

BLINDSIDE EDUCATION KIT



BLINDSIDE offers students the opportunity to hear from an exhibiting artist, our gallery manager, or a member of our Board of Directors. We love sharing our ideas about the current exhibition, or more general topics pertaining to Melbourne's art scene, and there is always time for questions at the end!

We accept bookings from educational institutions for student groups.

Topics we cover include:

- Artist Run Initiatives (ARI) – What are they and how do they work?
- The differences between an ARI, a commercial gallery and a public gallery
- Exhibition programs – How does BLINDSIDE program? What do we look for?
- Staging an exhibition – Design, themes and media in the current exhibition
- The role of the Curator
- Writing about art
- Advice for emerging artists, including how to write an exhibition proposal
- Arts funding and support
- Promotion – What are the best ways to reach the desired audience?
- Conservation – What are the considerations for the safe handling and display of artwork?

FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

We offer an educational program, which is specifically tailored to the VCE Art and Studio Art curricula. Our programs can be customised for specific outcomes within the VCE syllabus – let us know your specific requirements when arranging a booking.

FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS

We provide information and advice about how to exhibit your work and get involved with an ARI, whether it be applying for an exhibition or funding, writing about art or volunteering. We also offer information about *Debut*, our annual exhibition showcasing new work by recent graduates.

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PAUL YORE | *Anthropop*, 2013 | Installation view, BLINDSIDE Gallery 1

LLAWELLA LEWIS | *Quiltwood*, 2013 | Installation view, BLINDSIDE Gallery 1

This Education Kit was written by Martina Copley, Claire Mooney and Raymonda Rajkowski. Editor: Claire Mooney. © BLINDSIDE 2015

THE DIFFERENT ROLES OF GALLERIES

What type of gallery is BLINDSIDE?

BLINDSIDE is an **artist-run-initiative (ARI)**.

ARIs are generally not-for-profit art organisations that support and exhibit both emerging and established artists.

ARIs are often viewed as 'grass-roots' establishments, on the fringe of the more established public and private galleries. They are largely volunteer run, although this has been changing in recent years with paid roles being supported within the organisations.

Because of their volunteer and non-profit nature, ARIs can often be quite short-lived. However, there are a number of Melbourne ARIs that have persevered – BLINDSIDE, Bus Projects (formerly Bus), Kings ARI, Seventh, Platform and West Space have all been around for 10 years or longer.

- *BLINDSIDE is an artist-run-initiative (ARI)*
- *It is a non-profit, 'grass-roots' organisation*
- *It is largely run by volunteers*

Why are ARIs important?

ARIs provide a much needed exhibition space for a broad range of artists and artwork. Without a space to exhibit, artists can't get their work seen by peers and the public. Before ARIs, there were only commercial and established public opportunities for artists to exhibit, and these opportunities were very limited in terms of the number of artists they could support, as well as the types of artwork accepted.

ARIs offer a space without the pressure of sales, a space that can engage art, artists and audiences across various levels. They have different imperatives and can show work that can't be sold or is difficult to sell. They offer a space for experimentation and a space for artists to develop an exhibition practice.

- *ARIs provide exhibition space for a broad range of art/artists*
- *ARIs support art that is experimental (not really saleable)*
- *They are able to support a large number of artists a year. Unlike larger institutions, there is a quick turnaround and often multiple spaces offered to artists*



IMAGES FROM TOP

KYLE JENKINS | Installation view from 'Smash Your Head on the Punk Rock', 2014. BLINDSIDE exhibition in Gallery 1

LIZ HENDERSON | Installation view from 'Untitled', 2013. Wellington College student visit the exhibition in BLINDSIDE Gallery 1

What kind of art does BLINDSIDE exhibit?

As an ARI, BLINDSIDE shows work from all fields of creative endeavour, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, sound, installation, moving image, performance, conceptual art, ephemeral art and non-material work.

As well as the outcome of the exhibition itself, BLINDSIDE is also interested in the questions and the evaluation processes that emerge from the process of putting on an exhibition. This includes: how the artist solves the problems of what the work needs within the space, what works in the exhibition and what doesn't, and how the work interacts or dialogues with other work on exhibition in the gallery.

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- *BLINDSIDE is also interested in the process of exhibiting*

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AN ARI, A COMMERCIAL GALLERY AND A PUBLIC GALLERY

Representation, relationships with artists, and the nature of exhibitions

Commercial galleries represent a selection or 'stable' of artists, exclusively in each state. You can look online at their websites to get a feel for each gallery and what type of artists they represent.

ARIs do not represent artists, nor do public galleries. ARIs offer a platform to show work.

BLINDSIDE exhibitions change every three weeks, generally showing two or more artists in one cycle. Artists come into contact with the gallery and then move on. Although there is no formal ongoing relationship with artists, like there is with commercial galleries, ARIs do form ongoing relationships and friendships with certain artists and may exhibit their work over several years, either through the artist's application or through curated exhibitions. Public galleries like the AUstralian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) invite artists and curators to work on exhibition projects. The exhibitions are usually shown for months.

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- *ARIs do not represent artists, nor do public galleries. ARIs offer a platform to artists to show their work*
- *There is no formal ongoing relationship with artists (although ARIs do form relationships and friendships with certain artists and may exhibit their work over several years)*
- *Public galleries like ACCA and the NGV invite artists and curators to work on exhibition projects*

Collection of artwork

ARIs and commercial galleries do not have a 'collection'.

ARIs generally don't have the resources to purchase or store a number of artworks, and this is not their intended purpose as an organisation.

Commercial galleries don't have a collection of work, but will have a current stockroom of work by represented artists so you can email or call and make an appointment to view work by a particular artist. This stockroom will change over time as work is sold, or new works are brought in.

National, state and regional galleries (public galleries) acquire or purchase work for their collections. Likewise, you can make an appointment to view works in the collection at the NGV that may not have been on show for sometime. Each collection is a resource that has a different emphasis or focus. These works are mostly kept in perpetuity, forever,

and they belong to the public. The galleries are caretakers, they keep the works safe and provide access to the work and stories about the work.

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Funding

Commercial galleries operate like a shop in that they need to sell work in order to stay in business. They sell work and take a commission on each artwork sale with the remainder going to the artist.

BLINDSIDE and other ARIs are not-for-profit. ARIs do not make money by selling art. Exhibiting artists pay a gallery rental fee and any sales go directly to the artist with no commission taken.

ARIs can apply for funding from local council, state and national arts funding bodies. This funding can go towards supporting specific projects or towards ongoing operations costs.

BLINDSIDE seeks opportunities for funding from Arts Victoria, the Australia Council and the City of Melbourne. This funding allows us to expand our program of curated exhibitions, to invite artists to exhibit or perform, and offer artist/curator/writer fees.

Public galleries are funded by taxpayers and allotted certain funds by the current government through the Australia Council.

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- *Public galleries are funded by taxpayers by the current government*

THE ROLE OF THE CURATOR

How does BLINDSIDE put together an exhibition program and who chooses the exhibitions?

The BLINDSIDE Board of Directors consists of voluntary members who are curators, artists, academics, arts managers or other arts professionals. Exhibition proposals are reviewed and assessed by the BLINDSIDE Artistic Directors who program the annual calendar of exhibitions.

Sometimes artists miss out on selection because there are so many proposals for exhibitions in a particular medium (i.e. photography or painting) and we like to program a balanced range of approaches.

Most often the proposals that stand out are the ones that clearly and honestly represent the artist's thinking through the work, and have considered specifically the context of exhibiting at BLINDSIDE.

What is the role of the Curator?

The role of the curator in the western world has changed over time. Traditionally, the curator 'cared for' and catalogued the museum collection. As museums became more concerned in providing public access to their material and knowledge, curators became that interface, mediating between the artwork and the world. Then curators began working independently of the museum. The independent contemporary curator can create exhibitions for various art and non-art institution throughout the world. No longer bound to 'explain' or make sense of a particular collection, curators work with context and, much like the artist, bring together ideas, artworks, people and places according to their own agenda – which may be self-devised or commissioned.

What is the role of the curator at BLINDSIDE?

Curators at BLINDSIDE are very much in the contemporary curator mold. They can apply to show exhibitions at BLINDSIDE that they have created. In this capacity, they work independently from the gallery and put together the concept for the exhibition and liaise with the artists and/or writers involved to source work, text and installation support for the show. Their application requirements are the same as they are for an artist, and they must submit written material and images to apply to exhibit. Curated shows are also organised each year by BLINDSIDE.

How are BLINDSIDE curated exhibitions organised?

BLINDSIDE runs a series of curated projects every year including **Screen Series** (video) and **Sound Series** (audio).



PIP RYAN | *Happy Orang*, 2011 | mixed media | Photograph by Matthew Stanton | 'Screen Series' exhibition at BLINDSIDE

These projects are supplemented at the beginning and end of each year by **Debut** (a selection of work by recent graduates) and **Curtain Call** (an exhibition which invites artists who have shown at BLINDSIDE to return and exhibit work in a new context).

PLAY is a unique online and in-gallery exhibition space for experimental moving image, and is curated by the BLINDSIDE Artistic Directors.

BLINDSIDE Festival takes place every two years, it is focused on a curatorial framework and aims to connect art with diverse audiences through multi-artform events and in multiple locations.

In 2014 – 2015, BLINDSIDE has curated two touring exhibitions. In 2014, BLINDSIDE partnered with Asialink to present **Vertigo**, an exhibition of ten of Australia's most cutting-edge contemporary artists. **Vertigo** toured to Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan.

In 2015 **Synthetica**, a BLINDSIDE and NETS Victoria touring exhibition, was presented in Wangaratta, Swan Hill, Melbourne and Gippsland, and will be presented at Wagga Wagga in 2016. During its regional tour **Synthetica** is supported by a local exhibition series – **Here in the Undergrowth** – a showcase of new work by a local regional artist.

EXHIBITION PROPOSALS

How does an artist apply for an exhibition at BLINDSIDE?

BLINDSIDE calls for **exhibition proposals** from artists once a year. BLINDSIDE exhibits work from artists at any stage of their career, whether emerging or established. We also exhibit work from local, interstate and international artists and curators. Proposal forms are available from our website, similar to forms used across most ARIs.

Our proposal form asks for **written and visual material** specific to the exhibition you are proposing and to the space you want to work in. Generally ARI's ask for the following information in proposals:

- A description of the work you will be exhibiting and a rationale for the exhibition. When writing about the project you need to explain the ideas you are engaging with, how your work thinks through these ideas, what materials will be used, what scale they are, and where the artworks might be placed in the gallery space. The more clear and specific you can be the better.
- A brief biography: a paragraph describing studies undertaken, key exhibitions you've been part of, art projects you've completed, etc.
- A current art CV: listing contact and website details, solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, publications and collections.
- Artist statement: a paragraph or two that generally describes your art practice: your themes, materials and techniques, and areas of interest.
- Digital images of your work: this may or may not be of work to be exhibited. Often the work to be exhibited is not made before the proposal is written. However, the

images included **must** relate to your proposal in some way and show that you can make your idea. Most importantly the images should be clear, carefully composed, with good lighting. They should showcase your work.

BLINDSIDE is happy to look over proposals and give feedback **before the due date for proposals**. If you have any questions please contact the Gallery Manager: info@BLINDSIDE.org.au

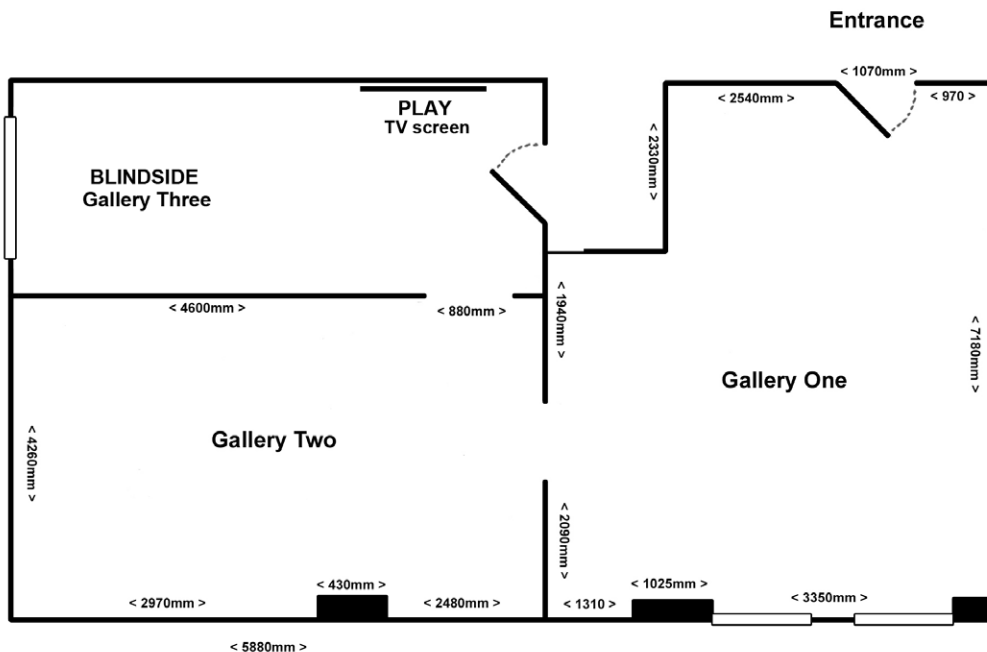
What are the physical characteristics of BLINDSIDE?

BLINDSIDE is located at Level 7, Room 14, 37 Swanston Street in the historical Nicholas Building in the CBD. The building also houses numerous artist studios, other galleries (Caves Gallery and Stephen McLachlan Gallery) and has an open house every year.

BLINDSIDE's Gallery One exhibition space is 40 square metres with a ceiling height of 3.4 metres. The long north-facing wall of the gallery is made from MDF. All other walls and the floor are concrete. There is a large window facing providing natural light during the day.

Gallery Two is 25 square meters with a ceiling height of 3.4 metres. The west and south-facing walls of the gallery are made from MDF and the remaining walls and floor are concrete. This room has no windows and can be darkened effectively for video or other works that need controllable lighting conditions.

Gallery Three includes BLINDSIDE's admin area, visitor seating and a Plasma TV showcasing PLAY – a curated space featuring a rotating display of new and experimental video in the gallery. PLAY is also a unique online platform, see: BLINDSIDE.org.au/play



ARTWORK DISPLAY

What is BLINDSIDE's approach to displaying artworks?

BLINDSIDE's approach to displaying works varies with each show.

If the exhibition has been curated by BLINDSIDE then the gallery manager and curator will work with the artists to determine the layout and installation of works.

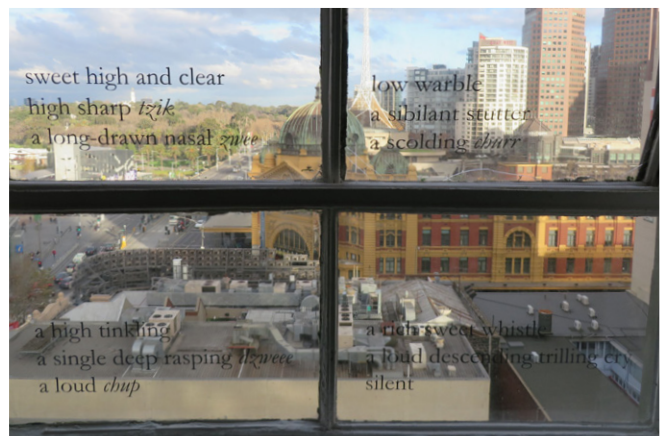
For a non-curated show, it is up to the exhibiting artist(s) renting the gallery as to how their work is displayed. The artist(s) may ask for advice from the gallery manager, but ultimately they have the final say on how artwork is installed as long as it complies with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) guidelines.

Artist(s) undertake the installation of the work themselves and are also responsible for returning the gallery space to the condition in which they found it.

What kinds of decisions need to be made when an artist is deciding to display their work?

Some of the questions an exhibiting artist or curator needs to address and solve when displaying work are:

- How many artworks need to be displayed? What are their sizes, shapes, special features, and materials used?
- Where will the artwork be placed in the gallery?
- What are the artwork's hanging or presentation requirements/fittings?
- What narrative or formal relationship is being created between the artworks? How will this be achieved?
- What characteristics of the space need to be taken into account? For indoor exhibitions this includes: wall space, floor space, window placement, door placement, lighting systems, hanging tracking, wall materials (i.e. MDF, brick, plasterboard), ceiling height and natural light. For outdoor exhibitions this might include: materials and weather, location to nearby architecture, pedestrian traffic, access to the site, installation equipment required, OH&S, anti-vandalism measures and public liability insurance.
- What technology or presentation methods/means are needed, do they need to be hired or are they available from the gallery? This may include: plinths, vitrines, data projectors, TVs, electrical cords and cables.



IMAGES FROM TOP

MELISSA MATVEYEFF and **LISA FRANKLAND** | Installation view from 'Personal Place', 2014, BLINDSIDE exhibition in Gallery 2

CATHERINE CLOVER | Vinyl text on windows | Installation view from 'Sound Series: Perch', 2014, BLINDSIDE exhibition in Gallery 1

LOUISE PARAMOR | *Ursa Major*, 2014 | Installation at Federation Square for the 'Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture' exhibition. Moving a large sculpture is an expensive operation and can be a major item in the budget for a sculpture

ARTWORK CONSERVATION

Methods and considerations involved in the conservation and preservation of artworks include materials, lighting, temperature, storage, presentation and artist intention.

How does BLINDSIDE approach conservation of artwork?

Unlike public galleries that need to house works over a long period of time, BLINDSIDE only shows artwork for a period of three weeks, therefore issues of conservation are not so pressing.

What are some of the conservation considerations for the safe handling and display of artwork?

TEMPERATURE

- Changes in temperature and relative humidity affect the artwork.
- Temperature and humidity can be controlled and monitored in some gallery and exhibition spaces.

LIGHT AND LIGHTING

- Works exposed to intense light will heat up, dry out, fade, discolour (pigments respond to light).
- This gets worse with increased exposure.
- The type of lighting is a consideration to protect works.

PROTECTING WORKS

- Albums, frames, vitrines etc. seal objects in a protective environment to keep them safe from light, dirt, heat, bugs, oils on skin, etc.
- Even work that seems really solid, like metal sculpture, reacts to the environment (e.g. rust) and is vulnerable.

How can contemporary art be conserved?

Contemporary art presents a range of challenges in terms of conservation. Artists tend to use unconventional materials and techniques that may be more susceptible to deterioration, or an artist may intend their work to be ephemeral and not last for a long period of time. The intentions of the artist, therefore, play an important part in the decision-making process involved with storing and displaying contemporary works. Interviewing living artists and the documentation of artwork also becomes significant to contemporary art conservation as it equips conservators with knowledge that could inform future treatments.

ARIs, like BLINDSIDE, play a role in capturing information around an artist's practice that contribute to building this knowledge and our understanding of the conservation needs of contemporary art.



IMAGES FROM TOP

RON MUECK | *In Bed*, 2005 | mixed media | 161.9 x 649.9 x 395cm
Images courtesy of the Queensland Art Gallery

In Bed comprises of a number of different components – the head and shoulders, the duvet and duvet cover, the body and the pillows and pillow cases – all of which are packed into large, heavy crates for safe transportation and storage. Photograph: Mark Sherwood/GOMA

Before the duvet cover could go on tour it needed a little attention. Some of the seams in the cover had split because of the pressure the duvet exerts on the cover while the work is installed and on display. Here the seam is being repaired by the textile conservator in the GOMA Conservation Laboratory. Photograph: Danielle Hastie/GOMA

Read more about the conservation at:
blog.qag.qld.gov.au/touring-ron-muecks-in-bed-is-a-monumental-affair

ABOUT BLINDSIDE



PERFORMPRINT (Michael Meneghetti and Joel Gailer) | *Bearings, Beauty and Irrelevance*, 2014 | Performance by Richard Flude for the 2014 BLINDSIDE FESTIVAL

As our name suggests, we support art practices that are on the periphery, for it is there that creativity thrives and the new is born. Deeply engaged in contemporary art practices in Melbourne and beyond, we are a transformative space, which actively engages and challenges a diverse audience, creating new dialogues.

BLINDSIDE is run by a Board of Directors which consist of voluntary members who are artists, curators, academics, arts managers or other arts professionals. BLINDSIDE also has a Board of Artistic Directors, who advise on the creative direction of the organisation, as well as Associate Members and Advisors, all of whom contribute to the running of BLINDSIDE.

The board works in conjunction with a paid gallery manager, who looks after the exhibition program and liaises with artists; and with a group of Associate Members who work in a volunteer capacity and perform various roles within the gallery, such as Website Administrator, Public Program Coordinator, Education Program Coordinator and Gallery Invigilators who sit the gallery.

Each month there is a board meeting where members can communicate about different aspects of the gallery. Different members will also liaise with each other on a needs basis (for example if they are working on the same project).

See the BLINDSIDE website for more information on the people involved: BLINDSIDE.org.au/about-us/board

ARTIST RUN INITIATIVES IN MELBOURNE

Allan's Walk Artist Run Space Inc (Bendigo)

BLINDSIDE (Melbourne CBD)
BLINDSIDE.org.au

Bus Projects (Collingwood)
busprojects.org.au

C3 Contemporary Art Space (Abbotsford)
c3artspace.com.au

Caves Gallery (Melbourne)
caves-gallery.com

Chapterhouse Lane (Melbourne)
chapterhouselane.org.au

Dudspace (Melbourne)
dudspace.com

Kings ARI (Melbourne)
kingsartistrun.com.au

Mailbox Artspace (Melbourne)
mailboxartspace.com.au

Off the Kerb (Collingwood)
offthekerb.com.au

No Vacancy (Melbourne)
no-vacancy.com.au

Platform Artists Group (Melbourne CBD)
platformartistsgroup.blogspot.com

Rubicon ARI (North Melbourne)
rubiconari.com.au

Seventh Gallery (Fitzroy)
seventhgallery.org

69 Smith Street (Fitzroy)
69smithstreet.com.au

TCB art inc. (Melbourne)
tcbartinc.org.au

Trocadero Art Space (Footscray)
trocaderoartspace.com.au

TwentyByThirty (Melbourne)
[facebook.com/pages/](https://facebook.com/pages/TwentyByThirty/)
[TwentyByThirty/](https://TwentyByThirty.com)
184294095410

West Space (Melbourne)
westspace.org.au

window99 (Fitzroy)
window99brunswick.street.blogspot.com.au

Zeppelin Projects (Brunswick)
zeppelinprojects.com

EDUCATION ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

BLINDSIDE offers students the opportunity to hear from an Exhibiting Artist, our Gallery Manager, or a member of our Board of Directors.

For bookings or enquiries please contact the Gallery Manager:
T (+61 3) 9650 0093 | **E** info@BLINDSIDE.org.au

BLINDSIDE

Level 7, Room 14, Nicholas Building, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000

EXHIBITION HOURS Tuesday to Saturday, 12pm – 6pm

T (+61 3) 9650 0093 | **E** info@BLINDSIDE.org.au | BLINDSIDE.org.au