

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 50

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 | 19/11/1992 to Bea, from Paul Bishop re membership; 21/12/1992 to Chairperson, from Diana North re writing an article for CAST newsletter; 24/12/1992 to Secretary, from Gwen Parsons with seasons greetings; 8/1/1993 to Chris Viney, from Bea Maddock, letter of thanks, enclosing invitation made for opening show; 19/1/1993 to G Richardson, L'ton Art Co-operative, from John M Bissland, enclosing \$200 for full membership; 26/1/1993 to Manager, from Diana North, enclosing \$10 for associate membership for Contemporary Art Services Tasmania; 10/2/1993 from Gina Lehman re joining the Co-op; 16/2/1993 copy? of letter to J Williams, from Bea Maddock, L A Co-op, re application and deeds, includes applications for planning approval; 2/3/1993 to Mr (sic) Maddock, L A Co-op, from T Domeney, City of Launceston, re development application; 21/4/1993 to L A Co-op, from T Domeney, City of Launceston, application has been approved; 14/5/1993 to L A Co-op, from Gwen Parsons, enclosing advertisement for "Hiss"; 19/5/1993 to Manager, from Diana North, re exhibiting at Launceston Library and Launceston General Hospital; 1/6/1993 to L A Co-op, from T Domeney, City of Launceston, re approval for amendment to existing permit; August 1993 postcard to L A Co-op, from Edwin; 12/8/1993 to manager, from Diana North re cooperating with mail-outs and newsletters; [1993] to L A Co-op, from R I Thain re no acknowledgment of cheque | 1992-1993 |
| 3/2 | January 1994, to Denise [Campbell] re reserve membership; 9/2/1994 to Snakepit, from Bronwen Power re Arthouse moving to new premises; 31/5/1994 copy of letter to Miss Williams, from Bea Maddock, Launceston Art Co-operative, re alterations to rear gate at 144 Charles Street; 19/7/1994 to David Castle, from Gina, Manager | 1994-1995 |

Snake Pit Gallery, thanking him for loan of stands for use during exhibitions; 8/10/1994 to Denise, Launceston Art Co-operative, from Ron Thain re his illness and reserve membership, with notation re answer; 16/11/1994 to Tharissa Burgess from Bea Maddock, Launceston Art Co-operative, explaining Co-op. structure and associate membership; 23/11/[1994] to Manager, from Ron Thain, his wife unwell, encloses \$30, 'your organisation is worth keeping afloat'; 14/2/1995 to Launceston Art Co-operative, from Lance Armstrong, MHA, accepting invitation to become a Patron Member; 22/2/1995 to Launceston Art Co-operative, from Monika Zechetmayr enclosing her 'art vitae'; 27/2/1995 copy of letter to Monica Zechetmayr from Edna Broad, Manager for February, sending application for membership; 10/4/1995 to Bea, from Tharisa Burgess, has looked at a suitable building; 21/7/1995 to Proprietor, Snakepit Gallery, from Ken Ashlin re advertising in the Saturday *Mercury*; [August 1995] to Launceston Art Co-op, from TICO Coordinator, State Library, re information for Tasmanian Index of Community Organisations; 7/10/1995 copy of letter to Joanne Wild, from Executive Committee, re printing Patron Print for 1996; 7/11/1995 to D Marsden, from Exec Committee, enclosing membership application form; 9/11/1995 to Helen Freitag, from Joanne Wild, re patron print, and enclosing profile and curriculum vitae

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| 3/3 | <p>No date to the Committee, from Anne McIntyre re gallery being closed when she went to view exhibition; 3/3/1996 copy of letter to Anne McIntyre, from Denise Campbell, apologising for gallery's closure during advertised opening hours; 1/5/1996 to David Marsden, The Snake Pit, from Paul Mickan, Manager Planning, Launceston City Council, re draft Launceston Planning Scheme; 8/5/1996 to Bea Maddock, Launceston Art Co-operative, from Sue Napier, Minister for the Arts, Sport and Recreation, re Co-op. overcoming 'recent financial difficulties', gallery 'has become a vital part of Tasmania's art scene'; 9/10/1996 to Launceston Art Co-operative, from Sean Payne re not receiving invitations etc., with notation re answer; 22/10/1996 to Martin Stevenson from Lisa Roberts, re press release; 22/10/1996 to Melissa Smith, Launceston Art Co-operative, from RG Campbell, General Manager, Launceston City Council, re a funding strategy for the co-operative; 22/10/1996 copy of fax to Gina Lehman, from Lisa Roberts, re press release, press release attached; 23/10/1996 copy of fax to Danny Clarke, Advocate, from Lisa Roberts, re press release; 23/10/1996 copy of fax to Simon Bevilacqua, Mercury, from Lisa Roberts, re press release; 28/10/1996 copy of fax to Martin Stevenson, Examiner, from Lisa Roberts, re press release; 26/11/1996 to Miss J C Williams, from Bea Maddock, re Bea vacating flat at the rear of the warehouse at 144 Charles Street, Snakepit Gallery will continue to operate with a new committee as the Snakepit Art Space</p> | 1996 |
| 3/4 | <p>13/1/1997 to Denise Campbell re exhibition; 6/2/1997 to Kaye Dowling, Public Programmes Manager, QVMAG, re visit by Carmel Bird and</p> | 1997,
nd |

Michael Fortesque (two slightly variant copies); 13/6/1997 to Jill Stovell, NSW, from Bea Maddock re setting-up of Co-operative; 29/8/1997 to 'Dear Member' re support; 1/9/1997 to Curator, Snake Pit Art Space, from Karen McGuinness re holding an exhibition, includes information on her art, with notation re answer; 10/9/1997 to Manager, from Christopher Wareham, is looking for employment, curriculum vitae enclosed; 25/9/1997 to Kaye Dowling, QVMAG, from Lisa Roberts re Kaye presenting the Patron Prints and opening the Toys Benefit Show; November 1997 to Lisa, from Gina Lehman, financial management in 1997 has been successful, thanks her for her 'generosity in contributing monies', Foundation membership form attached; 10/12/1997 to Lisa Roberts, Snakepit, from Greg Leong and Bron Power re design brief for Royal Park Flood Levee, design brief enclosed; [1997] Christmas card to Gina, from Libby Harper, with thanks for cheque received on behalf of Snakepit Artspace; nd to Snakepit Gallery, from Hilma Tyson, enclosing membership sub, and donation; nd card to 'Dear Snakepitters', from Jim & Claudia, they miss being involved

4. Financial Records

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

5/1	List of members for 1993; full members, May 1993; full members, August 1993; full members, November 1993; reserve members, May 1993; reserve members, August 1993; reserve members, November 1993; Launceston Art Co-operative list of associate members, 1993; associate members, May 1993; associate members, August 1993; associate members, November 1993	1993
5/2	List of members 1994; associate members, 1994; full members, 1994; mailing list, correct to 1/2/1994	1994
5/3	List of full members, reserve members, associate members, January 1995; associate members, April 1995; art critics, patron members, 1995; art critics, patron members, full members, associate members, October 1995	1995
5/4	List of art critics, patron members, [members], 1995-1996 list (includes full members 1996)	1995-1996
5/5	List of patron print members, art critics, 1996; full members, March 1996; associate members, March 1996; membership, 21 June 1996	1996
5/6	List of foundation members 1997; Snakepit Art Space membership	1997

list 9/5/1997; Snakepit Art Space membership list 22/8/1997

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| 5/7 | Two lists of associate members | nd |
| 5/8 | List of names from last year's list | nd |
| 5/9 | Mailing lists | nd |

6.Exhibitions (including catalogues and newspaper cuttings)

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| 6/1 | Fifteen calendars of exhibitions held in Snakepit Gallery, 30 July 1993-30 December 1996 Oversize items
Also A4 calendars, July 1994-December 1996 | 1993-1996 |
| 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; Joanne Wild, Dennis Wild, 11-24/8/no year; Monika Zechetmayr, 8/3/no year | 1994-1996,
nd |
| 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) Some are Oversize items | 1993-1996,
nd |
| 6/5 | Newspaper cuttings: <i>Examiner</i> and <i>Mercury</i> cuttings re Snakepit Gallery and Snakepit Art Space exhibitions, 23/12/1992-28/3/1998 (includes some photocopies) Oversize items | 1992-1998,
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

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	Art work: The Launceston Art Co-op Snake Pit door sign, mounted on masonite <i>Oversize item</i> ; 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	1994
8/2	Dallas Richardson, 'Solid ground', catalogue of exhibition at University Gallery, Launceston, 8/6-7/7/1995	1995
8/3	Jo and Dennis Wild, flyer for 'Kangaroos in print' presentation, Community History Museum, 23/9/no year	nd
8/4	'The ship of fools folio', advertisement card on handmade paper	c1997
8/5	'The big drawing show', catalogue of exhibition by nine artists, Space Plentitude, Brisbane, nd	nd
8/6	Lanni's Gypsy Gallery, 128 St John Street, information sheet re space for hire, mailing list for exhibitions	c1997

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