Report on Julie Gough’s visit for Shaping Canberra

Funds were received from RSHA for Julie Gough to visit HRC in the lead-up to the Shaping Canberra Conference in September 2013. This visit was designed to prepare for Julie’s keynote conference presentation in response to the exhibition. The School of Art played an important part in enabling the planned activities.

Julie recently heard that she had won a residency at the Australia Council for the Arts’ Studio in Liverpool, UK, that would have to be taken up in the second part of this year. We decided that it would be appropriate to go ahead with Julie’s visit in March 2013 with a view to supporting, as planned, the Shaping Canberra interest in artists working with archives.

Julie’s visit involved three main activities:

1. A class with School of Art students who will be taking a subject about working with archives next semester
2. A talk at HRC, An Artist in the Archive (poster attached)
3. A two-day workshop with the Indigenous Textile and Glass Artists Group.

The intention of these activities was to introduce Julie’s approach to art making in response to archival collections to art students, artists and archivists – particularly those who were not familiar with her work. There was also time in Julie’s schedule for her to meet up with Canberra friends and colleagues and further her established conversation with them.

Class with School of Art Students
This was arranged by Martyn Jolly at the School of Art.

An Artist in the Archive talk: 2.30 – 4.00pm 22/3/13
This was designed to develop a conversation with artists and archivists who were not familiar with Julie’s work. It was held in the Sir Roland Wilson theatrette. The target audience was artists and archivists involved in the Shaping Canberra exhibition. Invitations were also sent to a wider group of people with heritage and archive interests, students in the Museums and Collections Graduate course, and RSHA colleagues. Afternoon tea provided an opportunity for further discussion with Julie. About 20 people attended. The event was an important step in furthering discussion about artists working with archives that could be further built on.

Indigenous Textile and Glass Artists Group (ITAG) workshop 23 and 24/3/13
The workshop took place at the School of Art. It was fortuitously timed on the weekend following the Selling Yarns conference and exhibitions in which several members of ITAG had taken part. As it was the first time that Julie and the artists had met it functioned as a valuable introduction to each other’s work practices. For the participants this largely represented new ideas about working with archival material and heritage objects. Julie also made an important contribution to ideas for the Group’s Shaping Canberra conference presentation. She is interested in following up possibilities for making connections between ITAG and Tasmanian Indigenous artists working in a similar way.

Mary Hutchison 27/3/13