

Dear Reader of Natural Selection,

I write to enlist your support. In the last issue of this Australasian magazine certain criticisms were levelled at our national campaign. Regrettably, this campaign is too vulnerable. It has not yet received a response from the Government and can ill afford such criticism. As I expect the writers may have erroneously thought the campaign is much stronger than what it is, their criticisms have had to be thoroughly addressed so as to limit their destruction (see blog site). For there is much to lose:

- 23 July 2001:** An Australian Federal Government media release commences with: 'A landmark examination of visual arts and craft in Australia was announced today by [the then] Federal Minister for the Arts, Peter McGauran. **Visual arts and craft are major contributors to Australian culture and the Australian economy, yet at the same time, visual artists and craftspeople are amongst the lowest income earners in Australia,** Mr McGauran said';
- 6 September 2002:** The resulting Myer Report makes 20 recommendations. The first recommends that direct funding be made to Artists through the reinstatement of a mandatory artists' fee and increased grants;
- 9 December 2003:** As a response over \$39 million dollars is injected into this sector, mostly into infrastructure (wages of those servicing the sector, etc...). Basically NONE goes to Recommendation One – the reason for the Myer Report;
- 8 July 2004:** Artists mount this campaign;
- 14 August 2004:** National SIT-IN to STAND UP for contemporary visual art, same day, same hour in public art galleries throughout Australia;
- 29 November 2004:** The campaign's THE STARVING VISUAL ARTIST put the cliché to rest PETITION is tabled in Federal Parliament;
- This day in March 2005:** Recommendation One remains ignored; our petition unanswered.

The systemic industrial abuse of visual artists and craftspeople who 'are major contributors to . . . the Australian economy' has been rubber stamped by the Government: its job declared done. Visual artists' dire financial situation is now far worse than in 2001 when the Myer report was called for, but the alarm bells in Canberra have been silenced. This is our last chance to make them ring loud. Let Canberra know that:



BUT YES TO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Someone else wrote the song 'Free Nelson Mandela', not Nelson Mandela. Please, be that person for this campaign. Write letters, articles, anything, everything. Let your embers flare, let us artists dare.

Gail Hastings for SASS

(For more information please go to our blog site at <http://sydneyartseen.blog-city.com>)