

National Cultural Policy Submission

GLAAS Inc

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

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

As one of the few organisations solely supporting glass artists, we have recently achieved grant funding to deliver a series of glass workshops for First Nations artists. There have been very few opportunities for First Nations artists to learn glass techniques, and to express their cultural influences and responses in glass art. Consequently, First Nations artists do not have a significant representation particularly in the architectural glass techniques such as leadlight and stained glass painting.

A Place for Every Story

Glass artists have suffered from a serious decline in educational opportunities in recent years, now partly rectified by the courses at Melbourne Polytechnic. However, the demand for the courses is starting to exceed the number of places available, and funding is needed for organisations which are supporting glass artists by providing training, workshops, exhibition and event opportunities. Many young people are being drawn to tell their story, and Australian stories, in glass; but resources are limited. Funding and increased awareness is needed to help develop this groundswell of interest in glass art.

Strong Institutions

There are very few organisations supporting the use of glass in art and architecture in Australia and or encouraging the development of training, exhibition opportunities and the raising of awareness of art glass in the wider community. Funding for smaller organisations such as GLAAS Inc, which is achieving outstanding results in education and artist outcomes and completely run by volunteers, needs to be increased. So often when funding becomes available it is directed at other visual arts areas – GLAAS Inc cannot grow without the ability to receive funding to enable paid professionals to grow the organisation, and in turn the glass sector which has enormous potential for employment into the future.

Reaching the Audience

Again, an awareness of glass in art and architecture would be greatly helped by support either financially, or through the opportunity for public glass works to be commissioned. There are so many possibilities for the use of designed art glass in the built and natural environment if this type of support was achieved.

Please tell us how each of the 5 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

GLAAS Inc seeks to support and encourage all glass artists. However, there has been a significant lack of educational opportunities in architectural and art glass techniques for First Nations artists. Consequently, Australian glass in art and architecture does not have a healthy representation of First Nations artists and culture in glass artworks. This is a serious omission of First Nations' representation in glass art, and the Australian arts sector.

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

A greater consideration of glass art, particularly architectural glass such as leadlighting, stained glass (painted glass), kiln formed glass used as installations and architectural elements in buildings, is necessary to grow the sector. There is a huge resurgence of interest in glass art and design, and great potential for sector and commercial growth. However, glass as art and as a valid contemporary design element in art and architecture needs to gain a higher profile among the visual arts in Australia, and support is required to achieve this.