



Sydney hosts international conference to encourage sharing of expertise with outside world

Universities review their place in society

The relationship between universities, cities and society in the coming century will be on the agenda when leading thinkers from 26 prominent universities around the world converge on the University of Sydney in July.

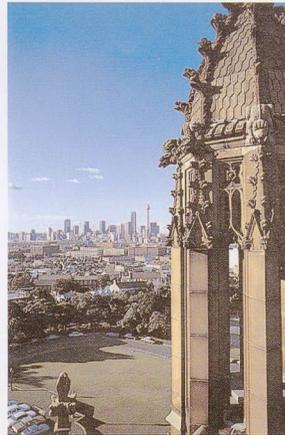
Delegates will be taking part in the second annual Academic Consortium 21 (AC 21) International Forum. The five-day conference brings together academics from countries including Germany, China, the UK, India and the USA, as well as senior NSW government officials and representatives of the Australian business community.

AC 21 was set up in 2002 to encourage cooperation and collaboration in higher education. Its aims include the promotion of research and the enrichment of education, and it also seeks to make contributions to industry and society.

Sydney University – the consortium's only Australian member – was chosen to host this year's event because of the expertise of its researchers in the area of sustainable development and its strong ties with the community.

As well as discussing issues relating to the changing role of universities in society, delegates will share access to information on research interests and academic activities, identify opportunities for co-operative education programs and facilitate the international exchange of culture between local communities.

The program includes a series of



Urban edge: the Sydney skyline from the University of Sydney.

of Education hosts a forum on learning technologies and e-learning.

There will also be an open public forum on Friday 23 July on the theme of universities, cities and society on the 21st century.

AC 21 includes universities such as Michigan and North Carolina State in the USA; Peking, Nanjing and Shanghai Jiao-Tong in China; Warwick and Sheffield in the UK; Chulalongkorn in Thailand; Gaja Mada in Indonesia; and the Technische Universität Chemnitz and the Albert-Ludwig-Universität Freiburg in Germany.

Director of the AC 21 General Secretariat, Professor Yoshitsugu Hayashi, said: "It is an important aim of AC 21 to contribute to bridging between local communities, universities and enterprises by sharing knowledge, culture and thoughts. The point is that universities don't only contribute to themselves, but to the wider regional and world society."

Sydney University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gavin Brown, said: "We are proud to have been selected to host this international forum with its theme of community outreach. Sydney is an important world city and the strong overseas networks of the University of Sydney reinforce and

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'I learnt an incredible amount about journalism and a huge amount about Asia. I had never seen anything like Cambodia – it was an eye-opener.'

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After working with children with disabilities in Bangkok, Melissa said: 'I found the whole experience enlightening, challenging and draining on all levels.'

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Athletes from water sports will dominate Sydney University's representation at the 2004 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in Athens.

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Research takes scientists below icecap

An Australian scientific team led by Sydney University marine biologist Adele Pile is carrying out exacting research under the Antarctic icecap into the effects of global warming.

Dr Pile, a lecturer in the University of Sydney's School of Biological Sciences, has spent three years investigating the impact of global warming on the plankton and algae in the water column, and the knock-on effect on organisms that live on the ocean floor and feed on the plankton.

Early in the New Year the researchers spent four weeks at Casey Station, 3880 kilometres due south of Perth and the gateway for scientists conducting ice core research. Under the icecap they studied sea sponges, sea squirts and bryozoans, monitoring where they live, what they eat, and checking for any changes in population numbers.

All the work was carried out in extreme conditions using SCUBA diving equipment, as the animals cannot survive in the laboratory. Dr Pile said: "Diving is easy enough in the tropics, but under the ice it is a specialised skill that requires training in new equipment and techniques."

Dr Pile has studied reef communities



PHOTO BY EMMA JOHNSTON

A researcher examines experimental panels in a kelp forest off Shirley Island near Casey Station in Antarctica.

around the globe, but her own plans to go to Antarctica were thwarted at the last minute by the outbreak of war in Iraq, which saw all specialised diving equipment requisitioned for the Australian forces. The

slightly-built Dr Pile was unable to find any equipment to fit her at the Australian Antarctic Division, which is involved in the scientific diving program.

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French leave for scholar

FIRST winner of a new \$28,000 travelling scholarship awarded by Sydney College of the Arts is Master of Visual Arts graduate Juliana Bartulin who plans to use the scholarship to travel to southern France via New York later this year, to take up a one-year artist's residency with Association Cantagal in St Privat.

An outstanding initiative in the contemporary visual arts community, the Fauvette Loureiro Memorial Artists Travel Scholarship is an important development for Sydney College of the Arts. It will be awarded annually to financially assist a recent SCA graduate to enhance their knowledge, skills and art practice in an international setting.

Bartulin has held successful solo exhibitions and received significant awards during her short career. She's not new to Association Cantagal, having taken up a residency there in her graduation year, 2002, and inclusion of one of her works in an exhibition there in June will pave the

way for her forthcoming residency.

A "link between time and process" inspires Bartulin's labour-intensive works which, spanning painting and sculpture, utilise non-traditional, found objects – like paper plant stamens (see below) and pressed four-leaf clovers – in a repetitive way that's meditative in both process and effect.

Her artworks are often inspired by literature, she said, such as that of French materialist fiction writer Georges Perec who "treated words for their materiality".

"I'm really interested in looking at a material for its potential within a larger structure," she said.

The scholarship Bartulin won was established through the generosity of the late Renee Fauvette Erdos, in memory of her mother Fauvette Loureiro, eldest daughter of artist Arthur Loureiro. The award was one of a total of over \$130,000 worth of scholarship awards presented on the opening night of the annual postgraduate degree show last December.



SCA graduate Juliana Bartulin with Sydney University Chancellor, Justice Kim Santow – and detail from one of her works.

Sightseeing in Beijing – and Sydney



Wrapped up and off to Beijing – including *Passage I* (background) by photomedia lecturer Simone Douglas.

FIFTY artworks left Sydney for Beijing last month for the first stage of an exchange exhibition program between Sydney University and Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA).

The works, by 16 Sydney College of the Arts academics – who are all regularly exhibiting artists – will be shown as the first part of *Sightseeing*, an exhibition that opens at CAFA's Downtown Gallery at the end of this month. Works by CAFA artists will feature as *Sightseeing* part two.

The Sydney College of the Arts selection provides a visual snapshot of the diverse range of artworks, in various media, being created at SCA, which has a strong conceptual contemporary art focus.

"There are works that explore language and text, use memory and history to uncover meaning, or investigate style, authenticity and appropriation", said University Art Collection Curator, Sioux Garside, who was invited by SCA's dean, Professor Ron Newman, to curate the SCA component.

"Other innovative works are concerned with issues of cultural identity or philosophical and spiritual questions."

An in-depth essay by Ms Garside features in the substantial bilingual catalogue which in itself provides a valuable opportunity to internationally profile the work of two globally focused art institutions.

The SCA works return later in the year for showing in the SCA Galleries. Meantime, an exhibition of works by CAFA artists, curated by Professor Tan Ping, Academic Director, International at CAFA, will travel to Sydney in June for concurrent exhibitions at the SCA and the University's War Memorial Art Gallery.

The cultural exchange, financially supported by Sydney University's International Office, aims to increase the understanding of the issues, values and ideas that preoccupy contemporary art and popular culture in both Australia and China. It includes a teaching exchange of two artists from each institution.

Singing and flying high – and on his way to Europe

TO BE snapped up by one of the foremost classical music agencies in Europe is a dream of many singers, but for 22-year-old countertenor David Hansen, who graduates with a Bachelor of Music from the Conservatorium this month, it's one dream come true.

"It's such an honour," he said of his connection with the London-based Askonas Holt Ltd, admitting he found it "a little daunting at first" when flanked by photos of the famous on their office walls: Yvonne Kenny, Dame Felicity Lott, Sir Thomas Allen, Angela Gheorghiu.

"It lets you know you've got to keep up a pretty high standard," he said.

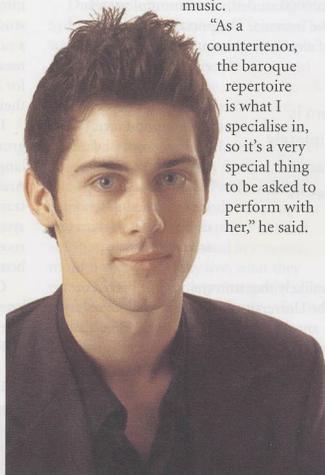
Feedback following a series of international auditions that Askonas organised for him earlier this year has been extremely positive and already he has some international engagements lined up.

These start with the Aix-en-Provence Festival in France later this year when, for two months, he'll tour Aix as 'The Spirit' in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* – an engagement that's at the invitation of prominent classical music entrepreneur, Eva Wagner, great granddaughter of the famous composer.

"It'll be so nice going from one town to the other, performing in the beautiful old intimate chamber opera houses," he said.

Next February he's off to Scotland to sing with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Emmanuelle Haim, the foremost young conductor of baroque music.

"As a countertenor, the baroque repertoire is what I specialise in, so it's a very special thing to be asked to perform with her," he said.



Countertenors may be enjoying a vogue, but they are still pretty rare in Australia he said.

"There's very little opportunity for countertenors here so I thought I'd try my luck in Europe. On the whole I think people here do enjoy the countertenor voice but often there are those who don't understand it or find it harder to embrace because of the way Australian culture is inclined. Whereas in Europe everyone was so welcoming, and what I heard again and again was that they thought the Australians were taking over in Europe!"

Mr Hansen was still in high school when he began studying with his Conservatorium singing teacher, Andrew Dalton, whom he sees as a role model.

"He himself was a distinguished performer in Europe and is a wonderful teacher," he said. "For the last six and a half years we've achieved a lot together."

"I dared to dream big when I was quite young and I remember saying to my teacher I just want to be the best I possibly can. What's happened this year is more than I thought would happen in the next ten years, so I'm just happy at the moment going with the flow and having a ball."

Europe-bound – countertenor David Hansen.

The invitation from Askonas came about through promotion by Jenifer Eddy who has the longest-running artists' agency in Australasia and is a consultant for Askonas Holt.

"It's fantastic for me too because it was my first trip overseas for the auditions and going back will be my first trip to regional France, and it will be my first trip to Scotland," Mr Hansen said. "It's wonderful that I finally get to live the dream. I've got to do the hard work now."

The many prizes he won while at the Conservatorium, including a Conservatorium scholarship and the London-based Australian Music Foundation Award, have helped to fund his European trips.

Meanwhile, he'll be graduating in absentia this month while performing with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and the Christchurch City Choir in his first international concert, "Go for Baroque" which showcases the big bravura and famous castrati arias of the baroque.

"I have a lot of great friends at the Conservatorium – the singing world can be quite harsh. To know that it's possible to put one foot in front of the other and follow your dream is encouraging for them, I think, as much as it is for me."