

President's Report

The Annual Report gives us an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and activities of Craft + Design Canberra throughout the year. This is my first President's report since joining the team in 2023, and I find myself impressed with the incredible talent and world class standard of work from our members and staff. I would like to acknowledge the major achievements of our predecessors in delivering innovative exhibitions, programs, and festivals. I stand on your shoulders.

When you last received this report, we were known as Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre. You may have noticed our new name – welcome to the first report from *Craft + Design Canberra*. This name was adopted to reduce public confusion, as our evaluation results showed that people believed the *Design Canberra Festival* and *Craft ACT* were perceived as separate organisations. Craft ACT was also perceived to be an arm of *artsACT*, and therefore assumed to be completely government funded, rather than a not-for-profit organisation, partially funded by government. To choose a new name we engaged in an extensive consultation with our members, through ThinkPlace and Inklab. So far, our new name has been met with positivity, and we look forward to building on that momentum.

But first, I want to reflect on the impressive year that was. In 2023 Craft + Design Canberra: hosted 17 diverse, challenging and beautifully crafted exhibitions; received a commendation from the *Canberra Region Tourism Awards* for the *2022 Design Canberra Festival*; created a new workshop space for community engagement; organised artist studio visits through the *Craft + Design Canberra Anytime Program*; changed the organisational structure and increased wages, in line with NAVA (National Association for the Visual Arts) codes of practice, and government regulations; revisited the Constitution, which was last reviewed in 2015, and will be voted by members at the 2024 AGM; advocated for affordable insurance for our members; collaborated with other art organisations on the *Kingston Art Precinct* project; and acknowledged two of our Accredited Professional Members, Jennifer Kemarre Martiniello (Arentee) and Kirstie Rea, who were honoured with the title Craft Masters of the Asia Pacific Region by the World Craft Council, which is an outstanding achievement.

Craft + Design Canberra started the year with the *Emerging Contemporaries* exhibition, which highlighted the best work from recent graduates, demonstrating the depth and range of new artists and

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makers, and the *Daisy Chain* exhibition, displaying eight new associates from the Jam Factory's innovative and highly respected Associate Program. Julie Ryder, Bev Hogg and Mel Robson were selected for the *Artist-in-Residence Program* for 2022 and produced thought provoking work in their 2023 exhibition *Boundaries*. Krystal Hurst and Jessika Spencer were selected for the *2022 Indigenous Artist-in-Residence Program* and produced cultural significant work in the 2023 exhibition *Homage*. A special thank you to ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the National Library of Australia for enabling these artists and makers to undertake residencies and access research. Although I have only mentioned a few of the exhibitions during the year, I can honestly say that every exhibition has been exciting and thought provoking.

I would like to acknowledge Jodie Cunningham, the CEO + Artistic Director, for her excellent leadership, creativity, and her outstanding commitment to Craft +Design Canberra. Also, my thanks to all our staff and volunteers for your enthusiasm and dedication to deliver quality programs and services, we really value you.

Craft + Design Canberra does not exist without our members. You are the backbone of this organisation and I want you to know that the Board of Management, CEO, and staff are working for you, to ensure this organisation is exemplary.

Thank you to our valued volunteer Board of Management members for working collaboratively and remaining engaged despite your professional workloads. Your expertise and knowledge lead to quality governance, enabling the team to feel supported to deliver our strategic plan (Innovation, Collaboration, Value and Security).

Government and sponsor funding is essential to our operation. I would especially like to thank both the ACT Government and Federal Government for their four-year operational grants and in-kind support, to enable stability and security. Thank you to our sponsor, Home by Holly, for committing to our new four-year sponsorship model.

A special big thank you to all our members for supporting our exhibitions, workshops, open studios, artist talks, and the online and retail shop. The future looks bright when we have so much enthusiasm.

What an amazing year, thank you everyone!

Penny Boyer
President
Craft + Design Canberra