

National Cultural Policy Submission

Claudia Chaseling

Submitted: as an artist (and as an individual)

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:

First Nations

The recognition of the centrality of First Nations peoples to Australia's national identity is crucial and should be basis for art in Australia.

The Centrality of the Artist

If you look back in history and look at the eras, you see that what remains of cultures is art. Nations change, borders change, architecture is destroyed, but art often remains and is a testament to the times, thoughts and visions in which it was created. The purpose of free art is not to entertain, or to decorate. Free art is a deep urge to comment, describe and record. Through the intuition and the inevitable motivation of the artists, new forms are created, because time is always changing and because every situation makes a new demand. Free art should be supported, but above all appreciated, even if the artists are rarely the economically strongest.

In the last 15 years I observed a restriction of free art:

Suddenly free art and free artistic activity should be applicable and useful for today's market economy, which means a big restriction for the artistic activity and even its destruction. Examples are the art universities without 24 hours studio access, high tuition fees for free art (there should ne to tuition fees for free art), and the compulsion that free art must be applicable to the market economy.

Furthermore, artistic residencies and exchange programs should be promoted more again.

Please tell us how these pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

First Nations should be supported and highly recognized for making historic and contemporary free art. When I visited Aboriginal communities in northeast Arnhem Land in 1999 and saw cross-hatched paintings for the first time, in particular the Yirkala Church panels. These meter-high paintings are totally abstract whilst fully representing light, landscape, and spirituality and symbolizing the creation story. I was blown away by seeing such a degree and refinement of abstraction in painting created over the last 20,000 years and more. Europe's painting and abstraction history is quite short in comparison.

The Centrality of the Artist

I am a freelance artist not by choice but by vocation. It is not an easy path, but also a very enriching one. Free art can contribute far more to society than one might think. But free art is not predictable. Art is often inconspicuous and then again overwhelming and groundbreaking but above all unpredictable.

Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

I think that the cultural organizations in Australia and compared to international institutions do everything very well! The art teaching at Universities should go back a bit to the orientation and freedom of the 90's.