992-1997 |
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4.Financial Records

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 4/1 | Westpac monthly bank statements, 4/11/1992-14/3/1995,
3/5/1995-1/12/1995, 2/9/1996-1/10/1996 | 1992-1996 |
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5.Membership

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| 5/1 | List of members, including full, reserve, associate, patron and art critic categories, including mailing lists | 1993-1997 |
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6.Exhibitions (including catalogues and newspaper cuttings)

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| 6/1 | Calendars of exhibitions held in Snakepit Gallery | 1994-1996 |
| 6/2 | Catalogues of exhibitions: 'The Final Five', (Barb Bullard, Mandy Hunniford, Linda Bowen, Paul Bishop, Lou Millen) March, no year; Launceston Church Grammar School art staff (Ralph Hobbs, Helene Weeding, Katy Woodroffe, Donna Mathewson) 1994; 'Gang of four' (Jill Eastley, Simon Howell, Greg King, Peter Sugden), February 1995; 'Prints on view' (Denise Campbell, Helen Freitag, John Hay, Gina Lehman, Lou Millen, Diana North, Dallas Richardson, Joanne Wild) May 1996; '3 plus one' (Dallas Sutherland, Sue Creely, Natalie Holtsbaum, Sylvia Sutherland) 1993; David Archer, November 1995; Tara Badcock, 1997; Gina, 7/1/1997; Diana North, 24/2/-5/3/1996; Lisa Roberts, 22/4-5/5/1993, 12-23/7/1996; Melissa Smith, 28/6-10/7/1996; Ron Thain, 20/4-1/5/1994; Joanne Wild, 3-15/6/1994; | 1994-1996,
nd |

Joanne Wild, Dennis Wild, 11-24/8/no year; Monika Zechetmayr, 8/3/no year

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|------|--|---------------|
| 6/3 | Invitations to and notices re Snakepit Gallery exhibitions (includes inaugural exhibition, 31/12/1992) | 1992-1996, nd |
| 6/4 | Posters: A4 posters advertising solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, Snakepit Benefit shows etc at Snakepit Gallery; Launceston Art Co-operative 'Nothing over fifty(\$): Small Works Showing', 22 May-2 June 1993; 'Members Summer Showing' 31/12/1993-12/1/1994 (includes art work) | 1993-1996, nd |
| 6/6 | Attendance records for several exhibitions | 1993-1996 |
| 6/7 | Benefit Show 1995, list of exhibitors and their exhibits | 1995 |
| 6/8 | Snakepit Benefit Show '96, roster; notice, nd | 1996 |
| 6/9 | Snakepit Art Space, Snakepit exhibiting members 1997, folder of user's agreements, invitations to exhibitions, calendar for 1997 etc | 1997 |
| 6/10 | Snakepit Art Space, folder of information on Swap Meet and Mixed Bag Show, 25-26/1/1997 | 1997 |
| 6/11 | Snakepit Art Space exhibition kit, two folders. Folder (1) includes information on Snakebite preview; <i>Snake Bite</i> , issue 2, April 1997; user's agreement; notes for planning an exhibition; notes re documenting Snakepit history; membership forms (friends, patron, exhibition) and <i>Snakepit Summer Season</i> program, 1998 etc. Folder (2) includes some of the above, plus information on Snakepit Art Space; list of artists who had exhibited to [1996]; membership list (possibly incomplete) and information on Snakepit Art Register | 1997-1998 |
| 6/12 | Snakepit Fundraiser, 'Nothing over 50 dollars', notebook with artists' names, title, price sold? | nd |

7. Miscellaneous Records

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 7/1 | Snakepit management structure, folder containing diagrams | nd |
| 7/2 | Guidelines for managers | 1993-1994 |
| 7/3 | 'The Snake Pit', photocopy of article by Chris Viney in <i>Leatherwood</i> , 83, no. 8 [1993] | 1993 |
| 7/4 | Jo-Ellen Frances Jackson, curriculum vitae, c1993 | c1993 |

7/5	Introduction to new members (gives information on structure, activities, plan of building etc)	1994
7/6	The Launceston Art Co-op logo on A4 paper, variant colour and black and white copies; photocopies of diagrams showing location of Snake Pit (rough sketches and sheet of six small final copies of diagram)	nd
7/7	Licence to erect or display an advertisement, 14/4/1994 (includes sketch of signs on building)	1994
7/8	Forms etc re Patrons and Patron Prints	1994,1997
7/9	Working bees, 6-7/1/no year, work to be done, purchases	nd
7/10	Envelope with diagram of Snake Pit's location on front left hand side	nd
7/11	'Planning your exhibition', notes, invitation to three informal discussions, March, April, May/no year	nd
7/12	Snakepit Art Space, photocopy masters	nd
7/13	<i>Hiss Review</i> , no.1, February 1993-no.17, December 1996	1993-1996
7/14	<i>Snakebite</i> , [no.1]- no.5, December 1997, no.6, June 1998	1997-1998
7/15	<i>Background Noises</i> (comments on Snakepit exhibitions)	1994

8.Ephemera

8/1	Linda Bowen, Mandy Hunniford, Lou Millen, preview postcard for exhibition at Despard Gallery, Hobart, 24/7-16/8/1994; Dallas Richardson, 'Solid ground', catalogue of exhibition at University Gallery, Launceston, 8/6-7/7/1995; Jo and Dennis Wild, flyer for 'Kangaroos in print' presentation, Community History Museum, 23/9/no year; 'The ship of fools folio', advertisement card on handmade Paper, c. 1997; 'The big drawing show', catalogue of exhibition by nine artists, Space, Plentitude, Brisbane (no date); Lanni's Gypsy Gallery, 128 St John Street, information sheet re space for hire, mailing list for Exhibitions, c. 1997	1994-1997
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OTHER SOURCES

Hiss Review, no.1, February 1993 - no. 17, December 1996 and *Snake Bite: a quarterly preview of coming events at the Snakepit Art Space*, 1997, are held in the State Library of Tasmania, Hobart, and the Launceston Library