

### 3. The ANBG Public Art Program Annual Commission and Program Element Typologies

Despite the intermittent nature of funding which is expected to be available for the implementation of the Public Art Master Plan for the Gardens and the consequent lack of control over the planning and timing of commissions on an orderly basis, the key area over which the Gardens can have control is the conceptual grounding of each commission to an artist or craftsman, and the balancing of commissions annually within a conceptual strategy which is designed to stimulate, engender, and shape the interpretive role of art in the mission of the Gardens.

The Master Plan therefore contains ten conceptual categories or “typologies” of commissions with the intent that if possible, a minimum of one commission is developed and implemented from each of those categories during the next five to fifteen-year redevelopment of the Gardens. The ten commission typologies are as follows.

TYPOLOGY	CONCEPTUAL STARTING POINT
1.	Simon Schama’s “landscape of the mind”: commissions exploring the interlacing of strata of common memory in the landscape areas of the Gardens
2.	“Interpretation of change” commissions to artists: artists’ explorations of the “come and go” nature of arid environments and the custodianship of the Australian plant kingdom
3.	Icon commissions: commissions to artists for works of art for way-finding, place-making, and interpretation of specific planting areas in the Gardens
4.	The Gardens’ mission for “studying”: commissions whose content forms the biographies of scientists in response to the ideas of the legacy of science and exploration as described in Stephen J. Gould’s “Preface” to <u>The Lying Stones of Marrakech</u>
5.	The Gardens’ mission for “growing”: commissions to artists (often involving consultation and collaborations with horticulturalists) which respond to the wonders of the horticultural science of the Gardens: the fascination with “growing”, of the process of re-creation of habitat, of the bush-garden ethos, of the commercialisation of native plants, etc.
6.	The Gardens’ mission for “promoting”: commissions to artists responding and amplifying what captures people about the Gardens: the mystery of “place”, of the bizarre in nature, of memory in relation to associations with plants and land-form, of the evidence of great age in plants, of smell/aroma in plants, of “connecting” at close range with a special area of the Gardens through the placement of a functional item such as a seat in proximity to particular species, and to commissions relating to children’s “play” as promotion of what the Gardens are
7.	The “long now” and the “future-eaters” commissions: interpretations by artists towards understanding custodianship of the land in Australia, the promotion of taking the long view and of long-term responsibility measured in centuries
8.	Acknowledgement of indigenous custodianship: commissions to artists which reference the Aboriginal presence in the Canberra region prior to European occupation in relation to the Gardens’ planting program
9.	Recycling of and research on plant material: partnership projects with the Wood Workshop, Canberra School of Art, ANU
10.	Children Interacting With the Gardens: commissions reinforcing the goals of the Environmental Education Centre programs, involving artists working alone, with school groups, and in some cases with a community

The following pages outline each of the typologies in more detail.



## Typology #1. Simon Schama's "Landscape is the Work of the Mind": Commissions Exploring the Interlacing of Strata of Common Memory in Landscape

As already quoted in Section "2" above, Schama says:

"For notwithstanding the assumption, commonly asserted..., that Western culture has evolved by sloughing off its nature myths, they have, in fact, never gone away. For if, as we have seen our entire landscape tradition is the product of shared culture, it is by the same token a tradition built from a rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions. The cults which we are told to seek in other native cultures—the primitive forest, of the river of life, of the sacred mountain—are in fact alive and well and all about us if only we know where to look for them..."

The commissions under this typology are to artists and craftspeople to mine the "deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions" with respect to the definition of special places and characters within the growing of plants in the Gardens. The resulting works may be ephemeral or more permanent, either in hard or soft landscape areas, may create objects or only a character or ambience of place, or could also include performance works in a variety of performing arts media, including music, dance, lighting design, etc.

An example of a commissioned work of art in a major public place with an artist who has "mined" the cultural memory of place is:

- The commission to Michael Nelson Jakkamarra of Papunya from 1985 – 1988 for the design of a mosaic pavement for the Forecourt Island at Parliament House, which by its very presence acknowledges Aboriginal presence in Australia long before European occupation and whose iconography represents a "coming-together" of ancestors through the landscape for important discussions.



(photos from left to right: Michael Nelson Jakkamarra's Forecourt Mosaic pavement at the centre of the island with a running watercourse designed by Australian fountain design consultant Robert Woodward; commissioned fabricators Franco Colussi and Aldo Rossi, trained in mosaic in Italy before immigrating to Australia and finding little use for their skills, completing the final mortar pointing of the pavement.)

The following are examples of starting points for this typology for artists' commissions :

TYPOLOGY	RECOMMENDED CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINTS FOR THE COMMISSIONS
1.1	An artist's site-specific commission responding to Schama's statement: "Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from the strata of memory as from layers of rock".
1.2	Artists' site-specific commissions responding to Schama's statement that: "...although we are accustomed to separate nature and human perception in two realms, they are, in fact, indivisible".
1.3	"Artists' site-specific commissions responding to Schama's statement that "...For if, as we have seen, our entire landscape tradition is the product of shared culture, it is by the same token a tradition built from a rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions. The cults which we are told to seek in other native cultures...are in fact alive and well and all about us if only we know where to look for them...".
1.4	Artists' site specific commissions based on a response to Schama's statement that: "...By revealing the richness, antiquity, and complexity of our landscape tradition, [we can] show just how much we stand to lose [if we do not begin to reverse the degradation of the planet...".
1.5	Artists' site-specific commissions responding to and interpreting Schama's statement that: "Instead of assuming the mutually exclusive character of Western culture and nature, I want to suggest the strength of the links that have bound them together. That strength is often hidden beneath layers of the commonplace. So [my work] is constructed as an excavation below our conventional sight-level to recover the veins of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface...".

## **Typology #2: “Interpretation of Change” Commissions: Artists and Craftspeople Responding to the Science and Awareness of Lifespan Definition Among Plants, of the “Come and Go” Nature of Plants in Arid Environments, and the Science of Climate Change**

This commission has its origins in the principles in the approved conceptual basis for the Master Plan in which quotations from Gablik, Flannery, and others state that:

- “...we tend to pattern ourselves and our world view after our culture”, that
- “...the question [of social and environmental responsibility] is where can we possibly go, and how”, the concept that
- in local terms, the community can come to understand who it is, what it is, and what it is possible to become only if it also has an ever-increasing awareness of its origins and what it has been, and lastly that
- in Flannery’s words, “...it is ignorance of the past that dooms each new wave of immigrants to the ‘new’ lands to be future eaters. So certain are they of their superiority, so sure of their ability, that they do not think to learn from those who have gone before them, nor do they take the time to read the signs of the land until disaster has overtaken them..”

Commissions under this typology would be based upon the artists’ power alternately to respond to, celebrate, characterise, interpret, mourn, or otherwise inform residents and passersby in some way about our world community’s need to understand processes of change in the world of plants, of life-spans, and of how to “read the signs of the land” as good custodians living in the midst of this unique plant kingdom. The resulting works of art, craft, or design may be temporary and ephemeral responses to the process and sequence of change in a particular location in the Gardens, or may form permanent elements of the built form functional elements of the Gardens. The consulting Public Art Coordinator will refer to ANBG scientists in preparing the briefs for these typologies of commissions. Examples of artists’ works which make reference to these ideas are:

- artist Matthew Harding’s sculptural bollards for the waterfront redevelopment of the historic Railway Workshops in Newcastle’s inner city by the Honeysuckle Redevelopment Corporation in 1995, where the artist worked closely with the urban design consultant for the area to create contemporary bollards creating an essential element within the public plaza’s three-dimensional definition which nevertheless each respond to and incorporate the site’s Aboriginal, industrial, and social history (see images below)



(Images above, left to right):

- a) Railway Workshops Redevelopment Area, Newcastle, NSW: site specific sculptural bollards designed and fabricated by Matthew Harding for the Honeysuckle Development Corporation which create a pedestrian-safe zone within the public plaza of the industrial redevelopment area
- b) One of the tactile images on the individual bollards originated in moulds cast by the Artist in consultation with the local Aboriginal community from middens left from early indigenous occupation of the site
- the Entry Gates to the Maui Arts & Cultural Centre at Kahului, Maui (Hawaii), designed by artist Pat Hickman and fabricated under the direction of sculptor David Hamilton, Director of the Pilot Foundry in the Sculpture Department at the School of Art, University of Tasmania at Launceston. The Gates, as contemporary sculptural elements, are based upon indigenous Hawaiian concepts of dedicated space and the social history of the original indigenous occupation and fishing culture of the specific site, its rope nets and working with the land and shoreline which preceded the plantation camp previously on the site of the Cultural Center.



(images above, left to right):

- a) One of a series of pairs of site-specific sculptural Entry Gates commissioned by the Maui Arts & Cultural Centre, Kahului, Hawaii in 1995, with design artist Pat Hickman and sculptor David Hamilton, Head of the Pilot Foundry at the University of Tasmania at Launceston, who fabricated and installed the Gates
- b) Detail of a portion of one of the Gate panels, sand-cast in solid patinated aluminium from foam sheets tied by the artist

	CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINT OF COMMISSION
2.1	A commission in which the scientific and horticultural staff of the Gardens identify several planting groups or areas of the Gardens which perform important roles or serve as indicators in some way in the science of climate change, and artist creates one or more site-specific installations which respond to and highlight the “science of climate change” role
2.2	U.S. adman Regis McKenna has referred to the current generation’s sense of the compressing of time as “continuous discontinuous change”. A design brief is to be developed by Gardens staff and the Public Art Coordinator to request artists to address or respond to evidence of Nature’s “continuous discontinuous change” as evidenced in the Gardens
2.3	A commission in which the scientific and horticultural staff of the Gardens work with the Public Art Coordinator to develop commission briefs to artists which are about “taking the time to read the signs of the land” in a number of designated locations in the Gardens.
2.4	Commissions to artists from design briefs prepared collaboratively within the Gardens’ staff and Public Art Coordinator which will provide the basis from which artists can address Sir Keith Hancock’s statement in his book <u>Australia</u> that: “When it suits them, men may take control and play fine tricks and hustle Nature. Yet we may believe that Australia, quietly and imperceptibly..., is experimenting on the men... She will be satisfied at long last, and when she is satisfied an Australian nation will in truth exist” (Flannery, <i>Ibid.</i> p. 405). What is the evidence of the Gardens’ planting, species, and groupings of what has happened in the past in Australia when people “hustle Nature”, and what serves as evidence of Nature experimenting on people until “she is satisfied at long last?”
2.5	A commission to an artist to respond to the ideas behind Stewart Brand’s statement that:  “Responsibility, these years, means mastering long lead times, long lag times, and the hidden effects of cumulative change. In the domain of atmosphere and climate the delay between cause and effect can be thirty years. One climatologist notes, ‘We are the first generation that influences global climate, and the last generation to escape the consequences’”.



### **Typology # 3. Commission to Artists to Create a Visual Icon or Identity Points To Aid Way-finding, Make Identifiable “Places” Within the Gardens, or Initiate an Itinerary along Pedestrian or Streetscape Paths**

The conceptual basis of this commission is to allow artists to take a substantial role in identity-making within important places in the Gardens, to reinforce the commitment to visual connectivity, diversity, and interdependency of landscape and planting environments, and to provide the opportunity for the work in its aesthetic to bear out the conceptual basis of the quotations in Section 2 above that “...the sub-text of social responsibility is missing in our aesthetic models, and the challenge of the future will be to transcend the disconnectedness and separation of the aesthetic from the social that existed within modernism...” (Gablik, *ibid.*)

The Gardens is in serious need of “icon” elements which can be utilised to complete the scale of the three-dimensional spaces of many of the planting areas of the Gardens, particularly when those areas are in a state of change or with immature plants or horticultural development. The Entry areas to the Gardens could particularly benefit from a careful itinerary of commissions based upon the science and horticulture of the plants under cultivation in these areas, but providing a visually-calibrated series of views for occupants of cars and pedestrians entering the ANBG and drawing them back to the planting and study beds for closer views.



Examples of commissions which perform this function in public spaces, whether major or minor in scale, are:

- The site-specific sculpture completed in 1995 by Taiwanese sculptor Ju Ming at the entrance to the Singapore Armed Forces Military Institute in Singapore, cast in bronze by David Hamilton, sculptor and Director of the Pilot Foundry, University of Tasmania at Launceston. The content of the sculpture, in which the two figures engaged in tai chi are involved in strategic action and the parrying of force rather than the engagement in violent response, is highly suggestive at this public plaza at the entrance to the vast Institute (see images below);



Starting points appropriate for commissions under this typology are:

TYPOLOGY	POSSIBLE LOCATION OR CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINT OF COMMISSION
3.1	A site-specific icon commission to an artist to give a focal point for visitors arriving by car and on foot to the arid-landscape/grassland garden to the west of the Main Entry gates to the Gardens
3.2	A site-specific icon commission within the Eucalypt Lawn area of the Gardens
3.3	One or more site-specific icon and way-finding commissions in the new garden design for the areas of the Gardens re-emerging after the dismantling of the old glasshouses
3.4	Site-specific commissioned works with way-finding functions which create a stronger itinerary through the acacia plantings of the Gardens, interlacing appropriate visual and conceptual content
3.5	Major icon commissions whose presence can be “flagged” as being in the upper reaches of the pathway system of the Gardens, thereby serving as inherent “destinations” on visitor maps which draw visitors into the upper, less visited areas of the Gardens



#### **Typology # 4. Commissions to Artists to Explore the Gardens' Mission for "Studying": Commissions Whose Content Forms the Biographies of the Significant Lives of Scientists**

As is stated above, one of the three primary missions of the Gardens is the "studying" of plants.

Of course "studying" is done by individuals, and particularly by scientists among the many collaborators in the botany and environmental science of the ANBG. The importance and nature of that "studying" is one of the areas in which interpretation by artists in the Gardens can be particularly productive for visitors.

Scientist Stephen J. Gould, in his "Preface" to The Lying Stones of Marrakech (London 2000), has a number of ways in which he characterises what a scientist does which is so fascinating to the lay-person, and the ways in which the scientist's work can be made accessible to non-scientists. In the various processes of making science accessible to people, as in the popular scientific article, Gould notes that

"...We lose nothing of science's factual beauty and meaning [when] we add the complexity of how we come to know (or fail to learn) to conventional accounts of what we think we know.

To make science and its methodologies penetrable and exciting to the lay-person, the addition of that "how we come to know" to the bare facts of the discovery is often the handle or "way in" by which the non-scientist is drawn to the conclusion. Gould continues to describe his search for the means of making science accessible:

"...I experimented with many styles for adding this humanistic component about how we learned (or erred) to standard tales about what, in our best judgment, exists 'out there' in the natural world—often only to demonstrate the indivisibility of these two accounts, and the necessary embeddedness of 'objective' knowledge within worldviews shaped by social norms and psychological hopes. But so often, as both Dorothy and T.S. Eliot recognized in their different ways, traditional paths may work best and lead home (because they have truly withstood the test of time and have therefore been honed to our deep needs and best modes of leaning, not because we fall under their sway for reasons of laziness or suppression).

"Despite conscious efforts at avoidance, I find myself constantly drawn to biography—for absolutely nothing can match the richness and fascination of a person's life, in its wondrous mixture of pure gossip, miniaturized and personalized social history, psychological dynamics, and the development of central ideas that motivate careers and eventually move mountains".

"...So I have struggled, harder and more explicitly than for anything else in my life as a writer, to develop a distinctive and personal form of essay to treat great scientific issues in the context of biography—and to do so not by the factual chronology of a life's sorrows and accomplishments (a noble task requiring the amplitude of a full book), but rather by the intellectual synergy between a person and the controlling idea of his life. In this manner, when the conceit works, I can capture the essence of a scientist's greatest labor, including the major impediments and insights met and gathered along the way, while also laying bare (in the spare epitome demanded by strictures of the essay as a literary form of limited length) the heart of a key intellectual concept in the most interesting microcosm of a person's formulation and defence" (pp. 2 – 3).

In a similar way, this commission typology asks artists to perform a unique role of “biography” when needed or desired in the Gardens, not by portraiture or the preserving of the image of the person of the scientist, but like Gould, to find the means of making strong reference to the “central ideas that motivate careers and eventually move mountains” in important scientists’ lives.

Particularly potent in the context of the ANBG as a unique botanic garden focussing almost exclusively on native Australian plants would be for those “central ideas which move mountains”, in Gould’s words, to be selected from the work of those scientists whom Flannery identifies as reversing the process of the “future-eaters” in Australasia.

How this might be done in a rich variety of approaches by artists is perhaps suggested by Gould’s description of his methodology:

“[I attempt to create] a distinctive voice based on applying biographical perspectives to the illumination of key scientific concepts and their history (following the basic strategy, in each essay, of linking a person’s central operating idea, the focus of a professional life in development, to an important concept in human understanding of the natural world—in other words, to summarize the range and power of a principle by exemplifying its role in the intellectual development of a particularly interesting scientist). Thus I have tried to encapsulate, in the unforgiving form of an essay, the essence of both a person (as expressed in the controlling idea of his scientific life and a concept (through the quintessentially human device of displaying its development in an individual life) (Ibid., 3 – 4).

In the commissions to artists under this Typology, the desire to memorialise certain important botanists and other scientists in the Gardens would occur not with sculpture busts or plaques, but rather through an artist designing an installation or other work of art which through making references on many levels to the key concepts of his/her science and ideas, is capable of providing a highly resonant memorial to the scientist’s life. In each case, the reference to and revealing of the brilliance and contributions of the scientist’s ideas is a far more dignified and fitting memorial, since it captures that essence which “lives on” rather than the ephemeral casing which dies and falls away.

These commissions in many cases will require or substantially benefit from a formal, close working relationship between the nominated artist and a scientist on the Gardens’ staff who understands the ideas, concepts, and contributions to the field by the person being memorialised. This collaboration, if carefully managed, will add considerable vibrance and value to the work of art while at the same time allowing key ANBG staff members to more fully understand the potent role which artists and craftspeople can have in the Gardens’ efficacy and interest for the public.

Particular resonance can be gained in the Gardens through the obvious process of locating commissions based on the memorialising of key ideas of important scientists in the context of the plant material or ecosystem which they studied. This co-location adds richness to the creating of individual “places” in the Gardens which content which can be built upon by multiple means.

Starting points and possible locations appropriate for commissions under this typology are:

TYPOLOGY	POSSIBLE LOCATION OR CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINT OF COMMISSION
4.1	A site-specific commission in which an artist creates a work which focuses on the 18 <sup>th</sup> century age of exploration in relation to “discovery” in a broad sense with respect to Australian plant life: Banks, Cook, etc.
4.2	A site-specific commission which relates to the exploration of the continent (e.g. Flinders, etc) and the mapping of the “nature” of the continent, including the 19 <sup>th</sup> century interest in diversity
4.3	A number of site-specific commissions over time which relate to the biographers of the plant kingdom—the writers of the great <i>Flora</i> , and the great taxonomers—through reacting to, memorialising, or responding to the nature and value of their work, rather than their “persons”
4.4	A site-specific commission which in some way relates to the art of botanical illustration as a key element of the “studying” of plants, and the important illustrators in Australia: a celebration of and commentary on the skill of observing
4.5	A site-specific commission which relates to the “big picture” ideas embodied in the very existence of the Gardens of collecting and recording: e.g. the herbarium idea
4.6	Site-specific commissions which over time relate to the work of those scientists who have studied the evolution of plants in Australia: the celebration of the acts of discovering “what is here” and how and why
4.7	A site-specific commission which relates to, celebrates, and/or characterises the important work done by plant geneticists, both past and current
4.8	Site-specific commissions which characterise the work of contemporary scientists engaged in the current processes of classification: where plants grow, what they are called, etc., in the expansion of the still-very-sketchy picture of botanical life in Australia
4.9	A site-specific commission which helps the public understand the value of the work of scientists who are working to understand ecological pressures and habitat, both past and present: e.g. what plants are the environmental “filters”, those that hold environments together, and the “establishers” (e.g. the keen interest in mosses, lichens, ferns, native orchids, etc.)

**Typology # 5. Commissions to Artists to Explore the Gardens' Mission for "Growing": Commissions Whose Content Focusses on, Amplifies, and Makes Accessible to Visitors the Remarkable Accomplishments and Projects of the Gardens in Propagation and other Plant Growth Areas**

Like the Gardens' mission for "studying", the second of its three primary missions is the "growing" of plants.

This typology of commissions for artists is intended to explore the "why" of the Gardens' work in the area of "growing": i.e. its unique projects and roles in relation to the preservation, enhancement, and development of native plant growth.

The work of artists can often be founded on a spark of excellence, of intellect, of a wonderful story, of an itinerary through time or adversity of purpose, or of a marvelous fact or truth. These commissions could in fact be generated by scientists, horticulturalists, or education officers in the Gardens saying, "If only the public could realise what a remarkable process of ----- this is...". The artist and her/his work, properly selected, can be the means by which that fact can be demonstrated in a clear but non-didactic way, with an overlay of wonder, of excitement, and of creative expression.

Like the commissions in Typology "4", these commissions are likely to require the collaboration with and participation of one or more interested scientists or horticulturalists with the Art Program Coordinator in the development of the Design Brief, the proposed location and landscape/plant setting, and in the provision of background documents to be given to the artists. Furthermore, their collaboration may be highly important in a "critique and comment" role at key points in the commissioned work's development.

Starting points and possible locations appropriate for commissions under this typology are:

TYPOLOGY	POSSIBLE LOCATION OR CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINT OF COMMISSION
5.1	A site-specific commission which focuses on what is fascinating to the public about "growing": e.g. why are there greenhouses at the Gardens, and why is propagation always taking place?
5.2	A commission which addresses in some way why individuals are interested in "growing plants": what is the fascination, and where does it come from in humans?
5.3	A site-specific commission which relates to the public's abiding interest in the plant world's complex process of "constructing": the important things which happen underground with plants, rather than those which are visible above-ground
5.4	A site-specific commission responding to and characterising some aspect of the Gardens' mission of "growing", with growing understood as the creating of a live repository, and what constitutes the "edges" of the processes of growing in the Gardens
5.5	A commission to an artist which addresses in some way the public's interest in the idea of the re-creation of habitat: i.e. the artist's response to what a "native habitat" is, how one can construct a habitat, and to a child's delight in the concept that the Gardens "is a fake" as a made environment

5.6	A site-specific commission which celebrates horticulturalists in the context of the Gardens as experimenters, savers, and "knowers"
5.7	A site-specific commission to an artist which responds in some way or dramatises the "bush garden" ethos: where the ANBG sits in garden design, its adoption of landscape principles evolved in the 1960s, of naturalism and what it is as an aesthetic, and/or the linkages with Edna Wallings' ideas
5.8	Artists' site-specific commissions over time to respond to the Gardens' "extraordinary stories" in the growing sense, addressing the public's fascination with the remarkable
5.9	A site-specific commission which in some way relates to the Gardens' connections with the new commercialisation of native plants: ecological services, the creation of alternative crops, the Gardens' complex role of science/nature/culture in the city
5.10	A site-specific commission which draws upon the public's perennial fascination with pests and weeds and the concept of a "weed"

**Typology # 6. The Gardens’ Mission for “Promoting”: Commissions to Artists in the Area of Land-form Installations and Other Works which Make Creative Responses to Places in the Gardens and Plant Materials**

The third of the primary missions of the Gardens is the “promoting” of plants.

What the process of involving artists in the Gardens’ mission of “promoting” plants can be suggested in part through passages from an interview of environmentalist Christopher Manes by cultural historian Suzi Gablik in her book, Conversations Before the End of Time (New York 1995), where he says

“We have the hope that the ideas we’ve created over the last five hundred years can be used toward preserving the earth, preserving biological diversity, and getting back into communication with the other biological communities around us... [We as humans are] just a plain member of the biological community. We’re here like anything else. Which is greatly liberating, if you ask me. We can enjoy ourselves. We don’t have to be the vanguard of evolution any more...

“I really think that it’s time for our culture and artists to change the subject. For the last five hundred years, all we’ve talked about is Man—his psychological existence. And that’s all part of the fabric of this story. I think we have to take that subject and just put it aside, not talk about it any more. We need to start talking about this other kingdom...” (Ibid., pp. 93 & 102).

In the broadest sense, these commissions to artists are to “talk about this other kingdom”—i.e. to make reference on a wide variety of levels through integrated works of art to our “one-ness” as living things with the plant kingdom, our unity with other species, our integration as just one living species in the world. Many visitors to the Gardens have stated in surveys that they come to the Gardens to relax, to be free of stress, to have a sense of release. These commissions are intended to explore and amplify that sense of release and connection through being a means by which visitors are brought closer to immersion in the wonder and complexity of species in the plant world, and are released, at least momentarily during their visit, from the one-sided contemplation of Man and the human-only side of the world around us.

The other way in which the commissions to artists within this typology are intended to address the “promoting” of plants which is an essential part of the Gardens’ mission is through requesting the employment of the artists’ perceptions and responses to reveal in more richness those aspects of plants and plant life which are most fascinating to visitors: the wonders of form in individual plants, of the mystery of “place” made by groupings of plants, of the connections of memories of the past with certain plants or flowering species, of the aroma of plants, etc.

Examples of starting points for commissions under this typology are:

TYPOLOGY	POSSIBLE CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINT OF COMMISSION
6.1.1	An artist’s commission to call people’s attention to aspects of plant form in a part of the Gardens which otherwise might not be seen or understood by visitors
6.2	An artist’s commission to select among nominated locations in the Gardens and create a commissioned work of art which responds to and amplifies the sense or mystery of a particular “place” in the Gardens

6.3	An artist's commission to respond to and amplify visitors' delight and intense interest in what is perceived as "the bizarre" in nature, whether as aberration or as unique characteristics of plant species
6.4	An artist's commission to deal with memory and plants, playing upon visitors' intense memories of places and aspects of places by means of their association with or characterisation by plants
6.5	An artist's commission to respond to, characterise, or amplify visitors' fascination with the extreme age associated with certain plants in the Gardens, or with the entire concept of plants and time
6.6	An artist's commission to select one of several nominated locations in which to create a work which is based in some central way upon the aromas or smells of plants
6.7	An artist's commission which seeks to "connect" visitors to the Gardens more fully, closely, or intensely with some aspect of the planting through the placement and creative making of a seat, stone wall, bench, an object which channels visitor's views to see in a new way, etc.
6.8	An artist's commission to shape the land-form, planting beds, species selection, and other aspects of one of several nominated areas of the Gardens to dramatise the plantings in a manner which allows visitors to more fully appreciate the characteristics of the planted species
6.9	An artist's commission which contributes to the promotion of the Gardens through the creation of a meaningful but light-hearted element for children's play related to a particular place in the Gardens

## Typology #7: The “Long Now” and “Future-eaters” Commissions: Responses by Artists Towards Understanding Custodianship of the Land in Australia

Chapter Two of the Master Plan provides a conceptual basis for the presence of public art in the Gardens according to which commissioned artists will be requested to respond to issues of environmental identity, of sustainability, and of the Gardens’ missions of “growing”, “studying”, and “promoting” plants.

In this commission typology, artists would be offered design briefs which encourage them to respond to and address making the “long now” characteristics and issues presented in the Gardens more apparent to the public. The concept of the “long now”, a phrase coined by US biologist and inventor Stewart Brand, comes from his view, noted in Chapter Two, that “some sort of balancing corrective to the short-sightedness [characterising our current culture] is needed—some mechanism or myth that encourages the long view and the taking of long-term responsibility, where ‘the long term’ is measured at least in centuries” (Op. cit., p. 2).

Also included within this typology would be commissions which respond to the urgency of Dr. Timothy Flannery’s concept of Australians as “future-eaters”, in which he believes that Australians have a crucial environmental care-taking role in the world, and that to the extent that we remain incapable of performing that role adequately, we are destroying future viability for ourselves and the rest of the world.

Commissions in this typology would be intended to “provoke” in Tilden’s language of interpretation: to make the visitors to the Gardens more aware of the richness and remarkable systems in which we live, and how very much we have to lose.

TYPOLOGY	EXAMPLES OF CONCEPTUAL STARTING POINTS FOR COMMISSION
7.1	<p>A commission in which the scientific and horticultural staff of the Gardens identify aspects of the Gardens, planting areas, or of particular species or groups of species which relate to Flannery’s concept of two hundred years of immigrants to Australia as “future-eaters”, with the artist preparing site-specific designs which respond to or dramatise that concept:</p> <p>“So certain are [each new wave of immigrants to the ‘new’ lands] of their superiority, so sure of their ability, that they do not think to learn from those who have gone before them, nor do they take the time to read the signs of the land until disaster has overtaken them” (Flannery, <i>Ibid.</i>, p. 405).</p>
7.2	<p>A commission in which the scientific and horticultural staff of the Gardens work with the Public Art Coordinator to develop commission briefs for artists which are about Flannery’s descriptions of “...entire ecosystems have evolved in Australia, that, when untampered with, recycle energy and nutrients in the most extraordinarily efficient ways”. The briefs will be intended to allow artists to design site-specific works which highlight the presence of plants and plant relationships from these ecosystems in ways that bring the public to understand their huge significance more fully.</p>
7.3	<p>Commissions to artists from briefs prepared collaboratively within the Gardens’ staff and consultants which encourage artists to highlight and dramatise the idea that “...Australians are caretakers of a disproportionately large share of the world’s biological riches and Australia is a land which tolerates few mistakes. If Australians do not possess a culture which values these things, they will be lost to the world” (Flannery, <i>Ibid.</i>, p. 16).</p>
7.4	<p>Commissions which, through design briefs developed collaboratively between the Gardens’ scientific and horticultural staff and the Public Art Coordinator, seek to make apparent those aspects of plants in the Gardens which measure the “long term” in centuries, not years or decades</p>

7.5	Commissions which respond, through making reference to plants and plant groups in the Gardens, to Stewart Brand's observations about the extreme emphasis on short-term views and considerations in our society, e.g.: "Velocity itself became the dominating characteristic of the world's quicksilver economy [in the last decades of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century]. 'We are moving from a world in which the big eat the small', remarked Klaus Schwab, head of the World Economic Forum, 'to a world in which the fast eat the slow'" (Op. cit., pp. 14 – 15). What is the concept of "slow" and "fast" in plants, and in aspects of culture associated with plants?
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**Typology #8: Commission Relating to the Recognition, Interpretation, & Celebration of Indigenous Culture in Relation to the ANBG's National Collection of Australia's Native Flora and its Site on the Slopes of Black Mountain**

The conceptual basis of the ANBG Public Art Program already described above is based in part on the exploration of a new role for artists working in special public places, in which

“...what is being advocated [within a new approach to public art in our time]... is the [artist's] individual professional and personal choice to find new forms which emphasise essential interconnectedness rather than the illusion of separateness...” (S. Gablik, The Re-Enchantment of Art, New York 1991).

In that spirit, a critical element of the revealing of identity and purpose of the ANBG in its location on the slopes of Black Mountain is the acknowledgment of the indigenous presence in this place prior to European occupation, and its connection to the rich past and contemporary history of indigenous cultures in Australia. It is particularly critical in the reinterpretation of “place” involved in the revealing of the unique origins and identity of the ANBG as contrasted with other Botanic Gardens in Australia, and in helping the public to understand the mission and purpose of the ANBG.

Significant response, reference to, and “honouring” of this Aboriginal presence and its more than 60,000 years of sustainable use of environments in Australia can be made by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists within the ongoing ANBG Public Art Program. The inspiration and conceptual basis for the exploration of these commissions should not be merely “who they were and are”, but rather “who we were, are, and must be” in relation to the expansion of our knowledge and interpretation of the ANBG as “...the original national collection and the world's most comprehensive display of living Australian native plants” (ANBG Draft Plan of Management, Foreword, p. “v”).

Also to be addressed within this commission typology is a key recommendation of the Draft National Code of Public Art Practice by the National Association for the Visual Arts (November 2000) produced with funding from The Australia Council, which documents the lack of opportunities for professional Aboriginal artists to train or obtain experience in the field of public art. The recommended listing below of annual commissions for this typology recommends the creation of a “partnering” commission when possible, in which a national Expression of Interest or specific commission of offer to one or more artists would invite artists with experience in public commissioning processes to “pair themselves” with a professional Aboriginal artist who has not yet had the opportunity of a public art commission for the creation of a work acknowledging or interpreting the host culture presence, past and/or contemporary.

Indicative examples of commissions recognising and exploring the host culture presence by both indigenous and non-indigenous artists include:

- The design of the Main Entry Gates at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center in Kahului, Hawaii, where artist Pat Hickman made explicit reference to vine fish-nets and the evidence of indigenous Hawaiian occupation of the site, where indigenous elders intermittently made dedications and chanted on the site as appropriate during construction, including non-indigenous collaborators in the ceremonies;
- The collaborative design work of two Aboriginal artists from Perth from the earliest design stages within the architectural/landscape design team for paths, landscape, sculptural elements, and content of the Victoria Park project in order to ensure the embedding of content relating to Aboriginal occupation of the site;

- The commissioning of indigenous Hawaiian stone artisan Kamaka Emmsley to design and build 750 linear feet of dry stone masonry walls in the Hawaiian tradition for the perimeter of the Maui Arts & Cultural Center. Research for the commission demonstrated that Emmsley, driving a backhoe for a living, was one of only four people remaining in the indigenous community on Maui who still knew the ancient Hawaiian techniques and religious protocols of the dry stone masonry ceremonial platform and precinct walls. This knowledge was preserved and passed on through the commission.
- Michael Nelson Jakkamarra's collaborative work for over three years within the MGT Architects Design Team on the public commission for the Forecourt of Parliament House, where key members of the Team travelled to Papunya to consult with Michael, and he intermittently travelled to Canberra to provide advice to the architects, engineers, art coordinators, and fabricators in the maintenance of the integrity of the design during its fabrication, thereby gaining considerable professional experience.



(photos, clockwise from top left: the completed Main Entry Gates at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center by artist Pat Hickman; the gates in fabrication under the direction of sculptor David Hamilton of Pilot Foundry at the University of Tasmania in Launceston; chanting and dedications by indigenous elders, accompanied by members of the Project Team, on the construction site for the Maui Arts & Cultural Center; indigenous Hawaiian dry stone masonry artisan Kamaka Emmsley during his fabrication of the six-foot-high, four-foot-deep walls in volcanic rock at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center; Aboriginal artists Jimmy Morrison and Sue Elliot within the Victoria Park project design team of MGT Architects, Donaldson Smith Hooke Architects, and Landscan (landscape architects).)

Examples of this sample typology within the ANBG Public Art Program are as follows, all of which should be closely integrated within the ongoing landscape design and development of each site:

TYPOLOGY	RECOMMENDED LOCATIONS AND CONCEPTUAL STARTING-POINTS FOR THE COMMISSIONS
8.1	A commission to an artist to respond to and commemorate the presence and information known about the location of early occupation sites in the general vicinity or area of the ANBG as an expansion of the existing public education interpretive itinerary relating to Aboriginal culture and ecological relationships throughout the Gardens.
8.2	Commission for artist's response to, commemoration, or interpretation of the contemporary Aboriginal memory of views from the ANBG into the extended landscape and distant land relationships from the site.
8.3	An artist's commission acknowledging the focus, presence, itinerary, and "gateway" proximity between the ANBG with its mission and the national Aboriginal cultural presence at the National Museum nearby at the lake-front.
8.4	An artist's commission to acknowledge the <u>fact</u> of the native title claim which has been formally lodged by Aboriginal people which encompasses the Green Square area. Regardless of the outcome of the claim, a commission allowing an artist to respond to and comment on the fact of the claim is intended to function as an integral part of the ongoing process of national reconciliation as it relates to the contemporary transformation of the Green Square area.
8.5	A "partnering" commission between an Aboriginal artist without experience in public commissioning processes and an established artist experienced in public commissioning for the design and fabrication of one of the "visual icon" commissions which forms part of the Commission Listing
8.6	An invited paid national submission for a short-list of established or senior Aboriginal artists for the design of a major work of public art for a specific site within any future redevelopment areas of the Gardens
8.7	A commission honouring, commemorating, and/or interpreting the millennia of environmental sustainability inherent in indigenous cultures

8.8	A commission interpreting, honouring, and/or commemorating indigenous cultures' successful social interdependency (in relation to and as exemplifying the key principles of the ANBG mission)
8.9	An commission for indigenous performance art at a site of particular botanic or environmental significance, determined in collaboration with local Aboriginal cultural elders, NPWS Aboriginal rangers, etc., whether historical or contemporary, within the Gardens

**Typology #9. Commissions Based upon an Ongoing Partnership with the Wood Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, Institute of the Arts, ANU: The Recovery of Fallen Trees and Surplus Plant Material at the Gardens as an Opportunity for Research, Study, and the Crafting of Objects in Wood for the Gardens**

Commissions under this typology would arise through the opportunities identified in a formal ongoing partnership between the Gardens and the Wood Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, which teaches the arts of designer/makers in wood, but which also has a strong interest on sustainable use of furniture timbers, wood technology, and the re-use of plant materials.

The Wood Workshop has the means and capacity to use the services of one of its past graduates who provides a commercial service in the recovery of “downed” trees in the urban environment in Canberra for sawing, removal, milling, and seasoning into usable timber elements for construction of objects ranging from fence posts and sleepers to fine joinery timbers and wood sections for turning of bowls and other objects.

These commission typologies would be based upon the Gardens offering all “downed” trees or other large-scale plant material to the Workshop for assessment about the potential for study and re-use. If re-usable, the Workshop could arrange for the removal and milling of the timber, for research in its proper joinery or sculptural uses and finishes, and the possibility of the design and fabrication of functional elements to be re-installed in the Gardens in proximity to living examples of the same tree or plant species. This series of projects would be related to but go far beyond the previous designs prepared for timber benches and tables utilising environmentally sustainable timber sources designed collaboratively by MGT Architects and craftspeople Michael Gill and fabricated by local artisans for the Gardens some years ago.



(photo: Public Programs Director Rod Harvey of the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra with guest, seated on one of the commissioned “picnic benches” designed for the Gardens by MGT Architects in collaboration with craftspeople Michael Gill & Chris Payne in sustainable timbers ).

Possible starting points for these commissions will be identified in a Workshop to be scheduled early in 2002 with participation from the Wood Workshop and recent graduates, key members of the Gardens' staff and management, and the Public Art Coordinator.



Above image: Barwon Heads Village Park shelter by artist William Kelly, 1993 .



## Typology #10: Children Interacting With the Gardens: Commissions Reinforcing the Goals of the Environmental Education Centre Programs, Involving Artists Working Alone, With School Groups, and in Some Cases With a Community

It is clear that the Gardens' role with respect to its thousands of repeat visits each year from schoolchildren and families with children is extremely important. As with all formative experiences in early life, either the child's experiences at the Gardens will shape a positive attitude towards the wonderment of the plant world throughout the child's future life, or it will serve as an ongoing negative influence and memory with respect to future contacts and connections with any issues relating to botanical matters.

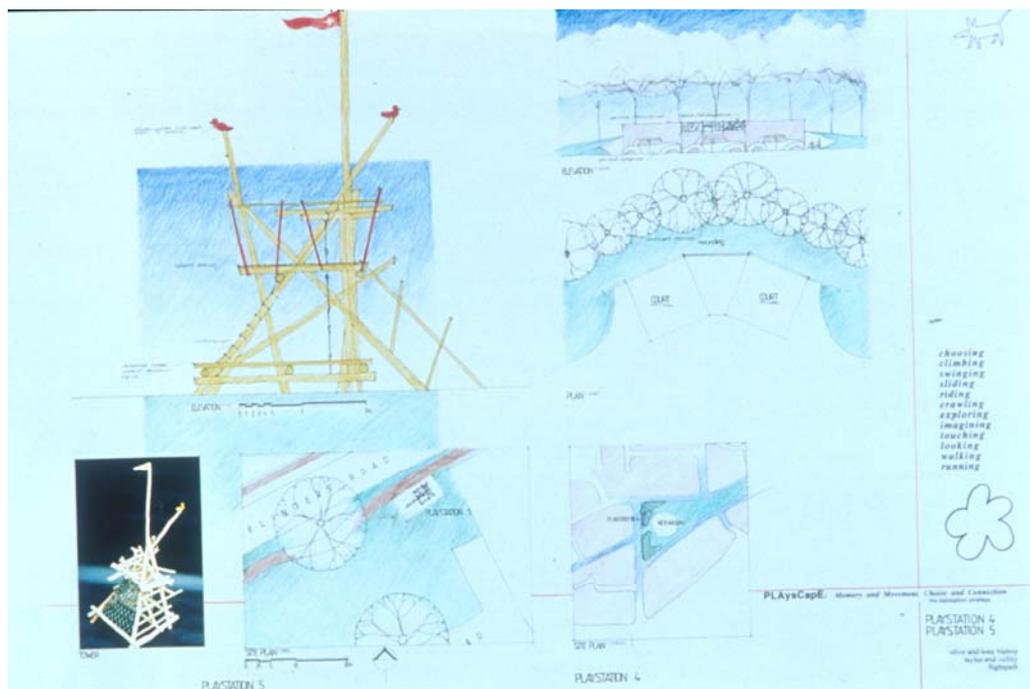
As Freeman Tilden states, the approach to shaping how children interact with the Gardens must be singular and carefully directed:

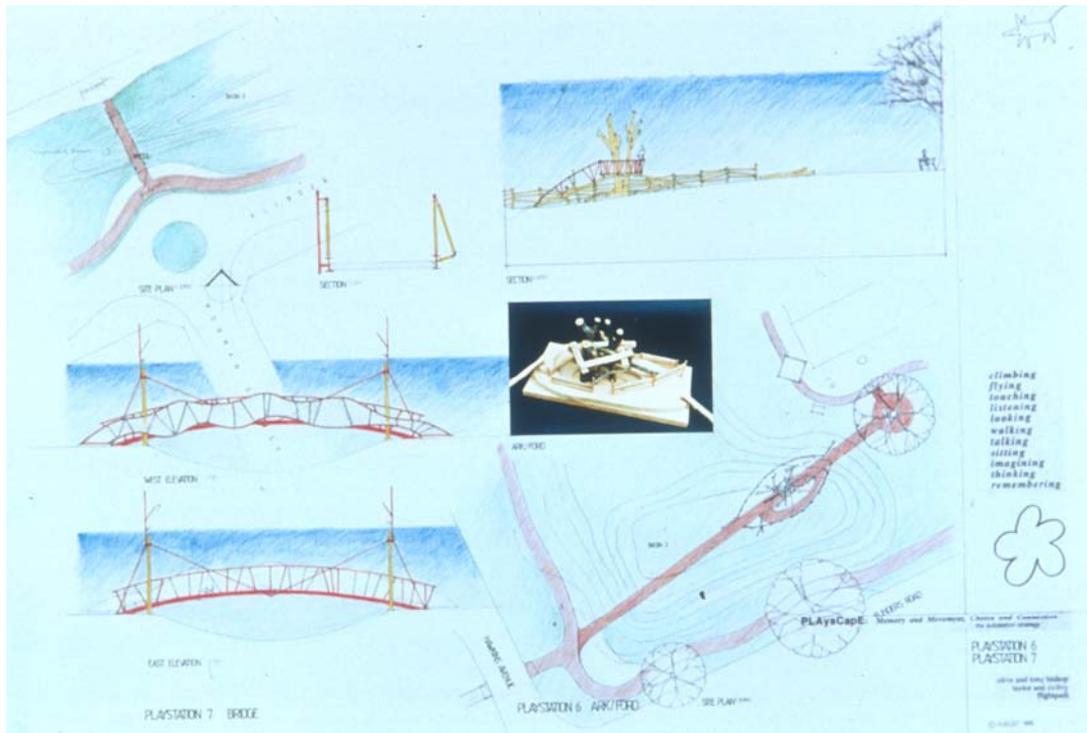
"Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program..." (Op. cit., p. 9).

The reasons in our own time for why the success of this approach with children is so important are obvious: In Stewart Brand's words, the key question for the future is:

"How do we make long-term thinking automatic and common instead of difficult and rare? How do we make the taking of long-term responsibility inevitable?" (Op. cit., p. 2).

The likely role of the artist in the process of children's interaction with the Gardens is most important in its capacity to provoke, to stimulate, to expand ways of thinking and sensing, and to "make fun". The ways in which this may occur are myriad, but must be very carefully focussed to be of significant value: there may be individual, site-specific commissions to artists to create objects or series of objects within an environment, to create safe but stimulating "play-scapes" which nevertheless teach, to work with students and teachers in the making of creative projects, or to work with students as part of the community in the making of more permanent elements within the Gardens.





Hillcrest Regent Gardens Playscape design (unbuilt), Adelaide 1995, by artists Olive & Tony Bishop

The examples to be cited as starting-points for design briefs for artists working in this way in the Gardens will be generated from a Workshop to be scheduled in early 2001 involving the participation of key members of the Gardens' staff, Guides, Friends of the Gardens, teachers, an artist with experience in working with and for children in the environment, one or more students, and the Gardens' Public Art Coordinator.