

2.3 GORDON DARLING FOUNDATION TRAVEL GRANT - MGA STAFF TRAVEL TO CHINA REQUEST
(JR: AP ARTS12)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Approves international travel and eight working days for Monash Gallery of Art Gallery Director Anouska Phizacklea to travel to China to coincide with Shanghai Photo September 21-23 and for professional and programming development.*
- 2. Notes that a grant of \$4,896 for this proposal has been received to fully fund this travel by the Gordon Darling Foundation.*

INTRODUCTION

A grant has been received by the Gordon Darling Foundation of \$4,896 to fund the MGA's Gallery Director to travel to China. This grant proposal seeks to further build on the success of the recent Monash Gallery of Art exhibition *China: grain to pixel*, a collaboration with the Shanghai Centre of Photography, the first time this unique profile of the history of modern China was exhibited outside China. Importantly, it provides an opportunity to secure exhibitions and relationships to further engage Melbourne's Chinese community, notably the 24% of Monash residents of Chinese background.

PURPOSE

Council's approval is required for international travel to China and Hong Kong and the 8 working days allocated to coincide with Shanghai Photo. There is no additional funding requirement by Council to fund the proposal.

BACKGROUND

MGA is the Australian home of photography. As Australia's only public institution solely dedicated to the collection, exhibition and promotion of photography, MGA holds a unique place in the nation's network of art institutions. The Monash community is transitioning to one of the most multicultural communities in Australia, with 49% of Monash residents born overseas and over 12% from Chinese backgrounds, meaning Monash has one of largest Australian-Chinese populations in the state.

The Gordon Darling Foundation was established in 1991 by Gordon Darling, who passed away in 2015. Its purpose is to fund Visual Arts activities across Australia.

The Foundation supports the visual arts and to promote, through Public Institutions, access to and enjoyment of all areas of the visual arts, to the broadest possible audience. Annually, it assists institutions with projects and helps to promote Australian arts in the international arena. MGA staff have previously been beneficiaries of Foundation funding. Advice has been received that the MGA's application was successful, after the submission was made in January. Since being advised of its success, the Gallery Director has been making contact with institutions in China to develop the itinerary for Council's approval.

The positioning of MGA as the Australian home of photography was clearly sign-posted during 2017 with a series of exceptional international exhibitions which included *China: grain to pixel*, an exhibition delivered in partnership with Shanghai Centre of Photography (SCôP). It was MGA's largest international show and most attended exhibition to date. The exhibition resonated with audiences and created new pathways and opportunities for the community to engage with MGA, inspired new audiences to explore photography, and advanced MGA's profile and reputation.

MGA is seeking to continue development of strategic relationships with international institutions and partners by supporting the Director to travel to China and Hong Kong to continue to develop regional exhibition partnerships and provide her with an exceptional professional development opportunity.

DISCUSSION

Collectively, MGA staff and the Committee of Management have a highly developed awareness of the responsibility and opportunity this travel grant presents, reflected in the new Strategic Plan. Given Monash's diverse cultural profile, MGA seeks present exhibitions that reflect, inform and include the Chinese community as a key part of its future exhibitions and programming.

The travel grant will provide a unique opportunity to directly engage with galleries and cultural organisations in China, notably during the Shanghai Photofair, which has a significant role in the growing importance of photography in China, the world's second largest art market. This year's program will feature an ambitious *Insights* exhibition, and a strong focus on artists pushing the boundaries of photography across the fair's 50 leading Chinese and international galleries. By attending the Fair, the Gallery Director has identified a unique time to view a very broad range of Chinese photography and meet with potential partners. This will expedite identification of exhibitions suitable for MGA and establish relationships with cultural institutions for future pursuit.

Each institution listed in the draft itinerary (Attachment 1) has been selected for the possibilities that may benefit MGA's future program. The Gallery Director's travel will also support the goal to build MGA's capacity to deliver the strategy by increasing revenue, developing and supporting MGA by the provision of professional development opportunities and attracting sponsorship opportunities. Demonstrated success has been achieved in this sphere with the *China: Grain to Pixel* exhibition; this proposal will seek to build on that success.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This proposal supports the **MGA 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan** endorsed by Council in June 2018.

The Plan's Strategy Statement notes that MGA is Australia's leading public art gallery devoted to the collection and exhibition of photography that engages local, national and international audiences in arts and cultural experiences. In five years, we have committed to double visitor numbers, engagement, sector relevance and influence. MGA will achieve this by focusing on four key goals:

- Present compelling, must see exhibitions that meaningfully contribute to arts scholarship and the advancement of photography
- Build a nationally significant collection of Australian photographs
- Deliver culturally enriching experiences that inspire audiences to embrace, explore and value photography
- Build our capacity to deliver our strategy by increasing revenue and developing and supporting our people.

This proposal seeks to advance specifically MGA's goals to present relevant, must see exhibitions that meaningfully contribute to arts scholarship and the advancement of photography. Underpinning this are the following initiatives:

- Inspire audiences to explore photography with compelling, must see exhibitions that grow and enrich audiences
- Present a national and internationally significant touring program, developing global partnerships that champion and support Australian artists and arts workers
- Demonstrate excellence and leadership within the sector including profiling and championing photography, increasing collaborative projects, producing publications of significance and providing professional development opportunities.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *China: grain to pixel* exhibition was sourced by the previous Gallery Director Kallie Blauhorn and COM member Milton Harris in 2015. This exhibition became the most popular exhibition in the history of the gallery. It raised the profile of the gallery amongst prominent leaders and generated significant financial support from sponsors. Its success demonstrates the value to the Monash community of securing international exhibitions relevant to a local audience at MGA. Exposure to global trends, ideas and relationship development in Asia has significant potential for MGA to extend this recent success for the benefit of the Monash community and the national reach of MGA.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

No human rights implications inform this proposal.

CONSULTATION

This proposal is supported by the MGA Committee of Management and the grant application was submitted with a letter of support by the CEO, Dr Andi Diamond, both of whom have endorsed the proposal prior to presentation for Council's consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for this proposal has been secured through a grant from the Gordon Darling Foundation according to the following summary:

ITEM	DETAILS	EXPENDITURE
Flights	Qantas Flights	\$839
Accommodation	8 days	\$3,107
Meals / Other costs	Meals \$80 per day	\$800

	Travel \$15 per day	\$150
TOTAL (Inc. GST)		\$4,896

Note: costs current at time of grant application

CONCLUSION

This grant opportunity is a unique and highly valued opportunity to pursue strategic and creative partnerships with arts and cultural organisations in China. Building on the success of the *China: Grain to Pixel* exhibition. The proposal supports the development of an exhibition program directly relevant to the community of Monash and new partnerships that support the future success of Monash Gallery of Art's new Strategic Plan recently endorsed by Council.

Attachment 1 Draft Itinerary

Final itinerary dates will be confirmed by negotiation with local hosting organisations.

Itinerary**Travel to China – 1 day****Hong Kong – 2 days**

Key specialist photography institutions and galleries to visit include:

- F11 Foto Museum
- La Galerie Paris 1839
- 10 Chancery Lane
- Gagosian

Beijing – 3 days

Key specialist photography institutions to visit include:

- Three Shadows Photography Art Centre
- 798 Photo Gallery
- Minsheng Art Museum
- Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA)
- Red Gate Gallery

Shanghai – 3 days

Key institutions and fairs to visit include:

- FotoFairs Shanghai (September 21-23)
- Shanghai Center of Photography
- M97 Gallery
- Minsheng Art Museum

Return to Australia – 1 day