

Karl Duldig Sculpture and Drawings

a centenary exhibition

Vienna

11 February to 4 May 2003

Krakow

22 May to 13 July 2003

Melbourne

7 to 30 August 2003

Curator: Dr Peter Stasny
Design: Blaich & Delugan
Graphics: Barbara Sakrawa

The life and the work of this Galician citizen born in Przemyśl [Poland] – who later, in Vienna, decided to continue his highly promising artistic career and eventually became remembered in history as one of most eminent Australian sculptors of the 20th century – inspires various reflections...

Professor Jacek Purchla, Director of the International Cultural Centre
Opening of the Duldig exhibition, Krakow, 22 May 2003.

OVERVIEW

The 2003 international travelling exhibition *Karl Duldig Sculpture and Drawings*, marked the centenary of the artist's birth and represented the culmination of nearly five years preparation and planning on the part of The Duldig Studio.

The world-wide opening of the exhibition occurred on 11 February 2003 at the Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna (JMW), the first of the three international venues hosting the exhibition. Further opening events followed at the International Cultural Centre (ICC) in Krakow on 22 May 2003 and the Victorian College of the Arts Gallery (VCA) on 7 August 2003. (Appendix 1)

Not only did these presentations significantly increase public awareness of the artist and of the extensive collection of The Duldig Studio, but through the inclusion of rich contextual information and supporting material, a unique and memorable visitor experience was achieved.

The international travelling exhibition represented the first instance of a single artist sculpture exhibition of this scale (over 100 individual items) being shown in the countries where the artist had lived and worked. The exhibition traced Duldig's artistic development over the course of the 20th century commencing in Europe prior to the second world war and, after a short but artistically significant period in Singapore, continuing in Australia till his death in 1986. It was notable as the first comprehensive exhibition of the work of an Australian sculptor to be exhibited in major European galleries and provided an entirely new and diverse audience access and exposure to Australian art.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To organise an innovative international travelling exhibition of a well-known European and Australian artist and, as a consequence, increase the profile of Australian sculpture overseas and attract new audiences.¹
- Through high quality accompanying publications, to contribute to scholarly research on 20th century European and Australian sculpture, as well as illustrate the influence of the antipodean environment on European émigré artists and demonstrate their contribution to Australian art.
- To foster international relations through artistic and cultural exchange between Australia, Austria and Poland.
- To offer museum staff and volunteers, in Australia and overseas, as well as freelance curators, designers and other professionals in related disciplines, an opportunity to be integrally involved in a significant international arts/cultural project.

¹ The idea to trace the journey of the Karl Duldig's life (1902-1986) and his artistic development over the course of the dramatic events of the 20th century, was conceived by Eva de Jong-Duldig, daughter of the artist and Director of The Duldig Studio.

Participating Organisations, Supporting Institutions and Individuals (also Appendix 2)

Exhibition Curator

Dr Peter Stasny, a respected Austrian art historian and curator, was retained by the JMW to curate the exhibition *Karl Duldig Sculpture and Drawings*.² Dr Stasny was visiting curator at The Duldig Studio intermittently between 2000 and 2002. Assisted by the Director and Curator of The Duldig Studio, he gained an intimate understanding of the collection and the artist. The 65 sculptures and 16 drawings Dr Stasny selected for the touring exhibition were augmented by archival documents and photographs illustrating the artist's life experiences in Europe prior to 1938 and later in Australia. Dr Stasny's scholarly curatorial essay analyses pre-war teaching methods and the practice of sculpture in Vienna and Central Europe between the wars. He also liaised with the exhibition venues, the lending institutions and individuals, the exhibition designers and the graphic artist (catalogue), and was involved in general administration and organisation.

Principal Lending Institution

The Duldig Studio in partnership with the Director, Eva de Jong-Duldig, was the principle source of the exhibited items³. The administration and organisation of The Duldig Studio underwent significant changes during the period leading up to the exhibition resulting in a sustainable organisational and legal structure for the future. Operating under an independent committee of management, The Duldig Gallery Inc., (T/A The Duldig Studio), was established as an incorporated association and achieved recognition as a deductible gift recipient and tax exempt public museum and art gallery (2002-03). (**Appendix 3**) Together with the exhibition curator and participating venues, The Duldig Studio assisted with communications and marketing fund raising and sponsorship, collection management and maintenance, educational programs and other administrative matters related to the exhibition.

The museum staff and volunteers applied best practice to the preparation of the exhibition manual and condition reports. Museum records and resources were considerably expanded and include electronic and digital records of the exhibition⁴, video footage including a 'walk-through' with the exhibition curator, digital images recording the design in each venue, audio recordings with ABC radio and TV footage from SBS (**Appendix 4**). New museum merchandise includes exhibition catalogues, posters and full colour postcards of selected exhibits. (**Appendix 5**)

Participating Venues (also Appendix 6)

One of Vienna's most important museums the JMW (www.jmw.at) is located in the principle tourist precinct near the St Stefans cathedral in a 17th century patrician's house know as the Palais Eskeles. The JMW extends over three floors with the first floor devoted to temporary exhibitions of a historical and artistic context. Over forty shows have been arranged by the JMW since the inaugural exhibition in 1993, including retrospectives devoted to artists, such as "Chagall. Images · Dreams · Theatre" and "Max Liebermann. Works 1900-1918". The JMW also offers a wide range of symposia, lectures, panel discussions, concerts and many other events. The JMW was the managing museum and anchor venue for the exhibition, in part due to their desire to show the work of expatriate and exiled Austrian artists to their audience of over 2000 visitors per week. (**Appendix 7**)

² Dr Stasny's previous research on the Australian émigré artist Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack culminated in European exhibitions of this artist's work (2000-01).

³ Other works were sourced from the NGV, the JMW and a European private collection.

⁴ These include full-colour reproductions of exhibited works and B/W illustrations.

Participating Venues (cont.)

The ICC, Krakow (www.mck.krakow.pl) is a specialist research institution which also has a role in education and the promotion of culture and the arts through research, publications seminars, conferences and congresses. It is located in Rynek Główny, the medieval central square of the world heritage listed city of Krakow, Poland's second largest city and historic and cultural capital. The ICC regularly holds exhibitions in its second floor gallery. The Duldig exhibition was "...the third presentation of the oeuvre of an eminent modern sculptor ...It is also the continuation of the cycle of exhibitions devoted to the Austrian avante-garde artists of the early 20th century."⁵ Visitors number 2500 per week, and during the Duldig exhibition included a visit from the Polish President. (**Appendices 8 & 9**)

The VCA (www.vca.unimelb.edu.au) is among the foremost tertiary arts institutes in Melbourne. Its recently opened gallery, located in the Melbourne arts precinct, is primarily intended to offer students and faculty the opportunity to exhibit their works in public, however historical shows are also mounted on an annual basis. Duldig's 'Magna Mater', on loan from the NGV collection and included in the travelling exhibition, could not be displayed at the VCA Gallery, however was shown at the Ian Potter Centre for Australian Art at Federation Square, with signage directing visitors to the VCA show. (**Appendix 10**)

...In summary, the exhibition and events were a great success, contributing to the profile of the VCA Gallery and generating new audiences ... Vikki McInnes, VCA Gallery Manager (Full VCA report (**Appendix 11**))

...There has never been a better opportunity to reflect on the history of Melbourne sculpture...
The Age, 22.08.03

Principal Exhibition Sponsors

- Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism
- Elizabeth Murdoch Trust
- Austrian Cultural Forum Krakow
- Amcor White Cap Europe

Significant Achievements and Benefits

- *Fostering of international relations and cultural diplomacy.*
High profile openings included representation from Ambassadors, government and other dignitaries⁶.
- *Identifying new sources of sponsorship for cultural events and providing best practice logistic and administrative experience for the participating museums.*
- *Raising the profile of the artist and of Australian sculpture in general.*
Approximately 20,000 visitors saw the exhibitions and attended accompanying public programs, whilst many more became aware of the exhibition through international print, radio, TV and electronic media.
- *Providing the opportunity for associated educational programs for adults and students⁷.*
Lectures, corporate events and guided tours involved the curator, art researchers and historians. The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) presented the 'Duldig Lecture on Sculpture' as part of its public programs⁸. Public lectures by leading academics were also presented at the European venues.

⁵ Dr Monica Rydiger, ICC curator, *International Cultural Centre (No.12) / Plans and Objectives 2003*

⁶ Dr Gerard Vaughan (Director NGV) opened the exhibition at the VCA gallery. Also present were the Austrian and Polish Ambassadors, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Sir Gustav Nossal and Margaret Adamson (DFAT).

⁷ Many school groups and tertiary students from Fine Arts academies and institutes attended the exhibition mostly addressed by the in-house curator and/or education officer.

Significant Achievements and Benefits (cont.)

- *Providing long-term value from associated publications.*
The catalogue, published in English (copy enc.) and German (174 pages, 82 full colour reproductions, 81 B/W illustrations) and the separate Polish catalogue (copy enc.) (128 pages) provides an enduring record of the exhibition and has made a valuable contribution to research on 20th century sculpture. Essays by leading academics included Dr Stasny (see above p2), Austrian historian Dr Kohlbauer Fritz ⁹, the distinguished writer and historian Humphrey McQueen ¹⁰, curator of the ICC Dr Monika Rydiger ¹¹, and Singapore art historian Jeffrey Say ¹².
- *Set new standards for exhibition design and for graphic design and fostered the work of independent designers.*
The Austrian architectural firm Blaich and Delugan transformed the JMW'S gallery space. Colour co-ordinated with the graphic design of the exhibition publications (designed by Barbara Sakrawa), the works were clearly delineated in a predominantly white setting with contrasting taupe walls. Signage was clear yet discreet and quality fittings were used throughout. The designers adapted these specifications to suit existing conditions at the ICC and VCA galleries.

Public Relations and Media Exposure

The exhibition generated extensive coverage in the international print, radio, TV and electronic media.

Detailed summary of all media (**Appendix 12**).

Selected extracts from print media (**Appendix 13**)

Selected extracts from Visitors Books (**Appendix 14**). See also back page of submission.

Highlights included:

- Advance publicity in Australia included a lead article in The Age (Culture) and a national television news report on SBS.
- Austria: Reviews and articles in major daily papers and in a historical journal. TV and radio coverage included a program on national culture news.
- Poland: Reports and reviews in over 30 print media outlets including Polish Newsweek, Art & Business Journal, Royal City Krakow, Warsaw Voice and Dziennik Polski. Shown on national TV news and on a special TV program
- Internet exposure on www.jmw.at, www.mck.krakow.pl, www.vca.unimelb.edu.au)
- In depth coverage on ABC Radio National Sunday Arts program, (also available on DVD). ¹³
- Individually designed posters for the three venues provided up-front publicity, and were prominently displayed in the CBD and central tourist precincts.

⁸ The 2003 Duldig Lecture was given by the Dr Peter Stasny and Humphrey McQueen and moderated by Frances Lindsay (Deputy Director NGV).

Guided tours for NGV members were also offered.

⁹ History of the Duldig family in Poland and Vienna.

¹⁰ Explained Duldig's émigré experiences in the context of Australian history (and art history) in the decades following World War 2.

¹¹ Writing in the Polish catalogue, she focussed on the development of figurative modernism in 20th century sculpture.

¹² Discussed how Duldig's brief stay in Singapore (1939-40) significantly influenced his work.

¹³ The presenter of this program, Julie Copeland, attended the opening of the exhibition in Krakow and interviewed Prof. Purchla, Director of the ICC and the exhibition curator. The program went to air during the Melbourne exhibition in August and was repeated on three further occasions.



THE DULDIG STUDIO
a museum & art gallery

Patron: Lady Nossal

Director: Eva de Jong-Duldig

...The international success of our joint project has demonstrated the importance of our aim - to re-instate the culture and soul of those who were forced to leave Austria. We can never compensate for or materially make good human suffering on the one hand or hate filled persecution even unto to death on the other. But we must retain the memory, and both for ours and future generations expose the reality. The exposure of the art of the exiles, especially of high quality, can assist us in this work. Thank you for this beautiful exhibition and all the efforts associated with it.

Dr Karl Albrecht-Weinberger, Director of the JMW Vienna, December 2003
Letter to the Director of The Duldig Studio

* * *

'...one can recognise in Duldig a conscientious working representative of Modernism ...beautiful diversity of materials in steatite, wood and bronze ...a goodlooking, sportive man, whose art was forgotten in the remoteness.'

Die Presse Vienna 26.02.03

'... '65 sculptures and 17 drawings now also bring Karl Duldig belated recognition in his home city of Vienna, which he richly deserves.'

Neue Kronen-Zeitung Vienna 12.02.03

I do hope that the exhibition, prepared in cooperation with the Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna and Victorian College of Arts in Melbourne, will let the Polish public understand more fully the nature of artistic dilemmas and ambivalences of modern sculpture...

Professor Jacek Purchla, Director of the ICC. May 2003.

...The pleasure of this exhibition is in the insight it offers into an intimate approach to art that remains based on lived experience.

...There has never been a better opportunity to reflect on the history of Melbourne sculpture...

The Age Melbourne 22.08.03

I was greatly moved by both the sculptures and drawings of Karl Duldig and his free spirit sings out. Hope it can come to New York. Agi Clark New York. (Vienna 14.02.03)

Duldig was previously unknown to me- but not anymore. Thankyou. Manfred Bublik (Vienna 24.03.03)

A very beautiful exhibition and a very interesting artist. Mirko Schoen Bremen. (Krakow 11.06.03)

This exhibition leaves an unforgettable impression. The variety of material demonstrates the artist's great talent and deep sensitivity. Jolanta Trygalska-Franzer (Krakow 13.10.03)

Very moved by this beautiful exhibition. Laurel Hemming (Melbourne 14.08.03)

Art with spirit, passion, love and strength. Maxine Banks Milwaukee, USA (Melbourne 24.08.03.)

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The Duldig Gallery is a not-for-profit museum and art gallery

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