THE NATIONAL ART SCHOOL - A SOCIAL HISTORY FROM 1833 to 1973 and a CATALOGUE OF THE ARCHIVAL ART COLLECTION

VOLUME 1


Queensland College of Art
Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland.

This Thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Research) Griffith University, Brisbane.

September 2011
ABSTRACT

At the core of this thesis is a broad social history of the origin of the National Art School (NAS), dating from the earliest days of art history in NSW when the Mechanics Institute was formed. From 1833, after many incarnations and name changes, this organisation evolved into the National Art School. Since 1922 it has been located in the old Darlinghurst Gaol in East Sydney. I have detailed the growth of the School until 1973 when it was absorbed into the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education. The documentary material used in the construction of the NAS history is examined in relation to the social and political forces that operated in Sydney and Australia during the period under examination.

The thesis began as a project to catalogue the extensive collection of student paintings held by the NAS. The lack of documentation, at the most basic level of student and staff names, extended the necessary scope of the research. The photographic record of the collection of student paintings is included as an appendix, as is the catalogue of these works. My thesis also includes, as appendices, the definitive (although incomplete) list of over 4,000 past student names, dating from the beginning of the twentieth century to 1973, and an incomplete, although comprehensive list of teachers names covering the same period. It has taken some years of research to compile these listings from a variety of official, published and press sources. This thesis also contains a coverage of the formation of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme and the effect this scheme had on a number of young student artists, many of whom became leaders in their various fields. No study of this group has previously been undertaken. I interviewed ex-students and teachers, and from them gathered names of some ex-CRTS students. I was able to contact a small number of still active artists and from the results of a questionnaire administered to them, formed conclusions about how they survived their financially stringent time as CRTS assisted students, and how the results of the training and support they received at the School affected their subsequent careers.

The importance of this study, apart from its intrinsic value, is the material it offers to future investigation by scholars from different fields. There is potential for much further research in every decade of the school’s history.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signature:.............................................................
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor Professor Ross Woodrow who assisted me to completion.
Evie Franzidis for her exceptional editorial skills.
Bernard Ollis, past Director, for permission to use the resources of the National Art School.
Therese Kenyon for use of notes relating to the exhibition ‘The Studio Tradition’.
Deborah Beck for her willing assistance in tracing paintings and permission to access the NAS Archives set up by her.
Kelly McKeon, Head Librarian and the staff of the National Art School Library.
David Barnes for his generous permission to use extracts from his Master’s Thesis, ‘From collegial policy communities to bureaucratic management techniques; a case study in tertiary education amalgamations of the 1970’s and 1980’s’.
Lorna Harvey for permission to quote from E A Harvey’s biography and Diana Harvey for useful consultations.
The State Library of NSW for permission to use the image ‘Art Students at East Sydney Technical College Art School, Creator Sam Hood, 1872-1953’.
Susan Schmocker, Chief Librarian of the Art Gallery of NSW library.
Staff at the Mitchell Library, Sydney for their patience and assistance.
Staff at the National Archives in Canberra.
Staff at the NSW Archives in Kingswood and Chester Hill.
Library staff members at TAFE Harris Street, Ultimo.
Kay Kavanagh at the TAFE NSW Information Centre for assistance regarding aptitude tests administered to the CRTS ex-service people.
Isolde Lennon for permission to use her Catalogue of the historic National Art School Plaster Casts, mainly purchased by Lucien Henry in 1910.
Cheb Badham, Fahy Bottrell, Eric Chester, Lindsay Churchland, Ray Davies, Bruin Finey, Frank Freeburn, Norm Hetherington, Anna Ingham, Ena Joyce, Edna Mackenzie, Tom Thompson, Charles Thomson, Margaret Tuckson, Jean Weir (Sherlock), Alan Waite, Guy Warren, Pat Yates. These CRTS and other students shared memories of their student years with me.
My son Wal for his computer expertise and assistance with photographic problems and my late partner Gerry Rippon for his absolute faith in my ability to complete the task.
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAI</td>
<td>Australian Artists Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGA</td>
<td>Artists and Galleries of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGNSW</td>
<td>Art Gallery of New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIF</td>
<td>Australian Infantry Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMCAE</td>
<td>Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Australian Sculptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASTC</td>
<td>Associate of Sydney Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWAS</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Army Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWCP</td>
<td>Australian Water Colour Painters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>College of Advanced Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAI</td>
<td>City Art Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRTS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAA</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Australian Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTS</td>
<td>Effective Full-Time Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESTC</td>
<td>East Sydney Technical College</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAA</td>
<td>Library Association of Australia</td>
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<td>NAS</td>
<td>National Art School</td>
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<td>NASC</td>
<td>National Art Students Club</td>
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<td>NIDA</td>
<td>National Institute of Dramatic Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW HEB</td>
<td>New South Wales Higher Education Board</td>
</tr>
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<td>NSWIA</td>
<td>New South Wales Institute of the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCA</td>
<td>Sydney College of the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCAE</td>
<td>Sydney College of Advanced Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SORA</td>
<td>Studio of Realist Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC</td>
<td>Sydney Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWP</td>
<td>Society of Women Painters [Sydney]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAF</td>
<td>Women’s Auxiliary Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>WW1</td>
<td>World War 1</td>
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Art Students - East Sydney Technical College c.1930s

Photo by Sam Hood, Collection of the State Library of NSW