

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



University's original home becomes an artists' Domain

The past, present and future of Domain House – the original home of the University of Tasmania – has been imaginatively interpreted by 19 artists in a new on-site exhibition which opens to the public tomorrow (**Wednesday 13 March 2013**).

The exhibition, titled *Domain: a contested landscape*, has been organised by the Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian College of the Arts, as part of the Ten Days on the Island 2013. Co-curated by the Faculty of Arts' Deputy Dean, Professor Noel Frankham, Dr Kim Lehman and Prof Libby Lester, it presents perspectives on human interaction with the built and natural environments. With a 150-year history as a site for education, Domain House is the ideal venue for presenting such an exhibition.

It is part of a series of site-specific art installation projects curated by Prof Frankham and others for Ten Days on the Island: the first was in 2007 at the Port Arthur Historic Site, followed by *Trust*, encompassing five National Trust buildings, in 2009.

The Domain House art installations reference and make comment on many facets of the site – the building, its environment, its historical significance and its potential.

Domain House is a grand neo-Gothic sandstone landmark built in 1848-49. It originally began its life as the Hobart High School and became the site of the University of Tasmania when it opened in 1890 and until it moved to Sandy Bay in 1963. Subsequently the site was home to the Tasmanian School of Art and TAFE Tasmania. It was re-acquired by the University of Tasmania in 2011 and is now undergoing conservation work.

“The art in this exhibition isn't traditional,” Prof Frankham explains. “It's perhaps best described as a series of interventions intended to prompt consideration and reflection on the exhibition theme of nature and culture utilising Domain House as a contextual site. Broadly, the 19 artists have responded to elements of the building such as its design, fittings and fixtures; the activities it has housed – university, art school, library - and its wider environment – the bush, the river and community uses.

“A sense of optimism is reinforced throughout the exhibition by the University’s commitment to the precinct and the recent Hobart City Council draft master plan, which together demonstrate renewal and revitalising of Queens Domain as a site for community engagement, education and recreation,” he said.

Lindsay Broughton specifically recalls his days as a student of the Tasmanian School of Art, with drawings of plaster cast busts hung in a room near to the former ‘cast room’, a storeroom for the plaster casts students had to learn to draw in their first-year drawing class.

Providing a whimsical element within the exhibition, Pat Brassington recalls children’s play on Queens Domain. Pat imagines a 1950s girl’s experiences of the Domain – tadpoles and frogs, long grass, exploration – tinged with a typically Brassington edge of menace.

Megan Keating and Paul Zika make playful references to the floral patterned carpet in one of the large teaching rooms. The clashing blue and green covered stairs become a moment of wonder as Meg’s bright green three-dimensional forest is revealed. With Paul’s elegant blue window pattern the installation gently explains its connections to the carpet pattern.

Other participating artists include Lisa Anderson, Lucy Bleach, Joy Barber, Steven Carson, Linda Erceg, Ruth Frost, Milan Milojevic, Brigita Ozolins, Geoff Parr, Troy Ruffels, Marie Sierra, David Stephenson, Lucia Usmiani, John Vella and Martin Walch.

The project team hopes to develop a series of further exhibitions addressing issues and aspects relevant to Queens Domain and community engagement with the urban landscape.

Domain: a contested landscape, presented by the Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian College of the Arts, for Ten Days on the Island 2013, will be open to the public from noon to 4pm each day until March 28.

MEDIA ARE INVITED TO VIEW THE EXHIBITION AND INTERVIEW CO-CURATOR PROFESSOR NOEL FRANKHAM AT DOMAIN HOUSE, ABERDEEN STREET, GLEBE, FROM 12.30PM WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2013.

Information released by:

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