Australian Network for Art & Technology

REPORT:

Fourth National Summer School in computer aided art, design and manufacture (caadm) 1992

support provided by:

Royal Melbourne Institue for Technology, Advanced Computer Graphics Centre
Cybex Computing
South Australian Department for arts & Cultural Heritage
Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board
Western Australian Department for the Arts

REPORT

The **Fourth National Summer School in Computer Aided Art, Design and Manufacture (CAADM)** for artists craftsworkers and designers was held at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology for four weeks during January 1992. The primary aim of the school was to facilitate the acquisition of computer based skills by artists.

This fourth school in ANAT's training program remains the only such intensive training program in Australia devised specifically for artists.

• background and rationale

Since its inception in 1985, one of ANAT's imperatives has been the facilitation of projects which expose artists to new technologies and afford them access to skilling in this area. A very real problem for artists wishing to utilize new technologies in creative production has been the lack of opportunities for artists to acquire both knowledge of and skills in high technology, placing limitations on the professional development of these artists.

ANAT attempted to address this problem by initiating in 1989 a subsidised training program of Summer Schools which has subsequently become a high priority in ANAT's yearly program, expanding and modifying each year in response to technological developments and students needs. The schools offer a unique learning environment which has become synonymous with ANAT's Summer Schools. Due to the success of the program, and also the continuing lack of training opportunities for artists, ANAT has introduced state-based Winter Schools, the first of which was held in Adelaide in July, 1991.

• benefits

Underpinning ANAT's interest in this area is the belief that the larger community will benefit through artists' usage and development of high technology. Education is seen as the fundamental key to developing and encouraging an awareness of innovation, and consequently an economy which makes use of the skills and creative wealth embodied by the nation's artists.

ANAT maintains contact with all former participants in order to monitor benefits of the Summer School to them and the wider community. Following are comments from participants in the Fourth National Summer School in CAADM.

I believe the ongoing support of artists and craftspeople moving into areas of new technology is fundamental to Australia's cultural development. ANAT provides an invaluable service with these Computer-aided design schools. I know of nowhere else where I could have had access to facilities and tutoring at an affordable cost. **Moira Corby**

The ANAT Summer School offered a much needed entry point for most, either those eager to experiment or those who needed to to comprehend low end and high end computers and their applications in visual problem solving within and between art and technology. **Csaba Szamosy**

Most importantly, all of the participating artists have stated that the Summer Schools have informed their artistic practice. Participation in the Summer Schools and the acquisition of skills and knowledge has in many cases empowered them in such a way as to have increased their ability to affect the economic mainstream, as artists.

Many of the participants have described the knowledge, techniques, skills and networks developed through their participation as invaluable and revolutionary. All Summer Schools organised by ANAT have effectively served as catalysts for action.

- **aims of project:**

- to assist the professional development of Australian artists through the acquisition and development of new technology-based skills
- to facilitate 'technology transfer', enabling participants to impart acquired knowledge to other parties
- to promote ANAT's primary aim - "interaction between the arts, sciences and technology"
- to introduce artists to a range of practical and theoretical issues associated with the use of new technology
- to inform and influence participant's art practice in order to create a body of 'new' artworks
- to exhibit the results of this and other ANAT-initiated programs in exhibitions and conferences nationally and internationally
- to present a succesful model for future educational and skilling programs for artists in the area of new technology

- **project**

ANAT attempts in all of its projects to have a gender and state balance. Eighteen artists from all over Australia attended the 1992 Summer School (see list attached). The only state not represented was the Northern Territory, as the participant from the NT had to withdraw at the last moment. We hope to address this lack of representation from the Northern Territory at future schools.

The artists ranged from those with no experience to those with computer experience for non-art applications. The school is designed to cater for all levels of experience, and to answer the individual participant's needs.

Each student had their own computer work station. To complement the core skills-based program, a number of satellite events introduced participants to other new technologies and future-oriented issues through hands-on workshops and demonstrations, visits to industrial and research facilities and seminars.

Tutorial was given by technological experts from ATEC and technologically literate artists who were employed to offer their expertise in the area of computer imaging, and to focus on the creative, as opposed to the technical aspect of the program. Dale Nason, Jon McCormack, Trevor Smith, and Ian Haig , some of Australia's most well respected computer artists, who are also extremely technically competent (all have backgrounds in programming), were employed to fulfill this role. Over three weeks, they taught the students 2D and 3D animation, image generation and manipulation on Amiga , MacIntosh computers and Silicon Graphics and work stations.

There was a variety of equipment for participants to access. This included high end Silicon Graphics3D solids modelling and rendering programs, MACii computers running authoring and animation program Macro Mind Director and a suite of Amigas running paint and animation programs. These programmes were able to be interfaced with video equipment, scanners, video frame grabbers, slide output devices, and colour printers.

CURRICULUM

Week 1

An introductory program focussing on an examination of the concepts underlying the creation of data. 'Hands-on' tutorials on 3D modelling systems and an introduction to Alias(Silicon Graphics) systems with Jon McCormack were features of the first week. Students had the opportunity of exploring a number of different hardware and software packages in order to determine which area to focus on.

Week 2

A period enabling participants to become more conversant with specific systems, and other interactive technologies for output of the computer generated works. During this week, students either engaged with 3D modelling and and animation using Silicon Graphics with Trevor Smithor worked with Ian Haig on the Deluxe Paint 3 and Amiga Vision Systems. Tours of high technology businesses and industry.

Weeks 3 and 4

Consolidation of skills and individual projects developed in the preceding two weeks. Videoing of works-in-progress, printing of 2D works. Presentation of findings and projects to an invited audience and the general public during an Open Day.

About 50 people attended the Open Day and luncheon, always a high point in the Summer Schools for artists to exhibit their work to date and to liase with industry representarives, interested artists, representatives from Government bodies and the general public.

Dale Nason organised satelite activities for the school, including software demos by industry representatives, visits to artists studios and vr demos.

• long term results

Since the 1992 Summer School, some of the participating artists have been offered unlimited access to the RMIT facilities to work on their own projects under the invited artists program at RMIT.

Other participating artists have maintained contact with ANAT and been successful in producing electronic based art work exhibited in a variety of exhibitions around Australia.

• support

Support for the project was provided by a wide variety of sources . The training program is reliant on a huge amount of in-kind support, and the success of the schools has been due in large part to the goodwill extended to us by individuals and organisations in the industry. Over the time we have been running the schools we have developed mutually beneficial relationships with a number of industry groups.

The following organisations have enhanced the 1992 Summer School by their contributions of time and equipment without which it would have been impossible to run the school.

Royal Melbourne Institue for Technology; Advanced Computer Graphics Centre
cybex computing
south australian department for the arts
tasmanian arts advisory board
western australian department for the arts

AUSTRALIAN NETWORK FOR ART AND TECHNOLOGY

1992 NATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL BUDGET RECONCILIATION

INCOME

WEST. AUST. DEPT. FOR ARTS	3800
TAS ARTS ADVISORY BOARD	2848
SADACH	2000
AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION	960
INDIVIDUAL FEE PAYMENTS	6930
ANAT CONTRIBUTION	1812
TOTAL INCOME	**18350**

EXPENDITURE

1. Travel	
Jim Pipp from WA	940
Matthew Perkins from TAS	464
Mary Hudson Ewington from TAS	464
Virginia Barratt from SA	124
Ken Ball from WA	940
SUBTOTAL	**2932**
2. Wages	
Trevor Smith	1200
Jon McCormack	360
Dale Nason (coordinator and tutor)	2160
Ian Haig	1200
SUBTOTAL	**4920**
3. Facilities	
Facilities Hire : RMIT	8000
Prints (150) : RMIT	300
SUBTOTAL	**8300**
4. Production Items and Consumables	
Consumables : Discs, stationary etc	600
Documentation	400
Sundries inc Refreshments etc	200
SUBTOTAL	**1200**

AUSTRALIAN NETWORK FOR ART AND TECHNOLOGY

1992 NATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL BUDGET RECONCILIATION (cont)

5. Open Day and Satellite Activities	
Illustration for Invite	50
Graphic Design	200
Catering	490
Casual Labour	78
Studio Visit - Marshall White	100
SUBTOTAL	**918**
6. Other	
Reimbursent of Registration Fee	80
SUBTOTAL	**80**

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

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2. Wages	**4920**
3. Facilities	**8300**
4. Production Items and Consumables	**1200**
5. Open Day and Satellite Activities	**918**
6. Other	**80**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**18350**