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From Tech. Ed. to Higher Ed.: **Professional training of the artist in Australia. A history of the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools, ACUADS 1981–2015**

<u>Synopsis</u>
The Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) is the peak national body representing art and design school educators. ACUADS is an incorporated, not-for-profit consortium of Heads of School from the Australian art and design tertiary education sector.

This history discusses the formation of ACUADS in 1981 at an informal gathering, known as the Conference of Heads of Art and Design Schools, and its growth into the leading discipline body for university art and design education in Australia.

Since its inception, ACUADS has collaborated with other associations in the arts, forming a united voice in the advocacy for the arts in the university sector. This strategy has been important for addressing common concerns, such as the importance of appropriate funding for teaching and research in the creative arts, the introduction of postgraduate education opportunities and support for cross-disciplinary study.

As a leader in the broader arts education field, ACUADS has been involved in the formation of the Council of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) and, more recently, the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Creative Arts (DDCA). In this context, ACUADS has assisted in bringing the creative arts disciplines to national attention. This united voice has proved to be successful in championing support for creative arts teaching and research in Australia's higher education sector.

ACUADS is recognised as the national association of colleagues in the university sector, promoting quality professional education, fostering research in art, craft and design education, and providing advocacy for the sector.

Background
The oldest Australian art and design schools were established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Their origins were in state-based technical education and they gave little thought to the formation of a national discipline association. Art and design

schools established later, in the 1960s and 1970s, were associated with Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions. In the late 1980s, when Australian Government policy abolished the binary system of higher education (universities and colleges), art and design schools were progressively incorporated into the university sector.

Key dates, organisations and associations
In 1967, an Australian UNESCO seminar was held at Melbourne's National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) as a follow up to a 1965 International Association of Art (IAA) conference in London. The seminar, chaired by Eric Westbrook (Director NGV), proposed the establishment of an association for art and design education (Australian UNESCO Seminar, 1970).

A related development was the establishment of the Australia Council for the Arts and its subsequent re-formation as the Australia Council in 1972, which included the establishment of art-form boards. The Visual Arts Board (VAB) and Crafts Board (CB) were particularly relevant to the art and design education sector.

In May 1974, the Visual Arts Board convened and funded a national seminar: *Tertiary Art Education: Art Teacher Education* at the University of Tasmania, Hobart. In his Foreword to the report following the seminar, John Baily, Visual Arts Board and Seminar Chairman wrote:

> It was the first meeting at a national level of staff from tertiary art and design schools for seven years, and it happened at a very crucial time, a time of considerable activity both in the art world in general and in art schools. Most art and design schools and departments are now parts of Colleges of Advanced Education and are being funded by the Commission on Advanced Education; many are in the process of introducing new courses at both degree and diploma level; and many are planning new buildings. Tertiary education is more accessible to students, with the availability of more courses and the introduction of TEAS, the Tertiary Education Allowance Scheme (National Seminar on Art Education and Art Teacher Education).

The seminar concluded with the recommendation: that "there should be further meetings at frequent intervals, and that these include participation by all levels of staff, and by students, recent graduates and any interested parties" (National Seminar on Art Education and Art Teacher Education).

In October 1974, the VAB seminar's recommendation was taken up by a Melbourne-based steering committee that agreed to the formation of the Australian Association

for Tertiary Art and Design Education (AATADE).[1] The Association attracted the support of tertiary art and design studio-based staff, mainly from Victorian universities, CAEs and TAFE institutions. However, with the formation and growth of the nationally-focused Conference of Heads of Art and Design Schools, established in 1981, support for AATADE faded and it produced its last newsletter in November 1984.

In 1976, another Melbourne-based organisation, the Australian Institute of Art Education (AIAE) was established as a national body of visual arts educators concerned with scholarly exploration and promotion of education theory and practice. AIAE attracted support from Teachers' College art education lecturers and Education Department art curriculum specialists. AIAE was closely aligned with the International Society for Education through the Arts (INSEA) and the Australian Society for Education through Art (ASEA).[2] AIAE publishes a journal and held an international INSEA Congress in Melbourne in 2014.

Since the VAB seminar in 1974, there has been little formal or organised connection between professional art and design educators and professional art teacher educators.

Australian Higher Education reform
The 1980s and early 1990s was a period of reform in Australia's higher education sector as art and design schools transitioned from the former CAEs and TAFE areas into the university sector. It was in this context that most capital city-based Heads and Directors of art and design schools met during a 1981 Sydney seminar supported by the VAB. At this meeting, there was agreement to hold annual meetings and informally establish a national consortium of art and design heads of schools. This conference became the basis for an unincorporated association established in 1989 called the National Council of Heads of Art and Design Schools (NCHADS). The initiative recognised that professional visual art, craft and design educators needed a nation-wide communication network and a focus for activity and exchange at the national level as recommended by the 1974 Hobart seminar.

The newly formed NCHADS brochure stated its aims as:

> to further the role of education of professional artists, craftspeople and designers;

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[1] The recommendation read: "Within a proposed general framework, the Association would be concerned with promoting the teaching of art and design, establishing and maintaining contact between the art and design schools, to formulate recommendations concerning the training of artists and designers and to initiate programs of research into selected aspects of art and design education". AATADE brief.
[2] AIAE recently changed its name to Art Education Australia (AEA).

identify, on a national basis, issues of common concern;
formulate recommendations and to articulate and represent them at
institutional, state and federal levels;
foster research and development into all aspects of the visual arts and design;
collect, co-ordinate and disseminate information relevant to art and design
education (NCHADS).

As art and design were new to the university sector, both teaching and research areas required adaptation in order to operate in the higher education context.

In 1989, NCHADS convened its first national conference in Canberra. Since then, annual conferences convened in capital cities on rotation have responded to contemporary issues and advanced the interests of the art and design education sector. Conference themes have included: *Convergence/Divergence* (UTas, 1995); *Framing New Perspectives* (ANU, 1996); *Cross Sector Collaboration* (Curtin, 1997); *Future perfect* (RMIT 1998) and *Building Bridges* (SCA, 1999).

The 1990s was a period of growth and professional development for NCHADS. Coinciding with the 1991 annual conference at RMIT, the first National Student Art & Design Exhibition was organised by RMIT's Art & Design Faculty. The exhibition was held in Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building and officially opened by Barry Pullen MP, Victorian Minister for Education and Training. The show attracted national media interest.

In 1994, reflecting the new location of art and design schools within the National Unified System of Australian Universities (UNS), NCHADS changed its name to the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS). In addition to a name change and a new logo, ACUADS's began to produce annual informational brochures. These comprehensively listed all of the art and design opportunities available at universities and private providers of university-level qualifications. ACUADS held regular Executive meetings and occasional workshops and seminars throughout the decade.

Also in 1994, ACUADS held its first international conference at the Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland, in New Zealand. This represented a new horizon for Australian art and design schools and included delegates from Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand. The same year, ACUADS opened its annual conferences to participation by all art and design academic staff.

1994 ACUADS conference, Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland, Ron Newman (UNSW), Pam Zeplin (UniSA), Pat Hoffie (Griffith) and Sue Rowley (UNSW)

1994 ACUADS conference, Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland
Ted Snell (Curtin), Bill Gregory (RMIT) and Mostyn Bramley Moore (Griffith)

Conferences have provided high profile networking opportunities and the chance to recognise distinguished teaching and research through a suite of ACUADS awards. Since 1998, ACUADS has recognised art and design academics via the Distinguished Fellowship Award, the Distinguished Teaching Award (introduced in 2003), the Distinguished Research Award (introduced in 2004) and the International Fellowship Award (introduced 2011). In 2011, Postgraduate Scholarships, designed to assist students with the travel and accommodation costs associated with attending

1994 ACUADS conference, Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland
Left: Elizabeth Grierson (NZ) and Conference Host Jolyon Saunders (Auckland);
Right: John Teschendorff (Curtin) and Norman Creighton (Monash)

the ACUADS conferences were introduced. In 2016, ACUADS announced two further awards: the Innovative Teaching Award and Innovative Research Award, for early career teachers.

In 1995, ACUADS entered into an arrangement with Design Editorial Pty Ltd to produce the *Design World/ACUADS* resource guide, a publication listing art and design courses at Australian universities, TAFEs, private colleges and, in New Zealand, Polytechnics. Paid advertising from each institution covered the cost of production of the guide. The Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Simon Crean, and Arts Training Australia (a national peak advisory body on vocational education and training) both endorsed the guide. *Design World/ACUADS* presented a comprehensive guide to every aspect of tertiary education courses in art and design and was distributed nationally, via newsagents, replacing the brochure previously produced by the ACUADS Executive.

In 1999, ACUADS worked with *The Australian* to produce six Special Advertising Reports, timed to coincide with the annual conferences from 1999 to 2005. The reports included articles from art and design schools, promoting visual arts, crafts

and design research themes, advertising education opportunities and advocating careers in art and design. Articles in the first report focused on the 1999 Sydney conference theme, *Building Bridges*.

2002 ACUADS conference, Brisbane, Andrew Andersons AO (PTW Architects), Daniel Thomas, Mostyn Bramley-Moore (Griffith), David Williams (ANU), Sue Rowley (COFA) and Su Baker (VCA)

In the reformed higher education sector, art and design disciplines found support by working with other creative arts areas that were also incorporated into the university sector. ACUADS' collaboration with the National Council of Heads of Tertiary Music Schools (NACHTMUS) resulted in the successful application for a Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA), Evaluations and Investigations Program (EIP) project grant to investigate research in the creative arts. The EIP *Research in the Creative Arts* report, published by DEETYA in 1998, was prepared by Dennis Strand in consultation with a Project Committee comprising representatives from visual arts, design, drama and theatre studies, dance, music and curatorship. The report recommended redefining research, with attention to research equivalence and data collection criteria, in order to better encompass the creative arts (Strand, 1998). The report drew attention to the unfavourable allocation of research funds and the weighting of performance measures. Following release of the report, good progress has been made in these areas and the creative arts are now better positioned in the university sector.

2009 ACUADS conference, Queensland College of Art, Noel Frankham (UTas), Elizabeth Grierson (RMIT) and Desna Jury (Auckland)

2011 Conference Keynote, Dr Iain McGilchrist, Australian National University

International connections
Since its inception, ACUADS has established international connections with the United Kingdom Arts and Design Institutions Association (UKADIA) and the USA-based organisations College Art Association (CAA) and National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

In 1994, ACUADS was invited by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee to prepare a co-operative exhibition of Australian art and design student works for a promotional exhibition in Singapore.

In 2003, the ACUADS Chair was invited to attend NASAD and the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD) meetings in California to speak about the introduction of PhD programs in Australian art and design schools.

In 2005, ACUADS co-operated with Australian Education International Shanghai and the Shanghai Association for Science and Technology (SAST) to produce an exhibition of Australian art and design. The exhibition included student work from eight ACUADS' member universities and was shown in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

2015 Conference Convenor, Simon Biggs (UniSA); PVC Denise Meredyth (UniSA) and delegates, University of South Australia

Today

In 2015, ACUADS represents over 40 universities and private providers offering art and design degrees at the Bachelor, Master and Doctorate level. Since 2003, ACUADS has published peer reviewed ACUADS conference papers, further supporting art and design education professionals by disseminating and archiving their research. In 2015, ACUADS extended this sector support in the form of a new small grants initiative.

Since its inception as an informal Sydney conference meeting, ACUADS has provided an organised network of art and design Heads of School, Deans, Directors and colleagues, providing support and direction for the art and design education sector. ACUADS has grown to become the authoritative voice and peak discipline body of visual art, craft and design education professionals. ACUADS promotes quality professional education, fosters research in art, craft and design education and advocates for the sector. ACUADS' development continues to be informed by international concerns, local policies and the ongoing need for a national communication network.

2015 conference delegates, University of South Australia
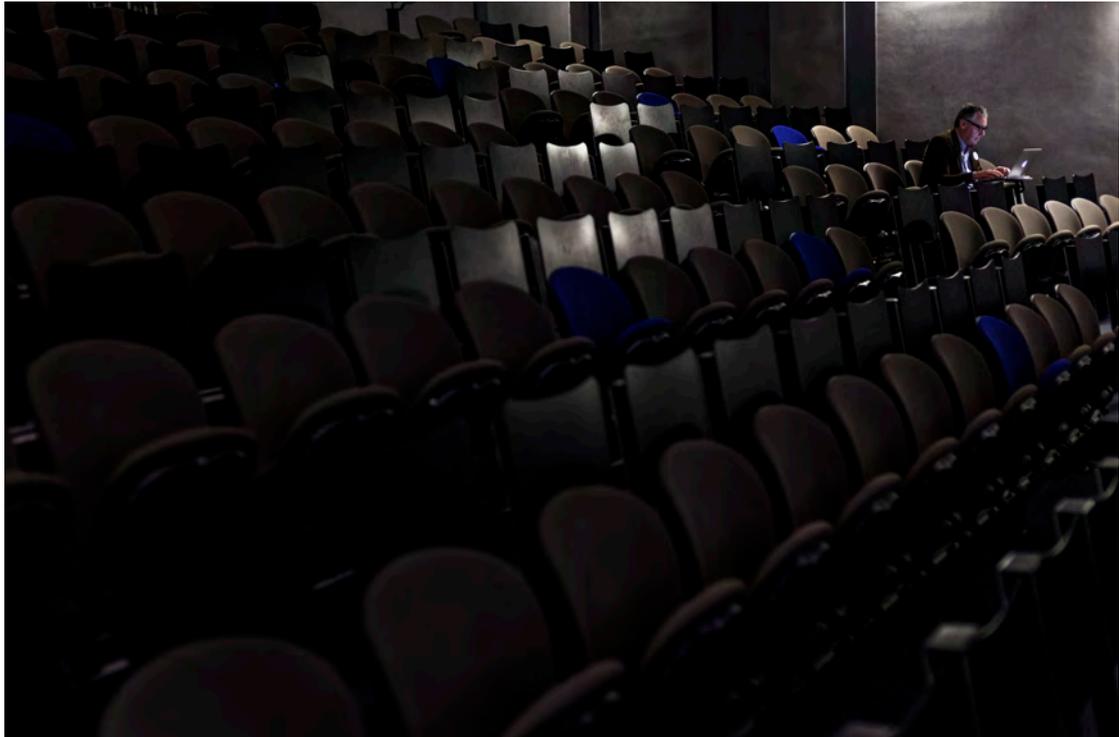
2015 conference delegate, University of South Australia

TIMELINE

1967   UNESCO seminar, *Professional Training of the Artist*, National Gallery of
        Victoria, Melbourne.

1972   Australia Council reformed to include Visual Arts Board (VAB) and Craft
        Board (CB).

1974   VAB national seminar, *Tertiary Art Education: Art Teacher Education,*
        University of Tasmania, Hobart.

—   AATADE established in Melbourne.

1976   AIAE established in Melbourne.

1978   Report, *Craft education and training in Australia: a report to the Crafts Board
        of the Australia Council*, published.

1980   Report, *Tertiary visual arts education in Australia: a report to the Visual Arts
        Board*, published.

1981   National Conference of Heads of Art and Design Schools (NCHADS)
        established.

1987-   Binary tertiary education system abolished and Unified National System
1992   established by John Dawkins, Labour Education Minister, Hawke
        Government. Art and design schools move into the university sector.

1989   International delegates from Indonesia and New Zealand invited to attend
        NCHADS conference *The Challenge of Change*, ANU, Canberra.

1991   First national Student Art and Design Exhibition, RMIT, Royal Melbourne Exhibition Building, Melbourne.

1994   Name changes to Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools, (ACUADS).

—   First international conference, *Biculturalism & Multi-Culturalism*, Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland, New Zealand

—   ACUADS invited to participate in an AVCC exhibition in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan in order to promote art and design education opportunities in Australia.

—   Attendance at annual ACUADS conferences is opened to all art and design education staff.

1995   Brochure, *ACUADS: A guide to undergraduate and graduate courses in visual arts, craft and design*, produced.

1996   ACUADS awarded DEETYA EIP Project Grant.

—   Forum, *Intercultural Education and the Visual Arts*, School of Art, ANU, Canberra.

—   Conference, *Framing New Perspectives*, ANU, Canberra.

1997   *Cross-sector collaborations: conference papers*, published.

1998   EIP report, *Research in the creative arts*, published.

—   Distinguished Fellowship Award announced at the annual conference, with the first award going to Professor Geoff Parr, Director Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart and inaugural Chair of ACUADS.

1999   First of six ACUADS special advertising reports in *The Australian*.

2001   ACUADS and NAVA (National Association of the Visual Arts) produce a professional practice visual arts program for use in elective study at art and design schools.

2003   ACUADS representative invited to attend 59th National Association of School of Art and Design (NASAD) in Los Angeles, USA to present information about PhD studies in Australia.

—   [ACUADS annual conference papers](#) peer reviewed and published on the ACUADS website for the first time.

2004   Distinguished Teaching Award introduced.

—   Council of the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) formed. ACUADS invited to join as an affiliate member.

—   Conference, *New Visions, New Policies, New Opportunities*, ANU, Canberra.

—   Distinguished Research Award introduced.

—   ACUADS invites senior staff from TAFE Colleges and Independent institutions offering degree programs in art and design to join as members.

2005 ACUADS and Australian Education International produce an exhibition of work by students from eight Australian universities offering art and design education for exhibition in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

2006 ACUADS celebrates 25 years of successful education, research and advocacy for tertiary art and design with the publication: *Thinking the Future: Art, Design and Creativity*, a theme shared with the 2006 Melbourne conference.

2007 ACUADS participates in a CHASS/DEST workshop on Research Quality Framework (RQF) at Griffith University, Brisbane.

— ACUADS receives two Carrick Institute project grants: (i) Studio Teaching and (ii) Scoping Study to examine how the Creative Arts PhD and DCA may provide an innovative model for research training.

2008 ACUADS collaborates with the College of Fine Arts (COFA), UNSW to produce the publication *ACUADS: Research 07/08*, showcasing examples of research activity in 2007 and 2008. The publication illustrates a cross section of art and design research funded activity by ACUADS members and was used for advocacy and promotion of the art and design sector.

2011 ACUADS annual conference Postgraduate Scholarships announced.

2012 Steering committee formed to draft a constitution preparing for the formation of the Association of Deans and Directors of Creative Arts (DDCA).

2015 ACUADS small grants initiative announced.

2016 ACUADS Innovative Teaching and Research Awards announced.
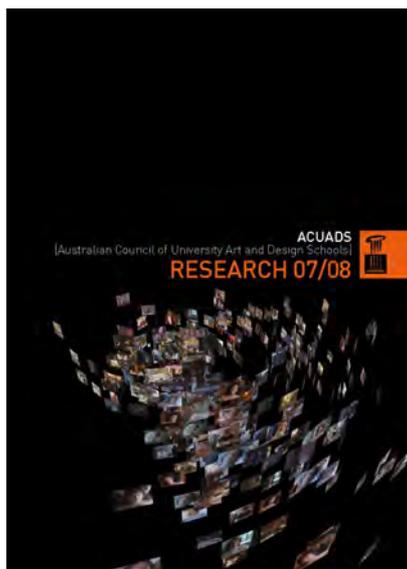
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