

Australian Network for Art & Technology (ANAT)
Alchemy: International Masterclass for New Media Artists and Curators

Brisbane, Queensland
May/June, 2000

Applications due: 18 February, 2000

Guidelines for Applicants

1. INTRODUCTION

ANAT will hold an International Masterclass for New Media Artist and Curators for six weeks in May/ June 2000, in association with the new Powerhouse Live Arts Complex in Brisbane.

The project will provide artists and cultural practitioners with space to work on their own projects either together or individually, within an intensive learning environment. The intention is to provide an opportunity for artists and arts practitioners from across Australia and around the world to network, develop new work, devise new forms of collaboration. Artists, curators and theorists will come together to germinate and hothouse their ideas, test their hypotheses, develop new processes and create new works.

Workshops will be conducted by artists and cultural workers for the duration of the project and between and during the workshops the participants will be provided with 24 hour access to a lab., exhibition/ installation, performance space and workrooms within the context of a critical production site. Highly experienced curators and artists will provide training and lead workshops for the participants. It is envisaged that at any given time there will be two workshop leaders and 20 participating artists and artworkers. The makeup and composition of this will change as it is not anticipated that it will be the same group of tutors or participants for the entire duration of the school.

The Masterclass will engage with a diverse range of topics, as outlined below. Participants will be asked to identify two to four weeks where the focus of the Masterclass is of most relevance to their practice. As the project is intended as a dynamic one, there will be continual opportunities for exchange of ideas.

To culturally contextualise the Masterclass, satellite events, combine fora with open days will be held, giving the public and media an opportunity to view the work-in-progress produced by participants.

2. Background

ANAT has pioneered intensive skilling programs for artists through its coordination of annual National Summer Schools in computer media since 1989. ANAT have developed each of these schools through working closely with various host organisations across Australia over the years, and in close consultation with highly skilled and critically astute artist tutors. The NSS operates as masterclasses for experienced artists working across all artform disciplines, providing a deeply immersive learning environment. They have provided the catalyst for profound conceptual shifts and directions in practice for participating artists.

In 1999 ANAT, for the first time, ran three National Schools: two National Schools for artists (one for Indigenous Australian artists and one with a science / art focus), and one for curators and other artworkers. These schools engaged with a diverse range of topics from science discourses to indigenous issues to curatorial practice. Based on ANAT's experience managing these diverse projects and an ever increasing number of enquiries internationally about the possibility of participating in our programs, for 2000 the scope of this concept has been broadened to develop a more interactive and collaborative approach to the Masterclass learning environment and, with the support of the Daniel Langlois Foundation, opened the project up to international participation.

3. Aims

Throughout the Masterclass there will be a focus on skills development and skills sharing. The framework for the masterclass will also address issues of access to local and overseas works, theoretical issues in order to contextualise new media work, particularly within an international framework. As with previous projects of this

nature ANAT have managed, in order to take into account the needs of participants, the program for the project will not be finalised until the participants have been identified.

The inclusion of curators as well as artists in this process will ensure that various exhibition and presentation opportunities arise during the period of the project. Additionally, we expect that the connections and contacts developed during the Masterclass will ensure that exhibition, collaboration and presentation opportunities will also be realised after the event in the participants' countries of origin.

The intention for this project is for it to be very much a people event. We are interested in developing an environment which will encourage the formation of ongoing international collaborations.

In addition to more formal workshops and tutorials, at ANAT Summer Schools, artists are encouraged to conduct informal presentations in order to be exposed to the wealth of artistic and technical expertise which each of them bring to the school. We will not be expecting that all of the participant will be taking part for the entire duration of the project, rather participants will be encouraged to select two to four weeks where the workshops seem most relevant to their own practice.

The masterclass will be divided into thematic areas. These themes will not happen in isolation and there will be overlap and confluences between the different areas. Participants will be asked to identify two to three themes which may be of particular relevance to their practice in order to participate in those components of the Masterclass. Themes which will be addressed are:

1. Art and Science Collaborations

Identifying and interrogating diverse science and technology practices, and how science and art can collaborate will be the focus for a component the Masterclass. As with the 1999 ANAT National Summer School, participants will gain access to skills in a number of diverse areas such as scientific visualisation techniques and software, computer programming and modelling languages, sound, visual and web-based computer media, evolutionary approaches to computer programming, cognitive science and philosophy of mind.

2. Indigenous artists needs

Following on from ANAT's highly successful National Indigenous School in New Media Arts, a component of the Masterclass will also be specifically developed for Indigenous artists. Indigenous artists with an interest in new media technologies often feel locked out of this developing area. The initiative aims to expand opportunities for Indigenous artists in the area of art and technology, through providing access to appropriate training, computer equipment and software for the development of digital arts practice as well as the cultural, social and aesthetic issues being addressed by these artists. Therefore, the creation of a supportive and culturally aware environment for the duration of the Indigenous components of the International Masterclass is integral to the successful outcomes of the project. Indigenous artists are, of course, also welcome to apply to all other aspects of the masterclass.

3. A Digital Region?

In line with ANAT's focus, during 1999 on developing links and connections in the Asia Pacific Region, a component of the Masterclass will interrogate possibilities for exchange and exploration between Australian technology based artists and artists and organisations in Asia and the Pacific regions. This component of the project will explore possibilities for what kinds of technology-based art practices and modes of organisation are most appropriate to developing collaborations across this geographic region. Whilst the Masterclass project will be open to participants from across the globe, participants from this geographic region will be prioritised.

4 Curatorial Issues for New Media practices

Following on from me.d iate: the National School in New Media Art Curation, this component of the project aims to address curatorial practice in this field by giving practical demonstrations and workshops on critical as well as design issues associated with new media installation. ANAT have identified that one of the main obstacles associated with curatorial reticence with regard to new media work is a lack of understanding of the technical issues associated with exhibition. Alongside the development of critical discourse, demonstrating recent works and outlining presentation requirements for art and technology and new media arts practices

which will permeate all aspects of the Masterclass, this component of the project aims to give participants an introduction to the techniques associated with installing this technology.

5. Performance and Hybrid Art Practices

Recognising that artists working in this field are increasingly working in highly interdisciplinary ways, ANAT are particularly keen to ensure that performance and interdisciplinary practices are addressed as part of this Masterclass project. The intention is to develop workshops for emerging and established practitioners to explore, in a practical way, the development and encouragement of new methodology and practice in hybrid/interdisciplinary performance. The rationale is to bring participants from diverse backgrounds together in one place for an extended period of time to experiment and collaborate. This component of the project is being developed collaboratively with the New Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council (who are particularly keen to further develop this field within an Australian context) and will enable participants to focus upon the particular demands of theatrical and performative space. It draws attention to time-based performance in our culture, and suggests that 'Place' remains a crucial concern for many artists, despite the ubiquitous discourse of globalisation.

6. Artistic practice and the Internet

A further focus area of the project will provide unique opportunities for artists and cultural workers to upskill in an area of growing importance to both arts constituencies and industry - the internet. Many artists are turning to the internet as a site for conceptualisation, production and dissemination of new work which uses the realtime multimedia distributed environment and culture of the net as an integral component of webbed artworks. Over the last three years ANAT has focussed much of its activities on the development of its own online presence as well as playing an active role in supporting artists who are engaged with conceptually and technically pushing the boundaries of working in this medium. As with the 1997 and 1998 ANAT National Summer Schools this component of the project will facilitate the cultivation of high end internet authoring applications and relevant programming languages.

The objectives of Alchemy are:

1. To assist the professional development of artists and curators through the acquisition and development of the latest relevant technology-based skills
2. To inform and influence participants' art practice in order to generate new bodies of innovative artworks which will attract new exhibition and distribution opportunities within the Australian and international electronic art sector
3. To facilitate 'technology transfer' whereby participants can impart acquired knowledge, skills and frames of reference to artists, students, educators and others
4. To introduce artists and curators to current debates associated with the broader cultural context of new technology through the satellite program of seminars, performances and workshops
5. To assist in the development of audiences for technology based art through the education of curators
6. To increase artists' capacity to earn reasonable wages and fees for specialist technology-based creative work (thereby also affecting the economic mainstream) through the skilling program
7. To create a masterclass learning environment for artists and curators where ideas and concepts are cultivated collaboratively
8. To provide artists and curators with access to information on international markets for technology based art.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria for the applications are:

- quality of the applicant's work, evidenced by curriculum vitae and support material

- a focus on skills development evidenced in the application
- evidence that the participant may disseminate skills gained at the Masterclass into her/his community
- That the applicant has an appropriate level of computer literacy.

National and international representation will also be taken into account. Indigenous artists and artists from Asia and Pacific regions are particularly encouraged to apply.

Application Process and Guidelines

As there are generally more applications received for the ANAT Schools than we have places available, the application process is a competitive one.

The fees for the course are as **\$200 per week**

Travel and accommodation assistance will also be available. Successful applicants will have to cover their living costs. In exceptional circumstances, fees may be waived.

Applicants must provide:

- A completed application form outlining benefits to their practice which are envisaged through attendance at the Masterclass
- A Curriculum Vitae detailing artistic achievements
- Support material, such as slides, video, audio tape, digital media (CD, Zip or Syquest on Macintosh format preferred) or relevant URL's. Catalogues or other relevant printed material relating to the applicant's art practice will also be accepted
- Applicants should identify between two to four thematic areas of the project in which they are most interested participating: Art and Science collaborations; A Digital Region?; Indigenous artists needs; Performance and Hybrid Art practices; Curatorial Issues for New Media practices; Artistic practice and the Internet.
- Applicants seeking fee waiver must indicate this in their submission and outline reasons

For further information or to discuss an application, contact:

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A subcommittee of the ANAT board will assess all applications.

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